

All Heads of Planning



Our ref: A12537067  
11 November 2015

Dear Colleague,

## Energy Targets and Scottish Planning Policy

On 22 June this year Amber Rudd, UK Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, made a statement to the UK Parliament stating that there is enough onshore wind in the pipeline to meet the 11-13GW of electricity from onshore wind by 2020. This statement was made in the context of the UK Government's decision to bring an early closure to the Renewable Obligation subsidy scheme. The statement went on to confirm that community led wind energy remained supported and was clear that onshore wind is an important part of the current and future low-carbon energy mix.

I am writing to you to re-emphasise that the Scottish Government's Scottish Planning Policy (2014) and Electricity Generation Policy Statement (2013) set out the Scottish Government's current position on on-shore wind farms and that this remains the case.

The Scottish Government's target is to generate at least the equivalent of 100% of gross electricity consumption from renewables by 2020. The Electricity Generation Policy Statement is clear that this target is a statement of intent and that it is known Scotland has the potential resource to deliver and exceed it.

Scottish Planning Policy on delivering heat and electricity is clear that the planning system should support the transformational change to a low carbon economy, consistent with national objectives and targets, including the 100% target mentioned above. This does not place a cap on the support for renewable energy developments, including on-shore wind once the target has been reached.

We expect development plans to continue to provide spatial frameworks for onshore wind in accordance with the approach in Scottish Planning Policy and that individual decisions be informed by the relevant development plan policies, themselves informed by the considerations set out in paragraph 169 of Scottish Planning Policy.



Whilst the ownership of any development is not a material consideration in determining the acceptability of the development in planning terms, in National Planning Framework 3 and the Electricity Generation Policy Statement the Scottish Government commits to achieving at least 500 megawatts of renewable energy in community and local ownership by 2020. National Planning Framework 3 paragraph 3.24 states ‘Local and community ownership and small-scale generation can have a lasting impact on rural Scotland, building businesses and community resilience and providing alternative sources of income. Collectively the potential benefits of community energy projects are nationally significant.’

Scottish Planning Policy paragraph 169 is clear that net economic impact including the community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities are relevant material considerations in the determination of planning applications for renewable energy applications, including on-shore wind. It is our expectation that such considerations are addressed in the determination of applications for renewable energy technologies.

While the Scottish Government’s 500 MW target for community and locally owned renewables has recently been met, we will be reviewing it to maintain momentum, and our support for community and local ownership remains undiminished . The Minister for Business, Enterprise and Tourism recently launched the ‘Scottish Government Good Practice Principles for Shared Ownership of Onshore Renewable Energy Developments’. This is an annex to the Community Benefit Good Practice Principles for Onshore Renewable Energy Developments. The guidance is based on the policy position of National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy. It is designed to assist planning authorities, communities and developers in considering a shared ownership renewable energy project within the planning system. I encourage you to become familiar with this guidance and highlight it to communities and renewable energy developers in your area. Local Energy Scotland assists communities and rural businesses through a variety of means including advice and support to access funding through CARES and and (in the case of communities) the Renewable Energy Investment Fund. If you or your colleagues are unsure whether the community involvement in a proposed development is meaningful you should consult Local Energy Scotland for advice: <http://www.localenergyscotland.org/>

You can download the good practice principles guidance from the Local Energy Scotland website at: <http://www.localenergyscotland.org/good-practice/>.

I trust this information clarifies that despite changes to UK policy the Scottish Government’s policy remains unchanged. Our policy supports new on-shore renewable energy developments, including onshore wind farms and particularly community-owned and shared ownership schemes. This policy support continues in the situation where renewable energy targets have been reached.

Yours faithfully,



**John McNairney**

Chief Planner

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