

## **Onshore Wind – Planning**

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### **Overview**

The Government made a manifesto commitment to decentralise decision making on new onshore wind farms as it believes new wind farms should only get the go-ahead if supported by local people. Clause 79 of the Energy Bill complements changes made by the Department for Communities and Local Government to change the law so that local authorities are the primary decision-makers for planning applications for new onshore wind farms. In future, local authorities in England and Wales (or potentially the Welsh Ministers in the case of Wales) will be the primary decision-makers for all new onshore wind projects including those with a capacity greater than 50MW.

### **Policy Rationale**

We have seen many examples of local community groups vigorously opposing wind farm developments and that is why we are implementing these measures. We want to see local communities having a greater say on the development of onshore wind in their area.

### **Provisions in the Energy Bill**

The Government is committed to ensuring that only wind farms that are supported by the local community come forward in the planning process. As such, the legislative changes proposed in the Energy Bill assist in transferring decision making powers from the Secretary of State to Local Planning Authorities for planning decisions on large onshore wind applications. Most of the work in transferring the powers is done by secondary legislation which DECC will be laying in Mid-January.

The measures included within the Energy Bill will work in tandem with the new considerations set out in a written statement by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on the 18 June 2015. The guidance to be applied to applications for proposed onshore wind farms in England states that local planning authorities should only grant planning permission for onshore wind farm applications if:

- the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan;
- and that following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.