

Petitioner submission of 3 January 2023

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

On the 6 December 2022, the [UK Government announced](#) that it would consult on proposed changes to national planning policy on onshore wind farm development in England.

It was confirmed that:

- Decisions on onshore wind sites will continue to be made at a local level as these are better to be made by local representatives who know their areas best and are democratically accountable to the local community.
- Under the proposals, planning permission would be dependent on a project being able to demonstrate local support and satisfactorily address any impacts identified by the local community. Local authorities would also have to demonstrate their support for certain areas as being suitable for onshore wind, moving away from rigid requirements for sites to be designated in local plans.
- Previous Government action would be enhanced to make sure local communities are at the heart of decisions on onshore wind. Changes introduced in 2016 that made local councils responsible for onshore wind applications, instead of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime, will remain in place.
- The Government will make sure strong environmental protections first brought in by the Government in 2015 remain, so that valued landscapes such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt are protected.
- The Government will seek views on developing local partnerships for supportive communities, so that those who wish to host new onshore wind infrastructure can benefit from doing so.

It appears the changes in policy towards Onshore Wind Farms in England are quite modest. Essentially this is the same position which was issued in the 2015/16 policy change, when it changed from national to local decision making.

It will be interesting to hear exactly how the “demonstration of local support” is achieved as this was an issue raised previously by this

Committee. It is also interesting to note that “satisfactorily addressing the project's planning impacts as identified by local communities” goes beyond the usual “material planning considerations” awarded consideration in Scotland. This would indicate greater protection and influence for communities which is what this Petition seeks to achieve.

The Scottish Government aspires to give local communities a greater say in the planning process and a greater influence on the future of development in their local area. This can be achieved by supporting our Petition and granting Scottish Communities the same ability to influence planning decisions as our neighbours in England.

Finally, we would refer you to the support this Petition has received from Planning Aid Scotland and RTPI. This is summarised in [Petitioner's submission dated 22nd August](#).