

Permitted development rights for onshore wind turbines in England

Closes 10 June

Consultation description

The government is seeking views on several proposals for permitted development rights (PDRs) for onshore wind in England.

The government is proposing to not change existing domestic PDRs that apply to households or introduce a new PDR for repowering or community energy projects. However, we are seeking further views and feedback on further changes that could support these types of development.

We are also consulting on a new PDR that would allow small-scale, non-domestic wind turbines to be installed without the need for a planning application, subject to a set of conditions and limitations, to support small-scale onshore wind deployment. By providing planning flexibilities for low-impact, small-scale installations, the proposed PDR aims to support a range of non-domestic settings including businesses, farms, and public sector organisations to reduce their bills, become more energy independent and decarbonise their operations.

Through this consultation, we are seeking feedback on the scope and design of the proposed PDR. The consultation focuses on the types of sites a PDR should apply to, proposed limitations and conditions to control impacts, and the role of local planning authorities. We want to ensure that any changes are proportionate and effective, enabling appropriate development while managing potential risks and impacts.

Question Number	Question	POS response
1a	Do you agree that a new PDR should be introduced for a wind turbine in non-domestic settings?	POS supports in principle the introduction of a new PDR for small-scale, non-domestic onshore wind turbines to facilitate microgeneration.
1b	Please explain your answer.	This is a proportionate way to encourage renewable energy generation where impacts are limited and manageable.
2	Q2a: Do you agree that this PDR should be limited to a single turbine within the boundary of the curtilage? Q2b: Please explain your answer.	Yes. Allowing a single turbine within the curtilage of a non-domestic site is reasonable and provides a clear, easily enforceable parameter.
3	Q3a: Do you agree with a maximum 30 metre tip height for the non-domestic wind turbine?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A maximum 30-metre tip height is appropriate and comparable to typical telecommunications masts.• A maximum 200m² rotor swept area is also acceptable.

	<p>Q3b: Please explain your answer.</p> <p>Q3c: Do you agree with a maximum rotor swept area of 200m²?</p> <p>Q3d: Please explain your answer.</p>	<p>These thresholds strike a balance between enabling meaningful energy generation and managing potential impacts.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Q4a: Do you think that a PDR should facilitate the installation of larger turbines on a site?</p> <p>Q4b: Please explain your answer, including any evidence, examples or case studies that inform your view.</p> <p>Q4c: What types of impacts (positive or negative) might arise from allowing larger turbines to be installed under a PDR?</p> <p>Q4d: Do you think that a PDR should facilitate the installation of multiple turbines on a site?</p> <p>Q4e: Please explain your answer, including any evidence, examples or case studies that inform your view.</p> <p>Q4f: What types of impacts (positive or negative) might arise from allowing multiple turbines to be installed under a PDR?</p> <p>Q4g: If you answered 'yes' to Q4a or Q4d, are there specific criteria the policy could introduce to help determine when more than one turbine or larger turbines may be appropriate?</p> <p>Q4h: If you answered 'yes' to Q4a or Q4d, what criteria, safeguards, additional requirements or approaches should apply to ensure that the</p>	<p>4a) NO</p> <p>4b) The Planning Officers Society does not support the introduction of Permitted Development rights for larger or multiple wind turbines. The scale and potential impacts of such development mean that any PDR would require extensive, highly technical and site-specific criteria to function effectively. This would risk creating a regime that is overly complex, difficult to interpret, and ultimately less transparent for both applicants and LPAs. Given the wide variation in landscape, environmental sensitivity, amenity considerations and cumulative effects, it is more proportionate, robust and accountable to assess proposals for larger or multiple turbines through the normal planning application process. This ensures that impacts can be properly evaluated, communities can engage meaningfully, and decisions can be made in a clear and evidence-based way.</p> <p>4c) Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual effects, which will vary depending on topography, landscape sensitivity, and cumulative context. • Impacts on scientific or environmental interests, depending on site characteristics. • Amenity impacts, including noise, shadow flicker and outlook, which require site-specific assessment. • Aviation and radar considerations, which often require bespoke consultation. These impacts reinforce

	<p>impacts of allowing more than one turbine or larger turbines could be effectively managed?</p>	<p>the need for case-by-case assessment rather than a blanket PDR.</p> <p>Q4d) No</p> <p>Q4f) As with larger turbines, introducing a PDR for multiple turbines would require extensive and highly technical criteria to cover the wide range of site-specific circumstances. This would risk creating a PDR that is overly complex, difficult to apply consistently, and less transparent for applicants and LPAs. The normal planning application process provides a more proportionate and effective route for assessing cumulative, landscape and environmental impacts.</p> <p>Q4g) Not applicable, as we do not support introducing PDRs for larger or multiple turbines.</p> <p>Q4h) Not applicable</p>
5	<p>Q5a: Do you agree with the proposed list of areas where the PDR will not apply?</p> <p>Q5b: What, if anything, would you change about the proposed list of excluded areas?</p>	<p>We agree with the proposed list of areas where the PDR should not apply.</p>
6	<p>Q6a: Do you agree with the proposed additional condition to minimise visual impact on nearby heritage sites and important landscapes?</p> <p>Q6b: Please explain your answer.</p> <p>Q6c: Do you think the proposed conditions are sufficient to prevent impacts from turbines installed on land nearby or adjacent to designated habitat sites?</p> <p>Q6d: Please explain your answer and provide any evidence you have.</p>	<p>We do not support the introduction of prior approval for siting, visual impact, heritage impact, or habitat considerations.</p> <p>Prior approval introduces an additional bureaucratic layer that is difficult for the public to understand and undermines the clarity that PDRs are intended to provide. If Government considers that impacts in certain areas require assessment, then a more transparent and proportionate approach would be to exclude those areas from PDR entirely.</p> <p>A cordon sanitaire (buffer) around sensitive heritage or landscape designations would be clearer and more enforceable than a prior approval process.</p>

	<p>Q6e: Do you think additional conditions are necessary to mitigate radar interference from nearby turbines?</p> <p>Q6f: Please explain your answer and provide any evidence you have.</p>	<p>Q6e) We have no specific views on radar interference conditions</p>
7	<p>Q7a: Do you agree with requiring a buffer distance of the tip height + 10% from the boundary of the curtilage?</p> <p>Q7b: Please explain your answer.</p> <p>Q7c: Do you agree with requiring a buffer distance of ten times the rotor diameter from the curtilage of protected buildings?</p> <p>Q7d: Please explain your answer.</p>	<p>The proposed buffer distances appear reasonable:</p> <p>Tip height + 10% from the curtilage boundary;</p> <p>Ten times rotor diameter from protected buildings.</p> <p>These provide simple, measurable safeguards.</p>
8	<p>Q8a: Do you think this PDR should include a separation distance between turbines?</p> <p>Q8b: Please explain your answer. If you have said yes, please also provide views on what you consider to be an appropriate separation distance in metres.</p>	<p>Yes. A separation distance is necessary to ensure appropriate spacing and avoid cumulative impacts.</p>
9	<p>Q9a: Do you agree that non-domestic wind turbine installations should be certified to the relevant MCS standards?</p> <p>Q9b: Please explain your answer.</p> <p>Q9c: Do you agree that turbines meeting an equivalent standard should be allowed to be installed under this PDR?</p>	<p>Q9a) We support requiring installations to meet MCS standards.</p> <p>Q9c) Yes, Turbines meeting equivalent standards should also be permitted to ensure flexibility and avoid unnecessary restriction of product choice.</p>

	<p>Q9d: Please explain your answer.</p> <p>Q9e: What schemes or standards, if any, would you consider as equivalent certification to MCS?</p>	
10	<p>Q10a: Do you agree with the proposed condition on use of non-reflective materials on blades?</p> <p>Q10b: Please explain your answer.</p> <p>Q10c: Do you agree with the proposed condition on removal of the turbine and associated infrastructure when no longer needed?</p> <p>Q10d: Please explain your answer.</p>	<p>Yes, the use of non-reflective blade materials is supported.</p> <p>Q10c) Yes POS support the requirement to remove turbines and associated infrastructure when no longer needed through conditions, though it may place enforcement burdens on LPAs.</p>
11	<p>Q11a: Do you agree with including prior approval in respect of siting, impact of the development on the amenity of the area, and land contamination risks?</p> <p>Q11b: Please explain your answer.</p>	<p>We do not support the introduction of prior approval for these matters. As noted in response to Q6a, prior approval adds unnecessary bureaucracy and undermines the clarity of PDRs. If impacts are a concern, PDR should not apply.</p>
12	<p>Q12: Are there any other matters or likely impacts that should be considered if a new PDR is introduced for non-domestic wind turbines?</p>	<p>No additional comments.</p>
13	<p>Q13: Do you have any comments on the relationship between EIAs and PDRs for small-scale, non-domestic wind turbine installations?</p>	<p>No comments.</p>
14	<p>Q14a: Do you think government should make changes to existing PDRs for small-scale turbines in domestic settings?</p>	<p>No comments.</p>

	<p>Q14b: Please explain your answer. If you have said yes, please include changes you think government should make.</p>	
15	<p>Q15a: Do you think government should introduce a new PDR for repowering projects?</p> <p>Q15b: Please explain your answer.</p> <p>Q15c: Do you have views on how the planning system in England could be improved for repowering (or life extension) projects, beyond changes to the NPPF?</p>	<p>Q15 a) and b) There is no reason in principle why PDR could not apply to repowering projects, provided clear parameters are set.</p> <p>Q15c) No further comments on wider planning system improvements.</p>
	<p>Q16a: Do you think government should introduce a new PDR for community energy projects?</p> <p>Q16b: Please explain your answer.</p> <p>Q16c: Do you have views on how the planning system in England could be improved for community energy projects, beyond changes to the NPPF?</p>	<p>POS supports the introduction of a Permitted Development Right (PDR) for community energy projects. It is reasonable and proportionate to provide communities pursuing locally supported renewable energy schemes with a level of flexibility comparable to that already available to commercial energy developers.</p> <p>Q16c) clearer national guidance on the definition and scope of “community energy”, streamlined validation requirements for small-scale schemes, and proportionate information expectations that reflect the lower risk and impact profile of such projects.</p>
	<p>Q17: Do you have suggestions for any other circumstances where a PDR could be used for onshore wind installations?</p>	<p>No further comments or evidence to provide.</p>
	<p>Q18: Do you have any further comments on the proposals in this consultation?</p>	<p>No further comments or evidence to provide.</p>
	<p>Q19: Do you have any further evidence or data to share?</p>	<p>No further comments or evidence to provide.</p>
	<p>Q20a: Do you think that the changes proposed in this consultation could give rise to any impacts on people who</p>	<p>We have no comments on potential impacts on people with protected characteristics.</p>

	<p>share a protected characteristic (Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage or Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or Belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation)?</p> <p>Q20b: Please explain your answer.</p>	

Conclusion

Overall, we support the introduction of a clear, proportionate PDR for small-scale, non-domestic wind turbines. However, we strongly caution against the use of prior approval, which risks creating confusion and administrative burden. Where impacts require assessment, the more transparent approach is to exclude sensitive areas from PDR and rely on the established planning application process.