

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

Minister for Climate Action written submission, 13 December 2024

Thank you for your letter of 20 November about Public Petition PE1864: Increase the ability of communities to influence planning decisions for onshore wind farms. You referred to the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee meeting of 13 November 2024 and raise three points for response:

- further information on when the Scottish Government expects to publish guidance on “effective community engagement in local development planning”
- an update on work to progress proposals for raising the current 50MW threshold to allow planning authorities to determine more applications for onshore windfarms
- information on what further consideration the Scottish Government has given to ensuring support is available to members of the public who wish to participate in public inquiries.

Guidance on ‘Effective community engagement in local development planning’ is expected to publish this month.

We continue to consider the process and timeline for making any changes to the Electricity Act 1989 threshold, which determines whether planning authorities or Scottish Ministers determine applications for energy generating developments. Stakeholder views on whether the current threshold of 50MW should be altered; whether different thresholds should apply to different types of generating stations; and on the resourcing implications of increasing the threshold were sought through our [‘Investing in Planning’](#) consultation which took place between 28 February and 31 May 2024. A summary of responses was published on 15 August and is available on the Scottish Government website - [Investing in Planning – A consultation on resourcing Scotland's planning system Summary of responses to the consultation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#).

In regard to what consideration the Scottish Government has given to ensuring support is available to members of the public which wish to participate in public inquiries, the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) continues to discuss and hear from the Petitioners and other members of the DPEA stakeholder group in relation to their experiences at inquiries, including at the group’s most recent meeting on 26 November. DPEA has also introduced a questionnaire which will be issued to all parties who have participated in an inquiry to seek their views about their experiences. This includes their views on how fairly the inquiry was run; whether they felt comfortable participating; and whether they felt able to present their case. Results of this exercise will be shared and discussed with DPEA’s stakeholder group.

DPEA will also shortly publish a Guidance Note in relation to the use of community sessions as part of the examination process. These sessions allow members of the community, who may not wish to participate in an inquiry, the opportunity to state their case to the reporter in a less formal environment.

I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Alasdair Allan