

# **PE1885/R: Make offering Community Shared Ownership mandatory for all windfarm development planning proposals**

## **Minister for Climate Action written submission, 2 May 2025**

Thank you for your letter dated 7 April 2025, regarding your meeting on 2 April 2025 to discuss the petition and request for updates from the Scottish Government on the following points:

- a) Information on when the Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan will be published and whether it will include proposals which build on the approaches being used by offshore wind developers, such as BlueFloat Energy and Nadara, to promote community shared ownership.
- b) Detailed information about the Scottish Government's engagement with the UK Government on community benefit, including shared ownership.
- c) Detail on the Scottish Government's approach to utilising informal mechanisms to encourage community benefit more broadly.

The Scottish Government remains steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that communities, particularly those in rural and island areas, reap the benefits of our clean power revolution across the energy system.

Community benefits and shared ownership opportunities are central to this ambition, alongside the broader economic benefits from the growth of Scotland's renewables and low-carbon industries. These initiatives bring valuable investment into communities from their local renewable energy resources, and the Scottish Government is clear that communities must be supported to seize these opportunities in alignment with their long-term needs and aspirations.

### **Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan and Shared Ownership**

The draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan was published for consultation in 2023, outlining a roadmap of actions to deliver a fair and secure net zero energy system. Since then, significant changes in UK Government energy policy, including the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan in December 2024 and recent court decisions, have emerged. This is a rapidly evolving landscape, and we are taking the necessary time to reflect on these developments before publishing any final strategy.

The Scottish Government continues to advance our commitments to growing shared ownership in Scotland. Enabling communities to invest in commercially owned renewable energy projects supports lasting economic and social benefits. Therefore, we encourage developers to offer shared ownership opportunities as standard on all new onshore renewable energy projects, including repowering and extensions to existing projects. This ambition is supported by Scotland's [Onshore Wind Sector Deal](#) and the commitment to publish a framework of practical approaches to support and encourage community shared ownership models. Our [Community and](#)

[Renewable Energy Scheme \(CARES\)](#) continues to provide support for communities looking to invest in shared ownership, offering free online guidance and resources.

Alongside progress made with onshore wind, the Scottish Government recognises that opportunities for shared ownership of offshore wind developments have the potential to deliver long-term economic and social benefits to Scotland's communities. However, the relative immaturity of the sector, along with the very large scale of many projects, presents challenges around communities' access to finance and capacity to take up potential offers.

In light of increasing interest from both communities and industry in how shared ownership could increase the distribution of wealth generated through offshore wind assets, our recent public consultation on [Community Benefits from Net Zero Energy Developments](#), which closed on 11 April, sought views on the potential for shared ownership opportunities across Scotland's offshore wind pipeline. The evidence gathered through the consultation, and wider work detailed below, will inform a refresh of our national guidance in the latter part of this year.

### UK Government engagement

Scotland's energy system operates within a UK framework of electricity legislation and regulation. We have therefore welcome regular engagement with UK Government Ministers and officials, which ensures Scotland's interests remain in sharp focus as the UK Government considers its approach to community benefits. This has included discussion about new GB-wide guidance on [Community Funds for Transmission Infrastructure](#), and we await further information about the UK Government's plans for an [electricity bills discount scheme](#) for communities living nearest to new electricity transmission infrastructure.

While we await more details on this scheme, we continue to progress actions within devolved powers to raise household incomes and improve energy efficiency across Scotland as well as broader market reform to support consumers and communities. We also continue to press the UK Government to consult on mandating community benefits from onshore net zero technologies.

### Community benefits

Despite powers being reserved to the UK Government, Scotland has made significant progress through a voluntary approach to community benefits, and the Scottish Government continues to leverage all available mechanisms to enhance these opportunities in Scotland to empower communities to benefit from our country's just transition to net zero.

We are reviewing our Good Practice Principles for community benefits from onshore and offshore renewable energy developments to build on this progress. Designed with communities and industry, the current guidance has been instrumental in helping communities secure over £30 million in benefits in the last 12 months alone.

The consultation was supported by a programme of in-person and online engagements with industry, local government, and third sector stakeholders, as well as targeted conversations with communities across Scotland, to ensure we captured a diverse range of knowledge and experience with these arrangements. We received

a high volume of responses to the consultation and will undertake a thorough analysis of the feedback received ahead of publishing a response later this summer.

In addition to the consultation, we have commissioned independent research into the provision of community benefits by different net zero energy technologies. Conducted through ClimateX Change, the research aims to understand the economics of different energy projects and other factors that may influence the delivery of community benefits from our current and future energy system.

I trust the Committee finds this response helpful and are reassured that the Scottish Government places great importance on communities receiving a just and equitable outcome from increased renewables and transmission network development across the UK.

**Alasdair Allan**