

**CEN briefing note: onshore wind**

- **In 2022, more wind turbines were built onshore in Ukraine than in England.** The de facto ban on new onshore wind in England meant that just two were installed in 2022, compared to 19 in Ukraine. The UK **currently** has just over 15GW of installed onshore wind capacity across over 2,600 projects, the majority of which (63%) are in Scotland. Onshore turbines provide around 11% of the UK's energy supply.
- **The UK needs to quintuple solar and double onshore wind power to hit the government target of a decarbonised power system by 2035.** Almost **half** of all major infrastructure projects have been delayed at the planning stage since 2017. The delays and blocks for onshore wind in the English planning system cost billpayers over **£1.5 billion** in 2022.
- **The majority of rural residents would support having a wind or solar farm within three miles of their house, but infrastructure still gets blocked at the local level.** The opposition to onshore wind in the last decade can be attributed to **poor community engagement** from some developers: the sector's current approach to community benefits is a postcode lottery, and some projects left residents feeling that even modest concerns were not taken into account. Despite this, onshore renewables installations continue to be popular: **a majority** of those living in rural areas would support a wind farm being built which was visible from their home.
- **The Conservatives would stand to gain politically by enabling new onshore wind deployment where there is community consent.** Onshore wind is **popular** with Conservative voters and the wider public - both nationally, and **in their local area** - despite a vocal minority opposing new projects. A **majority** of both the public and 2019 Conservative voters would support a new onshore wind farm within 3 miles of their home. Polling shows that MPs underestimate the level of support for onshore wind among the public: just **19%** believe more of their constituents would oppose a new wind farm in their area than oppose one, when in reality **77%** would support it. **60%** of 2019 Conservative voters in particular say they would 'think less' of their local MP if they campaigned against the development of a local onshore wind or solar farm.
- **Community compensation will be vital to getting low-carbon energy projects over the line in time to meet our net zero commitments.** Projects such as pylons, solar farms, and onshore wind farms are being held up in the planning system. Objections **often** arise from concerns around construction, noise pollution, harm to property values, and impacts on views and sightlines. Compensation for putting up with disruption could decrease the number of objections and increase approval rates. Extending benefits to include

generation projects like onshore wind and solar farms will help speed up their consenting process and bring cheap, clean, homegrown power online sooner.

- **The Government has somewhat relaxed the strict planning restrictions on onshore wind.** By amending the National Planning Policy Framework, projects no longer need to be designated in a local plan or get unanimous local support to be built. More flexibility has been introduced following CEN MP campaigning on the Levelling Up and Energy Acts. The new footnote also makes it easier to replace old turbines with newer, more efficient ones.
- **The Government's [Connections Action Plan](#) is aimed at cutting the time it takes low-carbon projects to connect to the electricity grid.** We have [more than enough](#) low-carbon generation and storage projects in the pipeline to meet our net zero targets, but these are being delayed by up to 10 years due to gridlock in the queue and planning obstructions. Published in November 2023, the plan will make the connection process more efficient and better allocate resources to projects that are more likely to go ahead.