

Lower bills for farmers, schools and factories

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Farmers, schools and manufacturers could soon cut their energy bills by installing small onshore wind turbines without needing planning permission.

- Farmers, factories and schools as well as public sector organisations could soon be able to install small onshore wind turbines in England without needing to apply for planning permission
- Proposals would enable farmers, businesses and schools to reduce their bills, while protecting them against volatile fossil fuel markets
- Another landmark step in delivering the clean power mission and reviving the onshore wind industry, after years of neglect under the de facto ban in England

Farmers, schools and manufacturers could soon cut their energy bills by installing small onshore wind turbines without needing planning permission.

New government proposals today (Wednesday 18 March) would allow businesses and public sector organisations to install one turbine up to 30 metres – no bigger than an oak tree – without submitting planning proposals, making it faster and cheaper to generate clean power on site.

Until now, planning regulations and high planning costs have stopped many small wind projects before they began – even where they made clear financial sense. Removing this barrier gives organisations certainty to invest, while keeping strong safeguards to protect landscapes and local communities.

Proposals come as the government publishes its first ever land use framework – which shows decisively that land can be multifunctional for food production, clean energy, food security and nature restoration, supporting farmers to diversify and remain profitable in the face of extreme weather and market shocks.

The current conflict in the Middle East shows the only route to energy sovereignty for the UK is to end its dependence on fossil fuel markets and accelerate the transition to clean homegrown power.

Onshore wind is one of the cheapest and quickest energy technologies to build, and by removing barriers, the government will help farmers, schools and factories to build the clean homegrown power that they need to protect themselves against volatile fossil fuel markets.

The proposals follow the government securing the largest onshore wind project in England for a decade during its record-breaking renewables auction, after years of neglect, and at a cost far lower than new gas power stations.

Energy Minister Michael Shanks said:

By allowing farmers, schools and businesses to build a single small onshore wind turbine – no larger than an oak tree – without planning permission, we are giving them the tools to lower their bills and make the best use of their land.

In the midst of uncertain global markets, the only way for households and businesses to

have certainty is to invest in clean homegrown power such as onshore wind, one of the cheapest and quickest forms of energy to build.

This also comes as Great British Energy and the government through their rooftop solar scheme save up to an estimated combined £220 million for around 250 schools and colleges over the lifetime of the solar panels, taking pressure off finances and securing more money to be reinvested in classrooms.

Currently, permitted development rights for onshore wind in England apply only to small domestic turbines with strict height and size limits.

The new proposals would extend these rights to non-domestic premises, making it faster and simpler for organisations to generate clean electricity on site where key siting and safety conditions are met.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/lower-bills-for-farmers-schools-and-factories>