Minutes • *1 July 2026*

Directorate for Energy Supply Chain (DESC)

1 July 2026

MEETING ON UK ENERGY SUPPLY CHAIN PRIORITIES

Executive Summary

The meeting reviewed progress from two active subgroups focused on policy certainty and UK competitiveness, and revisited whether a third workstream on enabling infrastructure should be reshaped and continued. The discussion was anonymised around the commercial impacts of delayed energy-transition projects, the need for stronger local and regional economic benefits, and the importance of turning member evidence into concise advocacy messages that can land with policymakers before party conference season and future fiscal events.

The strongest recurring message was that the UK supply chain is not simply asking for general support: it needs policy stability, a credible forward pipeline, practical project delivery, and clearer mechanisms to retain value in local communities. Participants emphasised that delay, stop-start decision-making and weak visibility of project timing are causing avoidable costs, lost confidence, re-tendering, deferred recruitment, and capacity moving to other markets.

The meeting also identified a need to balance critique with constructive messaging. Members wanted to develop a practical evidence base that shows what is working, where delivery is blocked, and what targeted changes would unlock investment, jobs, skills and regional growth. Current external evidence also supports the importance of supply-chain readiness, grid and infrastructure constraints, and clearer strategic planning for UK energy delivery.

Present

Stuart Broadley, EIC (*SRB*)
Kim Stephen, EIC (*KS*)
Neil Golding, EIC (*NG*)
Rebecca Groundwater, EIC (online) (*RG*)
Jack Boggis, EIC (online)
Ian Molloy, EIC
David Allely, Allelys Heavy Haulage
Phil Ashley, Fibron
Jasmina Tuncheva, FRACHT
Henry Rios, LV Shipping
Stuart Billingham, KOSO Kent Introl (online)
Andrew Ball, Murphy Group (online)
Ivan Gutierrez, OGC Energy
Carl Townsend, Sentinel ICCS
Miles Jackson, Wolf Safety Lamp Company
Dan Rigby, Wood

Apologies

Paul Bicker, asset55
Peter Richards, DEEP Manufacturing
Vilasini Krishnan, Deugro
Angus Milne, DNV
Frazer Budd, McDermott
Luke Pirie, Oceaneering
Martin Layfield, Petrofac
Paul Ashton, Powertherm
Sheena McGuinness, RSM
Darren Davidson, Siemens Energy
Paul Mudd, TRS Workforce Solutions
James Blanchard, United Infrastructure

1 Policy Certainty and Project Delay

The policy certainty subgroup presented work to map project timelines across major UK energy-transition projects.

Members stressed that the messaging should move beyond a broad "transition is delayed" argument. The proposed narrative is that the transition is not yet investable at the pace required because business models, funding decisions, consenting, grid access, transport infrastructure and procurement timelines are not aligned. This has consequences for the supply chain long before final investment decisions are reached.

2 Local Content, "Local Local" Value and UK Competitiveness

The UK competitiveness discussion evolved into a broader conversation about local content and the need to retain more value from UK energy and infrastructure projects. Participants repeatedly returned to the idea of "local local" benefit: not simply UK-wide content, but regional employment, apprenticeships, subcontracting, services, accommodation, transport, maintenance and long-term economic legacy in the communities where projects are delivered.

The discussion distinguished between protectionism for its own sake and a more nuanced approach that recognises strategic capability, economic resilience, national security and regional value. Members noted that other markets use local content or in-country value models more assertively, while the UK often appears reluctant to apply comparable mechanisms or to publish transparent results from local content commitments.

Participants suggested that local content requirements should be practical and targeted. Rather than applying a single headline percentage across a whole project, a better approach may be to identify which components, services, engineering capabilities or maintenance activities can realistically be delivered locally, regionally or nationally, then set weighted expectations around those areas.

The group also highlighted the need to understand what is legally and commercially possible under UK procurement rules and trade obligations. It was suggested that trade, legal and economics specialists should be brought into future work to assess how local content, strategic capability protection, apprenticeship commitments and regional value weighting could be designed without undermining competition or value for money.

3 Enabling Infrastructure and Delivery Bottlenecks

The third proposed workstream on infrastructure had received limited initial uptake, partly because the scope was unclear. During the meeting, however, members agreed that the topic remains important if reframed as "enabling infrastructure": the roads, ports, bridges, grid connections, transport routes, logistics capacity and local upgrades required to deliver large energy-transition projects.

Several examples were raised of heavy loads, large modules and specialist equipment being constrained by road capacity, bridge condition, route availability or local bottlenecks. Participants warned that if multiple delayed projects are later compressed into the same delivery window, the result could be competition for the same logistics routes, specialist equipment, skilled operators and local infrastructure capacity.

The infrastructure discussion was linked to wider concerns about recent shifts in public spending priorities. Members argued that removing or delaying transport and enabling infrastructure investment may have indirect consequences for energy projects, because some projects depend on transport routes and local upgrades that are not always visible in headline energy policy.

The group concluded that the infrastructure workstream should continue with a smaller, more specialist group. Its purpose should be to identify the enabling assets and choke points that materially affect project delivery, gather practical examples, and show how local infrastructure upgrades can create lasting community benefit beyond a single project.

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4 Skills, Workforce and Apprenticeships

The group discussed skills carefully and recognised that the message must be precise. There are real shortages in specific skilled roles, including specialist operators, machinists, engineering roles and experienced trades. However, participants also warned against presenting skills as the main reason projects are delayed, because policymakers may interpret that as evidence that UK content is unrealistic.

The strongest consensus was that workforce challenges are often a symptom of weak pipeline certainty. When projects are approved and orders are placed, companies can recruit, train and mobilise. When projects are delayed or uncertain, businesses cannot justify carrying apprentices or trainees for several years without visibility of work. The problem is therefore not only skills supply; it is the absence of a stable demand signal.

Members saw value in linking major projects to measurable apprenticeship and training commitments. Examples such as project-level apprenticeship requirements and wider social value measures were discussed as possible models. The preferred message was that stable project commitments allow companies to create skilled jobs, retain experienced people, and bring new entrants into practical, high-value careers that are less exposed to automation than many office-based roles.

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5 Evidence, Tone and Advocacy Approach

Participants repeatedly emphasised the need for evidence-led advocacy. The group does not want to produce a general list of complaints; it wants a concise, credible and usable set of messages that members can repeat. However, the summary evidence should also be clear that ambition alone is not enough. Members want the narrative to shift from policy ambition to investable delivery, with practical actions that reduce delay, protect capability, and increase regional economic benefit.

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6 Agreed and Proposed Actions

• Circulate a standard input table for Work related to DESC Sub-group 1 *RG already compiled and to be distributed to working group on 3 July.*

• Continue the work developed by group one and circulate a standard input table to go alongside this. Also ensure wider take up with regional committees and membership. *RG and NG*

• Develop a clearer local content workstream, including legal, trade and economics input on what is possible and how models from other markets may be adapted. *NG*

• Reframe the infrastructure group as an enabling infrastructure workstream and invite targeted specialists to identify material bottlenecks. *EIC*

• Re-engage with UK export finance and related bodies to explore transparency, relevance and accessibility of support for the supply chain. *NG*

• Prepare outputs in time to influence party conference season and subsequent fiscal and policy events. *RG/NG/KS*

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