

# Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) submission of 9 August 2022

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

PAS ([www.pas.org.uk](http://www.pas.org.uk)) is a charity and social enterprise that helps people in Scotland to engage with the planning system and their places. Community engagement is a key aspect of enhancing local democracy and empowering communities to ensure that Scotland is a fairer and more equal place. PAS provides – amongst other services – an advice service, training, youth engagement, and facilitation of community-led plans.

Thank you for the invitation to provide further information to the Committee.

### ***Response to Request 1: Provide Information about the training provided by PAS to staff and volunteers involved in supporting communities engaging in the planning process***

- All our staff and volunteers involved in providing planning advice to members of the public are required to be chartered planners. We take this and the associated Royal Town Planning Institute Code of Professional Conduct as assurance that all advice provided is competent and professional.
- We offer a range of training and support events for staff and volunteers. These cover planning topics and also other skills development aimed at achieving effective delivery of the range of PAS services.
- We also offer training events in response to frequent enquiry themes to our Advice Service, and also on planning topics relevant to our ethos and remit eg, short-term lets, alterations to domestic properties, and mediation in planning.

- We offer several strands of volunteering opportunities, one of which is volunteering on our Advice Service. Other volunteers offer their time and skills to activities such as training events or community engagement-based projects.

**With regard to point 2: *The Committee would be particularly interested in any training staff and volunteers receive when assisting communities in presenting their views to public inquiries***

- We receive a number of enquires relating to planning appeals generally, and occasionally these may relate to public inquiries on windfarms or other planning topics.
- On this basis, we have not recently provided training relating to public inquiries.
- We monitor the type of advice requests we receive and this informs the training that we provide to our staff and volunteers.

**We would also like to make the following points with reference to the progression of this Petition:**

- We reiterate that we would welcome Scottish Government undertaking research into how support could be provided for communities participating in public inquiries (on windfarms and any other topic).
- We note that no response has been received to the Committee's request to the Local Government Association for evidence on the legislation and procedures relating to the determination windfarm applications in England. We believe it is important that the Committee has access to this perspective before the petition proceeds. Alternative sources of this information may be the Royal Town Planning Institute or a specific local authority.