

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 11 February 2026
4th Meeting, 2026 (Session 6)

PE1885: Make offering Community Shared Ownership mandatory for all windfarm development planning proposals

Introduction

Petitioner Karen Murphy

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to make Community Shared Ownership a mandatory requirement to be offered as part of all planning proposals for windfarm development.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1885>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 2 April 2025](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Acting Minister for Climate Action and Scottish and Southern Energy Networks.
2. [On 14 January 2026](#), the Committee took evidence on thematic energy issues raised across a number of petitions, including this petition.
3. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
4. The Committee has received new written submissions from the Minister for Climate Action and the Petitioner, which are set out in **Annexe C**.
5. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage](#).
6. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
7. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 19 August 2021](#).
8. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 107 signatures have been received on this petition.

Action

9. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
February 2026

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE1885: Make offering Community Shared Ownership mandatory for all windfarm development planning proposals

Petitioner

Karen Murphy

Date Lodged

19 August 2021

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to make Community Shared Ownership a mandatory requirement to be offered as part of all planning proposals for windfarm development.

Previous action

Residents of Kintyre and Knapdale have engaged with 6 Community Councils who have in turn been in contact with Argyll and Bute Council.

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Fergus Ewing has been approached and representation has also been made to Jenni Minto MSP regarding some of the companies who are refusing shared ownership asking her to email a particular company about their stance. It is understood she is arranging a meeting with Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary, to discuss this.

Background information

Currently, Community Shared Ownership is a recommendation of the revised Scottish Government 'Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments' (2019), but many opportunist developers do not offer shared ownership on agreements to offer fair and effective CSO opportunities to impacted communities.

Because of the unprecedented scale of windfarm development, a piecemeal approach to securing CSO is beyond the scope of small communities. Given that development is a national occurrence, a coherent political response is required which mandates that developers must offer and secure 15% CSO investment. Unless this is in place Government will fail local communities, and will not achieve the target for Community and locally owned energy. Increasingly windfarm developers build windfarms to immediately sell them on to Capital Investment Firms, and, with no requirement to offer CSO, it is a seemingly added and unnecessary complication to their ability to sell, so offers are withheld. This is compounded by subsidies no longer being available.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE1885 on 2 April 2025

The Convener: We return to petition PE1885, lodged by Karen Murphy, which calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to make community shared ownership a mandatory requirement to be offered as part of all planning proposals for wind farm development.

The petition was last considered on 26 June 2024, and, at that time, we agreed to write to the Minister for Energy and the Environment. We have received a response from the Acting Minister for Climate Action, which states that the Scottish Government continues to explore all avenues to enhance the provision of community benefits and shared ownership.

The response highlights the use of devolved tax powers to provide non-domestic rates relief for renewable energy producers. Under the renewable energy generation relief, up to 100 per cent rates relief is offered for those who provide community benefit.

The petitioner's written submission emphasises that that demonstrates the Scottish Government's ability to use tax powers to increase community shared ownership. However, her view is that it is not an effective scheme. She points out that developments with profits of more than £4 million are offered a 2.5 per cent relief in non-domestic rates, and argues that that is not a sufficient incentive for developers.

The minister's response also states that the Scottish Government continues to engage with the UK Government on a range of measures that support communities to benefit from energy transition, including shared ownership and consideration of mandating community benefits.

Fergus Ewing: Gillian Martin has taken a close interest in the petition and, from statements in and outside the chamber, I know that she has a keen interest in pursuing that work.

I am aware of a number of dynamic developments that are taking place at the moment. For example, the Republic of Ireland now mandates community benefit at a rate, in effect, of €8,000 per megawatt. That is compulsory. Here, the £5,000 per megawatt rate is not mandatory because there are no legal powers to mandate it, as has been noted by the Scottish Government.

However, there is movement. Just yesterday, a senior official at Highlands and Islands Enterprise informed me that SSE Transmission is to set up a model of community benefit for upgrades to pylons and infrastructure. That is a new development, and I am keen to find out more about it. In addition, at least one offshore wind developer—BlueFloat Energy, together with Nadara—is considering and promoting community ownership for offshore wind. That is an example that many other projects may wish to follow, so it could have enormous importance.

Finally, coupled with that, I understand that the UK Government is not unsympathetic to some kind of scheme for community ownership, and one wonders whether that might be one of the most practical purposes for funding from Great British Energy,

possibly alongside the Scottish National Investment Bank. HIE has a close interest in taking all of that forward, because much of the activity is in the Highlands and Islands.

Although I appreciate that we are moving towards the end of this session of Parliament, all of those developments—and probably others of which I am unaware—mean that I am keen to write again to the Acting Minister for Climate Action to ask for further information as to when the energy strategy and just transition plan will be published and whether, specifically, it will contain proposals for community ownership. We could also ask for some detail of the work that is being done with the UK Government and for a ministerial statement at some point, perhaps in the autumn.

Community ownership is an idea for which the time has come—interest in it is growing throughout the country, and concern is growing about some aspects, including visual impacts, of renewable energy in Aberdeenshire, the Highlands and many other places south of Scotland. If we do not get on with it now, Scotland and Britain will be missing a trick. I am sorry to go on about it for so long, but I think that there are compelling reasons to keep the petition open and to allow the petitioners the full opportunity to benefit from what seems to be a congenial political environment.

Maurice Golden: I agree with Mr Ewing. I think that it would be useful to ask the Government to tell us in its response about some of the informal engagement mechanisms—Mr Ewing mentioned some of the formal aspects—to encourage overall community benefit. The petition is relatively narrow, but making shared ownership mandatory, although it could affect the asset base for some wind farm developers, could be in the wider scope of community benefit that would meet some of the petitioner's requests. It would be useful to get on record what the overall approach to community benefit in the round would be, particularly as we do not know when the Scottish Government's energy strategy will be published.

The Convener: Mr Ewing and Mr Golden have suggested that we keep the petition open and make inquiries. Is the committee content to keep the petition open on that basis?

Members indicated agreement.

Annexe C: Written submissions

Minister for Climate Action written submission, 2 May 2025

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

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

Petitioner written submission, 16 January 2026

PE1885/S: Make offering Community Shared Ownership mandatory for all windfarm development planning proposals

The petitioner thanks the Minister for the reply. The petitioner would point out to both the Minister and the Petitions Committee that once again the Scottish Government has obfuscated, rather than answer the question, which was “when such changes, as outlined in the submission, to the devolved tax/rate system will be made by the Scottish Government in order that Communities will be able to benefit from the increase in Community Shared Ownership that results”.

Over the **almost 5** years that this petition has been heard, the Scottish Government has admitted that, **contrary** to its repeated mantra that “energy is a reserved matter for Westminster”, it does have the powers to make Community Shared Ownership (CSO) mandatory – specifically:

1. Under its Section 36 powers – in the same way that the English and Welsh Governments used their Section 36 powers to refuse planning permission for any turbine developments over a specified height, it could refuse planning permission for any development that didn’t offer a Scottish Government approved CSO.
2. The Scottish Government has already used these powers when it banned fracking for shale gas in 2017 (even though energy is a reserved policy) and is considering using these powers to similarly block the building of new nuclear reactors in Scotland – counter to the current Westminster energy policy (as suggested in the BBC article “The nuclear power station on the front line of an election battle” from 12/12/2025). Thus it could use these powers to refuse planning permission for any development that didn’t offer a Scottish Government approved CSO.
3. Under its devolved powers to raise new land taxes, via the Scotland Act Part 4A chapter 3 and the Land Registration etc. (Scotland) Act 2012 (see earlier

petitioner replies for details, such as PE1885/N whereby it could mandate that any new title sheet at the registers of Scotland for leases between 3rd party wind farm developers and landowners are required to offer CSO.

4. Under the Renewable Energy Generation Relief (REGR) it could offer a negative tax that via incentives effectively makes CSO mandatory.

To paraphrase Oscar Wilde's character Lady Bracknell, "To lose one set of powers, Minister, may be regarded as misfortune, but to 'lose' all three looks like deliberate carelessness".

The petition's hearing by the Committee on April 2nd 2025 was supported by Community Energy Scotland (CES). CES not only agree that the Scottish Government has the powers to make CSO mandatory, they also point out that the Scottish Government doesn't even follow its own 'best practice' or 'advice' - that when it leases its own land (e.g. FLS) to wind farm developers it often fails to ensure that there is an obligation to offer CSO written into the lease. "Do as I say, not as I do".

Given the support from Community Energy Scotland and the Scottish Government's prior admissions to this committee that it does have the powers to mandate (see above), the petitioner asks that the Committee require the Scottish Government to answer categorically how it will use some, or all, of its powers to mandate CSO. The petitioner would also ask the Committee to make clear to the Scottish Government that an answer that just obfuscates again isn't acceptable (e.g. 'we await the Westminster Government's review of CBF and CSO'). The Petitioner would ask the Committee to seek an assurance from the Scottish Government that **all** leases of public land (FLS etc.) to renewables developers will contain a requirement to offer CSO to the community.

Finally, we'd ask the Committee to ensure that the Petition PE1885 isn't kicked into the long grass by the Scottish Government by the dissolving of Parliament in April.