

# Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport submission of 7 October 2022

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

Thank you for your letter of 23 September 2022 concerning evidence heard by the Committee in relation to the above petition.

In your letter you ask if the Scottish Government plans to provide additional funding to enable communities to pursue community ownership, and whether the Scottish National Investment Bank could be asked to provide funding for communities for this purpose. I have set out the Scottish Government's response to these points below.

The Scottish Government continues to provide funding to community groups and organisations through our Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES). Since 2010, CARES has offered advice to over 900 organisations and supported over 600 community and locally owned renewable projects throughout Scotland, offering funding of over £58 million to date.

The current CARES contract runs from 1 April 2021 through to 31 March 2025 and continues to help communities across Scotland engage with, participate in and benefit from the transition to net zero. CARES puts a particular focus on supporting communities to work together to address the challenges of heat decarbonisation at a local level, consistent with the Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings Strategy, while also continuing to provide advice and support to community groups and organisations looking to take forward renewables projects, to make the most of community benefit, and to explore offers of shared ownership.

The Scottish Government continues to encourage the renewable energy industry to consider, explore and offer shared ownership opportunities as standard on all new projects, including repowering and extensions to existing projects. The Committee will be aware that we have longstanding Good Practice Principles in place which provide a framework to support the delivery of successful shared ownership

schemes, which we encourage the renewables industry, communities and other stakeholders to use.

CARES also provides support to help communities procure independent advice, including financial and legal advice, which is essential for communities to make an informed decision on whether or not a shared ownership opportunity is right for them.

We are also working with the Scottish National Investment Bank and Local Energy Scotland to assess the pipeline of shared ownership opportunities – alongside other appropriate community energy projects – and the ways in which those opportunities could be financed.

The Committee may also be interested to note that we will commence the review of our existing Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Offshore Renewable Energy Developments later this month and plan to consult on the draft guidance next year. We will ensure that we build any relevant lessons from this process into future updates to the equivalent guidance for onshore renewables.

I hope the Committee finds this response helpful.