

Petitioner submission of 12 September 2023

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

On 5 September 2023 the UK Government announced amendments to its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

We wanted to reflect on how these amendments might affect our petition which, among other requests, *calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to increase the ability of communities to influence planning decisions for onshore windfarms by:*

- *adopting English planning legislation for the determination of onshore wind farm developments.*

Scotland Against Spin does not see any significant change in the UK Government's policy and we do not believe it affects this petition.

REASONS

On 17 March 2023, the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee wrote to the Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth with a number of recommendations, including:

“that the Scottish Government should now undertake work to explore the benefits and disadvantages of altering [the 50MW] threshold.”

and:

“the Committee also recommends that Scottish Government explore the scope for planning authorities to determine more applications for onshore windfarm developments.”

Under the new amendments to NPPF, all applications for onshore windfarm developments in England will continue to be determined by planning authorities, irrespective of size.

In a [statement](#) made by Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Michael Gove said *“My Rt Hon Friend the Energy Security and Net Zero Secretary and I continue to believe that decisions on onshore wind are*

best made by local representatives who know their areas. This will ensure decisions are underpinned by democratic accountability.”

The Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee further recommended that the “*Scottish Government explore opportunities to ensure that demonstration of local support is a key material consideration in the decision-making process.*”

[Footnote 54](#) of the amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:

“Except for applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing wind turbines, a planning application for wind energy development involving one or more turbines should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in the development plan or a supplementary planning document; and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been appropriately addressed and the proposal has community support.”

(Please refer to **Weight of Opinion** in [Petitioner’s submission of 9 July 2023](#) for suggestions of how community support should be determined.)

Scotland Against Spin is therefore content that the wording of the petition does not require any adjustment.