

Unified Statement of the Convention of Community Councils

This convention supported by xx Community Councils, collectively representing over (up to 400,000) residents in (South of Scotland) area:

- Recognises the impact of climate change on our planet and the urgency of acting to address and mitigate that.
- Supports the notion of a Just Transition, which empowers communities and protects the environment, bringing greater ownership and control of energy into the hands of local communities.
- Demands greater recognition and engagement of those communities most affected by the national strategy for energy generation, storage, transmission and distribution.
- Opposes unnecessary over-industrialisation of rural communities and greenfield sites and the exclusively developer-led mechanisms for expanding energy generation and storage.
- Calls for our elected members to urgently support and protect our communities at a national level, enhancing community voice at a local level, strengthening local authority planning powers for local matters, and making the processes and outputs of the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) transparent.
- Calls upon the Scottish Government to undertake a Planning Inquiry Commission of all major energy generation or storage infrastructure developments in the pipeline (to include data centres and major heat-producing industrial processes) to review the impact of the current planning processes and systems on urban and rural communities, by ensuring proper, meaningful and inclusive cumulative impact assessments are undertaken¹.
- Calls for the Scottish Government to immediately review ECU operating practice in light of NESO's Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) moratorium which demonstrates that process has over-consented BESS capacity for 2030 four times over and for 2050 more than three times over.
- Calls on the Scottish Government to require ECU and local authority planning processes to take NESO capacity guidance into consideration for all energy infrastructure planning and consenting processes.
- Calls for a national infrastructure-led process drawing on the NESO Regional Energy Strategic Planning (RESP) process to identify national and regional need for all energy infrastructure developments, followed by a local-led process involving communities to identify the best sites locally to meet the regional and national need.

¹ This should be based on the NESO Transmission Entry Capacity register of contracted connections, not only on individual planning applications.