



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE

Tom Arthur MSP
Minister for Public Finance, Planning and
Community Wealth

By e mail only—
MinisterPFPCW@gov.scot

Citizen Participation and Public
Petitions Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5254
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17 March 2023

Dear Tom,

PE1864: Increase the ability of communities to influence planning decisions for onshore windfarms

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to increase the ability of communities to influence planning decisions for onshore windfarms by:

- adopting English planning legislation for the determination of onshore wind farm developments*
- empowering local authorities to ensure local communities are given sufficient professional help to engage in the planning process*
- appointing an independent advocate to ensure that local participants are not bullied and intimidated during public inquiries*

The Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee considered the above petition at its meeting on [18 January 2023](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government to highlight the evidence we have gathered.

In considering this petition, the Committee have examined written evidence from a wide range of sources including the petitioner, members of the public, local community groups, organisations involved in the planning system, as well as the Scottish and UK Governments. The Committee also thanks you for the evidence you provided in person during our meeting on 15 June 2022.

The Committee appreciates your clarification, in correspondence dated 18 August 2022, that the Scottish Government does have the power to alter the 50MW threshold for renewable energy developments. In light of this clarification, the Committee recommends that the Scottish Government should now undertake work to explore the

benefits and disadvantages of altering this threshold. The Committee would also draw your attention to the submissions received from the UK Government, which indicate their willingness to engage and hold constructive conversations with the Scottish Government on these matters.

In considering this petition, the Committee have also heard concerns about the level of support available to individuals and communities participating in public inquiries on planning decisions, this includes submissions from Planning Aid Scotland. The Committee therefore considers there would be benefit to the Scottish Government undertaking further research into how support could be provided for communities wishing to participate in public inquiries into planning decisions, particularly those related to onshore windfarm developments.

The Committee also recommends that Scottish Government explore the scope for planning authorities to determine more applications for onshore windfarm developments. In determining applications for onshore windfarm developments, the Committee further recommends that the Scottish Government explore opportunities to ensure that demonstration of local support is a key material consideration in the decision-making process. In doing so, the Committee would also welcome information on the cost and time implications of altering the current process. This might include consideration of the length of time taken to consider a planning application if independent advocates were to be appointed to support community participation in this process.

The Committee would be grateful to receive your response electronically, in Word format, by no later than **Monday 17 April 2023**. Your response will be processed in accordance with the Parliament's [policy on the treatment of written evidence](#).

On behalf of the Committee, thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Carlaw', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jackson Carlaw MSP
Convener