

Scottish Government submission of 4 November 2021

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

Thank you for your letter of 7 October about Petition [PE1885: Make offering Community Shared Ownership mandatory for all windfarm development planning proposals, in which the Committee asked whether the Scottish Government could use existing powers in planning to provide incentives for developers to offer community shared ownership.](#)

The Scottish Government's previous reply on this petition included reference to [Shared Ownership of Onshore Renewable Energy Developments](#). As is explained in that document (pages 22 to 24), planning decisions are taken on the basis of the development plan for the area and any other material considerations. Fundamentally, the Town and Country Planning system manages the development and use of land. Questions of land ownership are not generally relevant to planning. Those fundamental aspects of planning affect what constitutes a planning consideration. The good practice guidance therefore indicates, amongst other things, that planning authorities should not seek to secure shared ownership through the use of planning conditions or obligations (see page 24).

The Scottish Government wish to see renewable energy developers consider making offers of ownership to communities as a matter of course. In order to support this ambition the Scottish Government Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) provides support to both developers and communities to help navigate this process. This supportive policy framework has helped to achieve our 2020 target for at least half of new consented schemes to offer shared ownership and forms a key part of helping meeting our targets of 2GW of community and locally owned energy by 2030.

However we are aware that not all communities will opt to take on ownership stakes in developments. Community benefits are a well-established, integral part of renewable energy developments in Scotland, enabling communities to benefit from their local renewable energy resource, as well as helping to foster better relationships with the

renewables sector. In 2019 we published revised Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Development. This year alone, around £22m of community benefits have been delivered to local communities across Scotland.

[Community benefits from onshore renewable energy developments - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)

Through the Bute House Agreement we have committed to exploring how community benefit can be taken into account and given appropriate weight in planning decisions through development of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), a draft of which will be laid in the Scottish Parliament and published for consultation this autumn.

The National Planning Framework is a long term plan for Scotland that sets out where development and infrastructure is needed to support sustainable and inclusive growth. The transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 is a key driver of this work and, as our [NPF4 position statement](#) published in November 2020 set out, we are currently considering priority policy changes to support a spatial strategy for net-zero, including strengthening our support for re-powering and expanding existing wind farms. NPF4 will bring the climate change agenda together with wider considerations including: the need to build resilient communities; support inclusive growth; and create better, greener places.

As the Committee will also be aware the Onshore Wind Policy Statement consultation was launched by the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport on 28th October and we are inviting responses to this until January 2022. Details on the draft statement and the consultation can be found using the following links: [Onshore wind - policy statement refresh 2021: consultative draft - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot); [Onshore Wind Policy Statement - Scottish Government - Citizen Space \(consult.gov.scot\)](https://consult.gov.scot) .

The consultation considers the ambition set out through the Scottish Green Party Agreement for an additional 8-12GW of onshore wind by 2030. A final Onshore Wind Policy Statement will then be published in the summer of 2022 to coincide with NPF4.

I trust this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely

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