



## PRESS RELEASE

# Majority of Brits would welcome onshore wind over nuclear in their community, according to a new YouGov poll for UK100

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- **Three in five people (61%) would prefer onshore wind in their community over nuclear (23%) if asked to choose**
- **Onshore wind enjoys backing across regions, generations and political divides — no demographic backs nuclear over onshore wind**
- **The poll was conducted after the UK Government published its new Energy Security Strategy**
- **The strategy prioritised nuclear over onshore wind development**

People across the UK would welcome onshore wind in their community over nuclear, according to a new YouGov poll.

The poll, commissioned by UK100, comes just days after the Government published its new Energy Security Strategy.

The strategy saw a pivot towards nuclear power and limited ambition on onshore wind.

When asked (between 11 and 12 April) whether they would prefer onshore wind or nuclear power in their community, more than three in five people (61%) said they would welcome onshore wind. Only one in five (23%) preferred nuclear power.

Every demographic and region prefers onshore wind to nuclear by a significant margin.

UK100 is the only network of local leaders across the UK committed to ambitious action on Net Zero and clean air.

Responding to the findings, Polly Billington, Chief Executive of UK100, says:

"The British people know that onshore wind is the quickest, cheapest and cleanest way to boost our energy security and reduce our reliance on Russian gas. It is also an industry that will bring almost 30,000 high-quality jobs to the UK by



2030. The results of this poll aren't surprising.”

“We work closely with local leaders across the UK who are ready to harness local support for onshore wind. But they need clear direction from the government on unblocking an effective ban on onshore wind that has seen a 97% decline in projects being granted planning permission between 2016 and 2021 compared to 2009 - 2014.”

“While not surprising, the results are significant. It has been reported that Kwasi Kwarteng and Boris Johnson had originally planned to support a massive UK onshore wind revival. But after apparent inter-cabinet wrangling, the final Energy Security Strategy rowed back on those ambitions. This polling proves Boris and Kwasi should have stuck to their guns — the public is lukewarm on nuclear power in their community but is ready to welcome onshore wind farms across the country. And local authorities are poised and eager to deliver it.”

Caroline Jackson, leader of UK100 member Lancaster City Council, adds:

“We welcome the findings of the UK100 survey. Government needs to react at speed to the immediate need for our own affordable energy generation. People and businesses are suffering while government puts its faith in the slow and unpopular nuclear option.”

“The positive findings by UK100 have come as a pleasant surprise. If government signals a change of attitude, we look forward to testing out the potential for onshore wind in Lancaster district alongside other safe, low carbon generation. Our overriding aim must be to reach our target of being carbon net zero by 2030.”

Gina Dowding, Cabinet Member for Planning and Place Making at UK100 member Lancaster City Council, says:

“The British public are desperate for urgent action on the cost of living crisis now. We know that onshore wind could be brought online really quickly which would seriously tackle soaring energy costs and the climate emergency.”

“It is disappointing that the Government shies away from the leadership in areas it is most needed.”

Lezley Picton, leader of UK100 member Shropshire Councils, says:

“I support the principle of on-shore wind power production where this meets national and local planning policy. Shropshire Council will continue to ensure that



we look at the benefits of proposals against their impacts, especially on landscape character and visual impact. Notably, and again following national policy, development for wind power must have the backing of the local community, which is why we believe there are wider opportunities through neighbourhood planning for communities to promote and have a stake in their own localised energy production.”

“Whilst the views of the poll in themselves do not change the approach to determining proposals for on-shore wind power locally, I will watch with interest to see if this leads to any change in national planning policy on the matter in due course”.

Ian Nellins, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Natural Assets and the Green Economy at UK100 member Shropshire Council, says:

“The catastrophic effects of climate change are being felt globally and we have a responsibility to invest in clean, modern and resilient power generation systems, but we must also pay attention to where these sites are installed so as not to cause further damage to our environment.”

“This in turn will promote growth and sustainable economies and stability in the pricing markets.”

Lucy Nethsingha, leader of UK100 member Cambridgeshire County Council, says:

“I am pleased UK100 has done this work. It is important to demonstrate to government that onshore wind has widespread support across many ages and demographics. It is the fastest and cheapest way to increase our access to clean energy, and the current rules need to change.”

“Councils should be able to work with their local communities to understand how to use the amazing resources we have in this Country to tackle the climate emergency most effectively.”

“We are seeing huge growth in solar power in and around Cambridgeshire, but this means reducing the capacity for agricultural production, and is also dependent on daylight. More wind power would give us more resilience in our renewable supply, but the current regulations prevent us from even exploring options.”

Rachel Coxcoon, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning at UK100 member Cotswold District Council, says:



"As someone who has worked in community-based renewable energy projects for over 15 years, these results tally with what I regularly see in community engagement and research activities; the British public support renewable energy in their communities when they see opportunities for community involvement and community benefit, supported by strong planning frameworks that allow for genuine local control over what happens where."

"What local government needs now from Westminster is the power and funding to help communities make the sort of ambitious Local Plans that will deliver on this. A renewable energy revolution that puts communities at its heart could transform the relationship between people and the energy system, accelerating the UK's transition to a climate-friendly future."

"Here at CDC, we are updating our Local Plan to make it Green to the Core. Our recent consultation asked a range of questions on renewable energy, and we'll use the responses to craft a positive policy framework for renewable energy. But many local authorities still have plans that are silent on this issue, and no real intention to change this; Government must now provide support and impetus to all local authorities to create the right policy framework for renewable energy in their area."

Polly Billington concludes:

"While the recent strategy left the door open for onshore wind in supportive communities, I hope this polling shows local leaders and the Government that those communities exist across the country. Brits are ready for an onshore wind revival."

## ***ENDS***

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## **More information from the poll**

The poll finds the majority of all Conservative voters support onshore wind (50% against 38% who prefer nuclear) while almost three-quarters of Labour voters back onshore wind over nuclear (74% vs 12%).

Urban and rural residents also overwhelmingly back onshore wind over nuclear power.



While Scottish people support onshore wind by the biggest margin (69% vs 16%) three in five voters across London, the South, Midlands and Wales, the North and Northern Ireland back onshore wind over nuclear (59%, 61%, 58%, 60% and 61%, respectively).

Remain supporters and Brexit backers also agree on onshore wind (73% of Remain voters and 51% of Brexit voters support onshore wind over nuclear).

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,842 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 11th - 12th April 2022. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

### **More information on onshore wind**

According to the Government's own analysis, prices of renewables have been consistently decreasing, the price of onshore wind has dropped dramatically by 50% since 2013.

According to researchers at BloombergNEF, energy from new onshore wind-farms is less than half the price of energy from gas stations that are already built and running. With offshore wind it's less than two-thirds of the price.

The researchers expect the price of gas to drop slightly next year, so it will be a similar cost to offshore wind again, before rising again through the rest of the decade while wind continues to fall. Gas will remain more expensive than onshore wind throughout.

Other energy analysts, at consultancy firm LCP, say they think the price of wind energy will drop to about a quarter of the price of gas energy in 2023.

The cost of nuclear power is about twice as high per unit of electricity as onshore wind.

Large onshore wind farms can be built within a timeframe of one to two years while nuclear power can take decades to install.

### **About UK100**

UK100 is a network of the most ambitious local leaders working towards Net Zero as soon as possible but no later than 2045. We help them collaborate to take decisive action in their communities.

Our members represent more than 37 million people in towns, cities and counties across the UK.

We facilitate knowledge-sharing between members, partnership-building and leadership mentoring. And support them to harness their collective power to affect vital national change.



Warm homes, affordable energy, clean air, and healthy landscapes make thriving communities.

And UK100 members have pledged to deliver a Net Zero future that delivers for people and planet.

[UK100.org](https://www.uk100.org)