UK Government

A National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation, EN-7: Government Response

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

November 2025

Territorial extent

This consultation relates to the exercise of powers in England and Wales. Energy policy is generally a matter reserved to UK Ministers but the powers relevant to this consultation do not apply in Scotland and Northern Ireland because the legal power to consent to the construction of electricity generating stations more than 50 Megawatt (MW) of capacity has been executively devolved to Scottish Ministers and is also devolved in Northern Ireland. Additionally, the Wales Act 2017 gives Welsh Ministers the responsibility to consent the construction of electricity generating stations with a generating capacity between 10 MW and 350 MW.

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1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Nuclear has a crucial role to play in powering Britain's clean energy future and will help to make the UK a Clean Energy Superpower as part of the Prime Minister's Plan for Change.

1.1.2 The new National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation, EN-7, will be a key part of the planning process for any new nuclear project, whether as a relevant National Policy Statement for an application for Development Consent, or as a potential Material Consideration in determining another type of planning application for nuclear infrastructure development. This National Policy Statement will complement the overarching National Policy Statement for Energy, EN-1, by setting out nuclear specific criteria.

1.2 Scope of the consultation

1.2.1 The consultation launched in February 2025 included the draft National Policy Statement on nuclear energy generation, called EN-7, and concentrated on ensuring it is fit for purpose. This was done by setting out the overall approach to EN-7 and the assessment criteria that will inform a decision on whether to grant Development Consent for nuclear infrastructure, and our approach to aiding implementation by developers. The criteria are divided into three categories:

- *Factors Influencing Site Selection* – Ensuring development consent is only granted for nuclear infrastructure development on suitable land;
- *Technical Considerations* – Ensuring development consent is only granted for nuclear infrastructure development where there are reasonable grounds to believe it is viable; and
- *Impacts* – Ensuring impacts on relevant communities and the environment are managed.

1.2.2 We have carefully considered all responses received, and appreciate the time, effort and expertise invested by all respondents in their feedback. This insight has been hugely valuable when considering the draft EN-7 and wider policies for supporting nuclear development. The government response to the changes to the draft EN-7 proposed in response to the consultation are outlined in sections 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8 of this document.

1.2.3 In some instances, the responses received were relevant to a different question within the consultation, or did not directly answer any specific question. In the former case, the points raised have been addressed under the most appropriate question. Where the responses addressed broader points than those raised under an individual question, these have been addressed in section 1.5 of this document which addresses overarching considerations. All feedback relevant to the draft EN-7 was carefully considered whether or not it addressed a specific consultation question.

1.2.4 The small number of points made by respondents which fell outside the scope of the consultation on the draft EN-7 are not addressed in this government response.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The consultation paper was published online alongside a link to a consultation survey, which allowed respondents to respond to the consultation via Citizen Space. The option was provided to respondents to respond by email or post. Overall, 77 consultation responses were received, 56 via Citizen Space (73% of responses) and 21 by email (27% of responses).

1.3.2 Respondents were able to select one main interest group they considered applied to them. Further interests could be recorded in the free text box but throughout the consultation, data will be presented, broken down and analysed by the main interest group selected in the closed aspect to this question, only. There has been no verification or scrutiny of the self-selections respondents made.

1.3.3 Email and postal responses received by the Department were manually added to citizen space; email, postal, and responses submitted through Citizen Space were then extracted together, as a file of responses. Where possible the responses were categorised into the relevant question so these could be reviewed alongside the Citizen Space responses.

1.3.4 The consultation survey structure included closed-ended responses whereby respondents could choose from a pre-defined selection of answers, and open-ended questions where respondents could populate free text boxes. Respondents could only choose one answer for closed-ended responses: Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly disagree and Not enough information for questions 1, 2, 4, and 5; and Yes, No, Unsure, Not enough information or Other for questions 3, 7 and 8.

Questions 6 and 9 were open-ended questions only. Where respondents did not provide an answer, theses were recorded as Not Answered.

1.3.5 A manual review of the questions with open-ended components was completed. The manual review of open-ended questions resulted in responses being grouped into themes. Responses may belong to more than one theme, and therefore the number of themed responses may be greater than the number of total responses to a question. The assignment of themes to open-ended questions underwent multiple stages of review to ensure fairness and accuracy.

1.4 Executive Summary

1.4.1 We received 77 responses to the consultation. The largest single group of respondents was 38 nuclear and/or energy industry bodies and experts, followed by 19 responses from non-government organisations, members of the general public, and environmental advocates, 14 responses from local authorities, and six from statutory consultees.

1.4.2 A majority of respondents, (45, 58%), expressed support for nuclear power, for reasons including the impact of nuclear power on economic growth and jobs, and its supply of low carbon, secure and reliable energy. A minority of respondents (23, 30%), did not express support or opposition towards nuclear energy. A small minority of respondents (9, 12%) expressed opposition to nuclear for reasons including its cost, environmental impacts, safety concerns, or a preference for renewables.

1.4.3 Moving to the responses received to each question:

- Question one asked respondents for their view on keeping the 50 MW electricity generation threshold for including nuclear energy projects in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) regime. Sixty-seven responses to this question were received, the majority of which (58%) were Agree or Strongly Agree, compared with 24% which were Disagree or Strongly Disagree. The remainder were undecided or the respondents said that there was not enough information.

- Question two asked respondents whether they believed that the draft National Policy Statement is adequately future proofed to accommodate advancements in nuclear technologies. Sixty-eight responses to this question were received, the majority of which (59%) were Agree or Strongly Agree, compared with 31% which were Disagree or Strongly Disagree. The remainder were undecided or the respondents said that there was not enough information.

- Question three asked respondents if there were any specific planning or siting considerations that should be addressed to ensure the National Policy Statement remains flexible to deployment of nuclear in diverse locations. Sixty-nine responses to this question were received, a large majority of which (75%) were Yes, compared with 10% which were No. Many responses which answered Yes either argued in

favour of relaxing population density requirements or adding additional detail to a number of criteria which we believe are already covered sufficiently in the overarching National Policy statement for energy (EN-1), other planning and regulatory guidance, or which would unnecessarily restrict nuclear deployment. The remainder answered Other, were undecided, or the respondents said that there was not enough information.

- Question four asked respondents to what extent they agree with the proposal to remove the distinction between criteria previously described as either 'exclusionary' or 'discretionary'. Seventy-two responses to this question were received, a large majority of which (72%) were Agree or Strongly Agree, compared with 14% which were Disagree or Strongly Disagree. The remainder were undecided or the respondents said that there was not enough information.

- Question five asked respondents for their view on our proposal to retain the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion (SUPDC) in EN-7 and the extent to which they agree or disagree. Sixty-four responses to this question were received, of which 44% were Agree or Strongly Agree, compared with 34% which were Disagree or Strongly disagree. The significant remainder (22%) were undecided or the respondents said that there was not enough information.

- Question six asked respondents to provide evidence that would support a change to the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion (SUPDC) in the future. This was a free text only question which approximately 60% of respondents answered.

- Question seven asked respondents if there were any specific areas of the draft EN-7 where further clarity or guidance is needed to help ensure successful implementation by developers, planners and regulators. Sixty-eight responses to this question were received, a majority of which (62%) were Yes, compared with 13% which were No. The significant remainder (25%) answered Other, were undecided, or the respondents said that there was not enough information.

- Question eight asked respondents for their view on whether additional support and information from the government would be beneficial and assist developers intending to apply for Development Consent in implementing EN-7 and proceeding through the Development Consent Order pre-application process. Sixty-one responses to this question were received, a majority of which (67%) were Yes compared with just 5% which were No. The significant remainder (28%) answered Other, were undecided, or the respondents said that there was not enough information.

1.4.4 Overall, respondents agreed that the criteria and scope outlined in EN-7 were appropriate and workable, but that additional information and guidance would be beneficial for developers navigating the NSIP regime. The consultation has identified no

areas of EN-7 which are unworkable, unfit for purpose, or lacking in broad support from stakeholders. We therefore plan to proceed with designating the draft EN-7.

1.5 Overarching considerations

1.5.1 This section of the document outlines the government response to the points made by respondents that did not fit solely within any particular question.

Overall plan for new nuclear and funding

1.5.2 Some respondents called for EN-7 to set out a detailed programme of nuclear deployment, including the number, type and location of nuclear power stations that will be built.

1.5.3 As stated in EN-1, the National Policy Statements on energy do not specify any limit or target for low carbon energy infrastructure, instead establishing a supportive and responsible framework in which an industry-led energy system brings forward projects. As part of the suite of energy National Policy Statements, EN-7 will follow this approach.

1.5.4 Nonetheless, we agree the industry needs certainty. This is why we have made concrete, funded commitments to the biggest nuclear building programme in a generation, investing £14.2bn in building the Sizewell C nuclear power station and making available over £2.5bn over the next five years to enable one of Europe's first SMR programmes.

1.5.5 In addition, we are also providing a pathway for privately led advanced nuclear projects to be deployed onto the grid and to supply industrial users. Great British Energy – Nuclear has been tasked with a new role in assessing proposals within a new framework, to be published shortly, with National Wealth Fund exploring potential investment opportunities and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero exploring revenue support for viable projects.

Relationship between EN-7 and the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan

1.5.6 Some respondents asked for clarity on the role of the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan's approach to nuclear energy, and how it will interact with the planning system.

1.5.7 The Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP) will support a more actively planned approach to energy infrastructure across England, Scotland and Wales, land and sea. This will help to accelerate the deployment of energy infrastructure to facilitate faster connections to the grid and should provide greater clarity for market actors on the shape of our future energy system.

1.5.8 The SSEP itself will not mandate site-specific areas for development. We are, however, exploring how reforms to the planning system could help streamline consenting decisions for developments aligned to the SSEP.

1.5.9 Following production of the plan, our intention is for the SSEP to become part of the framework of planning systems across GB; we will explore whether and how it is appropriate, for example, to amend the National Policy Statements (NPS) in the future to incorporate the SSEP or its spatial outputs.

1.5.10 Any amendments that may be made to update the NPS to reflect the publication of the SSEP would only happen once the SSEP has been produced and endorsed, and will be subject to the processes set out in the Planning Act 2008.

Reforms to the regulatory framework

1.5.11 Some respondents expressed safety and environmental concerns about our efforts to get Britain building again.

1.5.12 Safety is a cornerstone of our approach to nuclear energy, and a key part of maintaining public confidence in the planning system. Any reforms to the regulatory framework will be based on evidence and international standards such as those developed by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The UK's stringent regulatory framework will continue to ensure public safety.

1.5.13 The Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce is currently reviewing the nuclear framework and regulations and their application, whilst ensuring safety and environmental outcomes are not compromised. Final recommendations are due in Autumn 2025, with the next phase focused on practical solutions.

The sites listed in EN-6

1.5.14 There were 11 responses suggesting EN-7 says more about the potential suitability of the eight sites listed in EN-6 for nuclear infrastructure development.

1.5.15 We understand the interest in highlighting the characteristics of the sites listed in EN-6 in EN-7, and we are clear that many of those sites are likely to retain inherent features which are likely to make them attractive to industry for nuclear infrastructure development. For example, many of the sites listed in EN-6 have better scope for a sufficient grid connection to be established, helping to satisfy the EN-7 criterion requiring sufficient energy transmission infrastructure. EN-7 will support nuclear infrastructure development on the sites listed in EN-6, and elsewhere. The best way EN-7 can support development at any potential site is to impose criteria ensuring the beneficial characteristics of those sites will be assigned appropriate weight when an application for development consent is made, and this is what EN-7 does.

Further support in NSIP regime for applicants

1.5.16 Some respondents asked what additional support would be provided by government for applications which can take multiple years to reach the stage of formally applying for development consent.

1.5.17 Alongside the designation of EN-7, which provides a clear, criteria-based framework for assessing nuclear infrastructure proposals, the Planning and Infrastructure Bill[1] includes a complementary reform to streamline the consenting process for major projects, including nuclear. Together, these measures are designed to reduce uncertainty and accelerate the time it takes to process applications (particularly for long lead time applications) by improving clarity, coordination, and efficiency across the planning system. The Bill's five overarching objectives include:

- Delivering a faster and more certain consenting process for infrastructure, including clean energy and transport projects.
- Introducing a more strategic approach to nature recovery, driving up environmental outcomes and creating a win-win for both nature and the economy
- Improving certainty and decision-making in the planning system, giving local authorities the resources they need to deliver an efficient and predictable service to developers and investors.
- Unlocking land and securing public value for large scale investment, through enabling more effective land assembly by public sector bodies and ensuring development corporations can operate effectively; and
- Introducing effective new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning.

1.5.18 Additionally, we will release supplementary information once EN-7 is designated to assist developers in navigating the development consent order process. This document will be tested with industry in advance of publication.

Opposition to nuclear energy in principle

1.5.19 Where expressed, respondents' opposition to nuclear energy was primarily grounded in concerns about cost, safety, and environmental impact, alongside a preference for renewable energy sources.

1.5.20 Whilst we acknowledge the range of views about nuclear energy, it remains a critical component of the UK's low-carbon energy transition, offering safe, reliable, firm power to complement intermittent renewables and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

[1] https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3946

1.6 Overall approach to EN-7 (consultation questions 1-3)

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with the modification of this approach in light of the consultation feedback, to retain the < 50 MW(electric) threshold in the existing planning framework and to review our position in the future?

1.6.1 The notation "<50MW(electric)" or "<50MW(e)" means "less than 50 megawatts electric," referring to the maximum amount of electricity a power station can supply to the grid, where the "(e)" stands for electrical output. Notation written as "MW(t)," the "(t)" would refer to thermal megawatt output—meaning the total heat energy produced by the reactor, which is typically higher than the electrical output and may be used directly for industrial processes or converted into electricity.

1.6.2 In EN-6, developments over 50MW(e) are treated as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects in England, and developments over 350 MW (e) in Wales, are subject to the Development Consent process as set out in the Planning Act 2008. There are also statutory provisions under which projects falling below the threshold in England can be directed by the Secretary of State to be treated as a development for which development consent is required. There is currently no threshold for heat producing infrastructure in England or Wales.

1.6.3 The 2025 consultation proposed that EN-7 should not amend the current 50 MW(e) threshold. We considered that retaining this threshold in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime will support the development of advanced nuclear technologies and ensure that planning requirements are proportionate to the scale and impact of different projects. The consultation set out the circumstances under which projects < 50 MW(e) in England may require Secretary of State approval and how this threshold differs in Wales due to the Infrastructure (Wales) Act 2024 for the consenting of large-scale infrastructure projects.

Consultation data analysis

Table 1: Summary of responses to question 1

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Undecided / Not enough information	Total responses	No answer
Number	12	27	12	4	12	**67**	10
Proportion	18%	40%	18%	6%	18%	**100%**	

1.6.4 There were 39 responses to this question (58%) which agreed or strongly agreed with our approach in retaining the < 50MW(e) threshold. There was a higher level of

agreement from ‘Organisations responsible for/interested in new nuclear development Non-Governmental Organisations and nuclear energy professionals or experts.

1.6.5 The most cited reason for supporting the retention of the < 50 MW(e) threshold was that it ensures planning requirements remain proportionate to the scale and impact of different nuclear projects. Respondents emphasised that this threshold provides a clear and flexible framework that avoids overburdening smaller or experimental projects with the full Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project process, while still allowing for appropriate scrutiny through existing call-in powers. This approach was seen as essential to fostering innovation, supporting deployment at a range of scales, and maintaining regulatory clarity during a period of technological evolution.

1.6.6 Sixteen responses to this question (24%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the approach in retaining the < 50 MW threshold. The group containing the largest number of disagreeing responses was ‘Local authority/government representative’ stakeholders, although a substantial minority of the ‘Local authority/government representative’ group of stakeholders supported our proposed approach. The most cited reason for disagreement with retaining the < 50 MW(e) threshold was concern over the perceived arbitrariness of using electrical output as the basis for determining planning routes. Respondents highlighted that the potential risks, public sensitivities, and technical complexities associated with nuclear projects are not necessarily correlated with their electrical capacity. They emphasised their view that all nuclear developments (regardless of size) raise significant safety, environmental, and public confidence considerations, and therefore should be subject to the same rigorous and centralised scrutiny under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime. Many also highlighted that Local Planning Authorities often lack the specialist expertise and resources to assess nuclear applications, particularly for novel technologies such as microreactors, and that a consistent national approach would ensure clarity and build public trust.

Government response

1.6.7 We propose to retain the < 50 MW(e) threshold for the reasons respondents have identified above. We note most respondents (58%) to this question strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, compared with 24% who strongly disagreed or disagreed.

1.6.8 Some respondents who opposed retaining the < 50MW(e) threshold did so out of a desire to ensure that all nuclear projects, regardless of size, are subject to consistent scrutiny and that public confidence in emerging technologies such as microreactors is maintained. We recognise and respect this objective, particularly given the technical complexity and public sensitivity surrounding nuclear development. However, we believe that EN-7 achieves this goal more effectively by maintaining a proportionate approach. The threshold provides a clear and flexible framework that avoids overburdening smaller projects with the full Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project process, while preserving the government’s discretion to ‘call in’ proposals falling below

the threshold in England, where appropriate. In addition, regardless of whether a project is subject to the local planning regime or the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime, any nuclear project would be subject to the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)-led Nuclear Site Licencing safety and security regime as well as the relevant permitting processes led by the environmental regulators. A local planning authority considering a nuclear infrastructure proposal with a capacity of < 50MW(e) would have access to representations from the ONR and environmental regulators as to the viability of the development proposal. This ensures that impacts are properly addressed, while enabling innovation and deployment at a range of scales through proportionate planning processes.

1.6.9 Several respondents raised concerns about potential abuse of the threshold by applicants seeking an easier route to relevant planning consents via the Town and Country Planning Act regime. In the unlikely event that such an approach is taken to the planning regime, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government may 'call in' the project or projects for their determination.

1.6.10 Several respondents noted that the 50 MW(e) threshold may appear arbitrary, particularly where projects of similar scale fall on either side of the line and are subject to different planning regimes. This threshold is a statutory feature of the Planning Act 2008, and is not set through National Policy Statements. Legislation does provide the Secretary of State with powers to 'call in' projects.

1.6.11 Some respondents highlighted that the threshold is largely irrelevant because most nuclear projects currently under consideration would far exceed 50 MW(e) capacity. While this may be true for many current proposals, the government believes it is important to retain a clear threshold to provide certainty for developers and ensure smaller projects are not unnecessarily burdened by the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project process unless their impacts warrant it.

1.6.12 We acknowledge some respondents called for clarity on how the 50 MW(e) threshold applies to nuclear projects designed to generate electricity, heat, hydrogen, synthetic fuels, and/or medical radionuclides. In our response to the first round of consultation on EN-7, we committed to amending the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime to include heat-only reactors. EN-7 is drafted to apply to all Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects using nuclear fission to generate energy. This means that if and when the Planning Act 2008, which governs the technology scope of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime, is amended EN-7 will not require further revision in order to apply to NSIPs using nuclear fission which are not primarily designed to generate electricity. The Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime already accommodates nuclear stations that provide both heat and power, provided they meet the 50 MW(e) threshold in England or the 350 MW(e) threshold in Wales, including where electricity generation is a secondary output. Combined heat and power is also addressed in the Overarching National Policy Statement on energy infrastructure, EN-1.

1.6.13 We agree that the threshold should be subject to ongoing review. EN-7 will be reviewed at least every five years, or sooner if significant new evidence emerges. In determining the timing and nature of any review, we will consider the emergence of new reactor types, changes in deployment patterns, or evidence of planning inefficiencies under the current regime.

Question 2: To what extent do you believe the draft National Policy Statement is adequately future proofed to accommodate advancements in nuclear technologies?

1.6.14 EN-6 was designed to facilitate large-scale nuclear infrastructure capable of generating more than a gigawatt (GW) of electricity.

1.6.15 The 2025 consultation set out EN-7's new criteria-based approach, which aims to support development at the sites listed in EN-6 and elsewhere in England and Wales where the proposed siting criteria is met so as to support the siting of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs) in the UK planning regime for the first time. The draft EN-7 also addresses how developers can approach phased development with respect to the planning system, which may be a favoured deployment approach for SMR and AMRs.

Consultation data analysis

Table 2: Summary of responses to question 2

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Undecided / Not enough information**	**Total responses**	**No answer**
Number	6	34	14	7	7	**68**	9
Proportion	9%	50%	21%	10%	10%	**100%**	

1.6.16 There were 40 responses to this question (59%) which agreed or strongly agreed that the draft national policy statement was future-proofed for new technologies. The group of respondents providing the largest number of agreeing responses was 'organisations responsible for/interested in new nuclear development'.

1.6.17 Twenty-one responses to this question (31%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the draft national policy statement was future-proofed for new technologies. The group providing the largest number of these responses was also 'organisations responsible for/interested in new nuclear development', some of whom argued some of the criteria were not applicable to Advanced Nuclear Technologies.

Government response

1.6.18 We note a majority of responses agreed that the draft EN-7 is adequately future-proofed to accommodate advancements in nuclear technologies.

1.6.19 However, we acknowledge the suggestions in the consultation responses that more flexibility may be needed in future and that we should consider reviewing the policy as advancements in technology, decommissioning and applications emerge. EN-7, alongside all NPSs will be kept under regular review.

Question 3: Are there specific planning or siting considerations that should be addressed to ensure the National Policy Statement remains flexible to deployment of nuclear in diverse locations?

1.6.20 The 2025 consultation set out how the draft EN-7 would remain flexible to diverse locations; it proposed that developers intending to apply for Development Consent should use the population density and proximity to military activities criteria to screen and identify potential sites, before continuing site characterisation to determine whether a site meets the other criteria. This criteria-based approach empowers developers intending to apply for Development Consent to identify sites which are optimal for their project, bringing nuclear in line with other energy technologies.

Consultation data analysis

Table 3: Summary of responses to question 3

	Yes	No	Other	Undecided / Not enough information	Total responses	No answer
Number	52	7	1	9	**69**	8
Proportion	75%	10%	1%	13%	**100%**	

1.6.21 There were 52 responses to this question (75%) which answered that, yes, there were specific planning or siting considerations that should be addressed to ensure the national Policy Statement remains flexible to deployment of nuclear in diverse locations. Organisations responsible for/interested in new nuclear development and Local authority/government representatives were more likely to answer yes, with these respondents tending to suggest that there should be additional criteria or considerations added to the draft EN-7.

1.6.22 The seven responses to this question (10%) which answered no were predominately from new nuclear development or supply chain organisations. Where additional

comments were given, they tended to feel that the criteria are comprehensive and flexible enough as they are.

Government response

1.6.23 While a large proportion of respondents answered yes to this question, and called for additional or amended information, guidance and criteria, our judgement is that none of the responses identified shortcomings in the design of EN-7 that would render it unfit for purpose or in need of significant amendment to achieve our policy objectives. No response we received established the EN-7 criteria cannot apply appropriate standards to any scale of nuclear infrastructure, from traditional large-scale to SMR or AMR, at coastal or inland locations, and to serve the full range of potential applications. Additionally, the requests for change were highly varied across responses, with very few proposals for change attracting the support of even a significant minority of respondents. Key themes in requests for change are addressed below.

1.6.24 Amongst responses answering ‘yes’ to this question, additional criteria, and setting out new and existing criteria in more detail, was a common theme. Suggestions included new criteria on co-location with industry, climate change, and cumulative impacts, and more detail on criteria including wastewater, flooding, and impacts on marine areas.

1.6.25 We have carefully considered these proposals and conclude the issues are addressed at the appropriate level of detail across EN-1, the draft EN-7 and applicable planning and environmental guidance and permitting processes. For example, EN-7 already specifically addresses phased development, which would naturally apply to the deployment of multiple SMRs and AMRs over time, and by law, cumulative impacts must be assessed as part of Environmental Impact Assessment. We have further concluded that trying to replicate the content of EN-1 and relevant guidance and permits in EN-7 would create a risk of contradiction in the energy National Policy Statements and wider planning guidance, without providing any additional benefit to the environment or communities.

1.6.26 Some respondents called for EN-7 to contain a deadline, arguing this would provide certainty to residents living close to potential sites for new nuclear deployment. We agree residents should be fully engaged and informed of potential nuclear infrastructure development, but disagree that a deadline is an appropriate means to achieve this. The draft EN-7 has no deadline to enable industry to plan for investment in the low carbon energy infrastructure we need over the long term. To ensure residents are informed and consulted about new nuclear development, consultation will remain a very important part of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project consenting process.

1.6.27 Some respondents suggested EN-7 should reduce requirements to consider alternative sites, especially if the proposed site was listed in EN-6 or is located close to or beside the intended end-user of the energy to be produced. We recognise there may be circumstances in which there may only be a small number of sites, or a single site, that

meet the needs of a project. However, we also accept that this will not always be the case and it is reasonable to expect applicants to justify the site they have selected when considering the optimal use of land and the avoidance of environmental and community impacts. Developers must already consider alternative sites to satisfy the Sequential Test, where that test is necessary. EN-7 strikes a proportionate balance through its criteria, for example by requiring the applicant to demonstrate the proposed site has sufficient scope to transmit the energy it produces to the end user. As a result, the Secretary of State is likely to assign great weight to the benefits certain locations offer in this regard, such as by having better potential for a sufficient grid connection relative to other sites, or by offering co-location with high-demand energy users. EN-1 and EN-7 place no limit on the amount of low carbon energy infrastructure, including nuclear, that is needed and thus do not require applicants to establish that their proposed site is the most suitable site of all potential sites in relation to any one or more criteria. Applicants may propose a site because it is available for development, and it performs satisfactorily against a mix of criteria. Alternative sites do not need to be assessed as thoroughly as the site proposed and identified within the development consent application. Some activities, like detailed consultation with stakeholders, would normally occur after the consideration of alternative sites has yielded a proposed site.

1.6.28 Having considered respondents' proposals for new or amended planning or siting considerations that should be addressed to ensure the National Policy Statement remains flexible to deployment of nuclear in diverse locations, we propose EN-7 does not need additional detail addressing the considerations raised. EN-7 has been developed following extensive consultation with industry, regulators and other stakeholders to address their needs. We deem EN-7, along with EN-1, applicable legislation, and all other relevant guidance on environmental impacts, site licencing, safety and all other considerations, to be comprehensive and fit for purpose. We are committed to maintaining a planning framework which supports nuclear deployment in England and Wales and will continue to consider relevant proposals raised in response to this question ahead of our next review of EN-7.

1.7 Specific criteria (consultation questions 4–7)

Question 4: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to remove the distinction between previously exclusionary and discretionary criteria?

1.7.1 EN-6 included a range of criteria to inform decisions on the siting of new nuclear infrastructure. These criteria were used to assess the potential sites nominated by industry as part of the Strategic Siting Assessment carried out by government. All criteria, other than population density and aspects of proximity to military activities, were labelled 'discretionary'.

1.7.2 In the draft EN-7, we no longer use the terms ‘Exclusionary’ and ‘Discretionary’ to divide the criteria. This is for clarity, because failing to satisfy any single Factor Influencing Site Selection, Technical Consideration and/ or Impact criteria will be grounds for an application for Development Consent to be refused by the Secretary of State.

Consultation data analysis

Table 4: Summary of responses to question 4

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Undecided / Not enough information**	**Total responses**	**No answer**
Number	16	36	4	6	10	**72**	5
Proportion	22%	50%	6%	8%	14%	**100%**	

1.7.3 There were 52 responses to this question (72%) which agreed or strongly agreed with the removal of the distinction between exclusionary and discretionary criteria. There was a higher level of agreement from ‘Organisations responsible for/interested in new nuclear development’ and ‘Local authority/government representative’ stakeholders’.

1.7.4 The most cited reason for supporting the removal of the distinction between exclusionary and discretionary criteria was that it improves clarity and simplifies the planning process without weakening the rigour of assessment. Respondents noted that under the proposed approach, all criteria (whether related to siting, technical considerations, or impacts) must be satisfied for a Development Consent Order to be granted, making the previous labels redundant. This change was seen as a positive step toward ensuring that all factors are treated with equal importance, reducing confusion for developers and the public, and promoting a more consistent and transparent application of the criteria. Several respondents also welcomed the increased responsibility placed on applicants to demonstrate compliance with all criteria, and felt that the revised approach better reflects the reality of how planning decisions are made under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime.

1.7.5 Ten responses to this question (14%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. Respondents who disagreed with this proposal included ‘Local community member in the vicinity of potential or existing nuclear installation’, ‘Non-Government Organisation’ and ‘Local authority/government representative’.

1.7.6 The most frequently expressed concern was not about the removal of the distinction itself, but about ensuring that the criteria remain clear, consistently applied, and capable of supporting early, confident decision-making, especially in light of evolving technologies and devolved policy contexts.

Government response

1.7.7 We propose to remove the distinction between previously exclusionary and discretionary criteria for the reasons respondents have identified above. We note the majority of respondents to this question (72%) strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, compared with 14% who strongly disagreed or disagreed.

1.7.8 Respondents who disagreed with the removal of the distinction between exclusionary and discretionary mostly stated they did so to ensure that certain critical factors, such as flood risk, proximity to sensitive sites, or water availability, are treated as absolute constraints in the site selection process. We believe that EN-7 achieves these aims more effectively by requiring all criteria, whether previously labelled exclusionary or discretionary, to be satisfied for a Development Consent Order to be granted. This approach ensures that no factor is deprioritised, while allowing for a consistent and transparent assessment process that reflects the complexity and diversity of nuclear projects and sites. It also avoids the risk of prematurely ruling out sites where issues may be addressed through appropriate design and/or engineering solutions.

Question 5: The government currently plans to retain the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion in EN-7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the inclusion.

1.7.9 In EN-6, all listed sites were assessed against the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion as part of the Strategic Site Assessment. This complemented the UK's nuclear regulatory system by managing the potential risk to populated areas from nuclear infrastructure by limiting how close to densely populated areas it can be deployed, limiting the scale of possible impact in the extremely unlikely event of an incident posing a risk beyond the nuclear site boundary.

1.7.10 In the 2025 consultation, the government set out is intention to continue to apply the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion in EN-7, for all nuclear fission technologies within scope. This is because there is currently insufficient evidence available to demonstrate that novel nuclear fission technologies present a significantly different risk to existing nuclear fission technologies.

Table 5: Summary of responses to question 5

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Undecided / Not enough information	Total responses	No answer
Number	10	18	11	11	14	**64**	13
Proportion	16%	28%	17%	17%	22%	**100%**	

Consultation data analysis

1.7.11 A total of 28 responses to this question (44%) agreed or strongly agreed with the inclusion of the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion in the draft EN-7. Organisations responsible for or interested in new nuclear development and nuclear energy professionals and experts were the main groups that agreed, with most agreeing it was prudent to retain the criterion until further evidence on the safety of new technologies becomes available. Others suggested it did not unduly restrict development within England and Wales.

1.7.12 A total of 22 responses to this question (34%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. The majority of these were organisations responsible for or interested in new nuclear development, some of whose responses suggested that the criterion was based on out-of-date assumptions which would hinder the deployment of nuclear in England and Wales. Other responses – primarily from members of the public - objected to the criterion on the basis it allows nuclear too close to populations and advocated for nuclear development to be in more remote areas.

Government response

1.7.13 Small Modular Reactor and Advanced Modular Reactor technologies have a significant potential role to play in supplying low carbon energy, both to the national electricity grid and to high-demand users such as data centres, gigafactories, hydrogen and synthetic fuel production and/or industrial clusters. We are committed to working with industry to realise this potential.

1.7.14 Nonetheless, in the extremely unlikely event of an incident at a nuclear power station posing a risk beyond the site boundary, there may be impacts on surrounding communities which are relevant to a decision on whether to grant development consent for nuclear energy infrastructure. These impacts may arise both from hazards and from measures to safeguard the public. The Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion provides a clear and transparent way for the Secretary of State to weigh these potential impacts when considering whether to grant development consent, using iodine-131 as a proxy indicator which is relevant for all technologies using nuclear fission to generate energy. Without a relevant NPS criterion, the Secretary of State would still need to consider population density but would no longer have a policy set out in a relevant NPS to rely on, creating greater uncertainty within the planning system for both applicants and host communities.

1.7.15 There remains limited evidence available to demonstrate that novel nuclear fission technologies present a significantly decreased risk compared to existing nuclear fission technologies. No respondents provided sufficient evidence to justify a policy change as part of this consultation. Therefore, we have determined it is prudent to continue to apply the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion in EN-7 at this time. This approach strikes a balance between ensuring sufficient sites in the UK are available for

deployment while limiting the potential impact in the extremely unlikely event of an incident posing a risk beyond the nuclear site boundary.

1.7.16 Given a variety of new reactor models are being developed, many of which may include novel safety measures, we will continue to consider the criterion in the coming years. EN-7 will be reviewed every five years to ensure it remains relevant and effective, but this does not preclude us from updating EN-7 sooner. Any review of EN-7 or specific criteria will be based on robust evidence from the sector and international standards such as those developed by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Question 6: We are open to revising the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion in the future. How should this criterion change in the future to better support the deployment of advanced nuclear technologies, and what evidence supports your suggestion? Please reference your sources.

1.7.17 The consultation set out the government's reasoning for proposing to retain the Semi-Urban Population Density criterion without changes. Many Small Modular Reactor and Advanced Modular Reactor designs are in the early stages of development and there was limited evidence available to demonstrate that novel nuclear fission technologies present a significantly different risk to existing nuclear fission technologies. There was also limited evidence to indicate that the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion will prevent the deployment of new nuclear projects in economically efficient locations.

1.7.18 Once more evidence on the safety of advanced nuclear technologies is available, there may be a case for modifying the criterion. The UK's stringent regulatory framework will continue to ensure public safety in any future adjustments to the criterion.

Consultation data analysis

1.7.19 Forty-six respondents provided comments in relation to how the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion should be changed in the future. Most respondents to this question were from organisations responsible for or interested in new nuclear development. Some respondents suggested that the criterion should be modified to take account of individual reactor type characteristics; whilst others pointed to recent developments in Finland and the US as an example to follow.

Government response

1.7.20 We are grateful to the many respondents who took the time to answer this question and provide detailed feedback. However, we are not currently satisfied that sufficient evidence was provided by respondents to justify altering or removing the criterion.

Question 7: If it's not already addressed elsewhere (for example in EN-1 and the Planning Inspectorate Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project Guidance), are there any specific areas of the draft EN-7 where further clarity or guidance is needed to help ensure successful implementation by developers, planners, and regulators?

1.7.21 The consultation document and the draft EN-7 set out the factors influencing site selection, technical considerations and impacts which developers will use to assess whether a site is appropriate for their technologies. These were not individually consulted on in this consultation as they were consulted on in the first-round consultation; the government's response to the feedback received can be found in the response published in January 2025.

1.7.22 This framework of robust criteria will be used by developers to assess whether a site is appropriate for their technologies, focusing on safety, security, and managing environmental and other impacts to host locations and communities.

Consultation data analysis

Table 6: Summary of responses to question 7

	Yes	No	Other	Undecided / Not enough information	Total responses	No answer
Number	42	9	2	15	**68**	9
Proportion	62%	13%	3%	22%	**100%**	

1.7.23 There were 42 responses to this question (62%) which answered that yes, there were specific areas of the draft EN-7 where further clarity of guidance is required. Organisations responsible for/interested in new nuclear development and local authority representatives were more likely to answer yes, with these respondents tending to suggest that there needed to be further clarification around specific criteria in EN-7, particularly water quality and resources, biodiversity and socio-economic impacts. Some respondents also highlighted a need for further clarification on air navigation zones, radioactive waste management, non-electricity producing stations, co-generation, phased developments and engagement with local authorities and the public.

1.7.24 There were additional suggestions put forward by respondents that Government and EN-7 should provide clarity on the scoping process, the role of regulators and set out how the planning and regulatory regime work together.

1.7.25 The nine responses to this question (13%) which answered no either gave no free-text answer, or stated they were satisfied with the extent, clarity and detail of the criteria

within EN-7. These were a minority in some stakeholder types – Local authority representatives, NGOs, nuclear energy professionals or experts, local community members, organisation responsible for/interested in new nuclear development and nuclear supply chain organisations.

Government response

1.7.26 We appreciate the feedback provided by respondents regarding the need for further clarity and guidance in the EN-7. We are committed to ensuring that EN-7 provides clear information to guide decision making by the Secretary of State and for developers, planners, and regulators to take into account.

1.7.27 We acknowledge the importance of clarity around the specific criterion highlighted. As noted in response to Question 3, EN-1 and EN-7 collectively cover several of the areas put forward by respondents to a sufficient degree, included but not limited to, the impact of cooling systems on fish populations, long-term impacts of flood and erosion defences, and landscape impacts and compensation. Where there is a need for further clarification, we will aim to provide this in supplementary information to support developers in addressing these concerns.

1.7.28 We are continuing to do work to develop the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan and supplementary information to further support developers. More information is due to be published on these in due course. In addition, the Regulatory Taskforce continues to look at changes to legislation, the scope of regulators, the application of regulation, guidance for new nuclear technologies, and international alignment so reactor designs approved abroad could be approved more quickly. We will carefully consider the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce's final recommendations and respond as soon as possible.

1.8 Implementation (consultation question 8)

Question 8: Would additional support or information from the government be beneficial and assist developers intending to apply for Development Consent in implementing EN-7 and proceeding through the Development Consent Order pre-application process?

1.8.1 The 2025 consultation set out the government’s intention to provide supplementary information alongside EN-7 to support developers intending to apply for Development Consent in applying EN-7 to their projects. It listed what this could encompass: an approach to navigating the Development Consent Order pre-application process; highlighting other regimes and regulatory processes which should be undertaken; and signpost existing guidance.

Consultation data analysis

Table 7: Summary of responses to question 8

	Yes	No	Other	Undecided / Not enough information	Total responses	No answer
Number	41	3	2	15	**61**	16
Proportion	67%	5%	3%	25%	**100%**	

1.8.2 A total of 41 responses to this question (67%) answered yes, that additional support or information being provided by government would be beneficial to developers. Different types of support and information were suggested, including further guidance on when applicants should engage with each statutory body during the planning process. Some respondents felt that including lessons learned and best practice followed by both nuclear and non-nuclear applicants would also help applicants navigate the process.

1.8.3 A very small minority of responses to this question (3) answered no, that additional support or information from government would not be beneficial.

1.8.4 Around a quarter of responses to this question (15) were undecided, including more respondents identifying themselves as local authorities, many of whom gave their lack of familiarity with nuclear planning applications as a reason for this response. Sixteen respondents to the consultation gave no answer to this question.

Government response

1.8.5 Many respondents explained the consenting process for nuclear power stations is time and resource intensive, and that the multitude of public bodies responsible for different elements of the process can create practical challenges for them. To help with this we will include contact details for all bodies in the consenting process in the supplementary information pack that will be published alongside EN-7 once designation is complete. For the same reason, we will also ensure that the supplementary information pack signposts applicants to relevant documents involved in the consenting process.

1.8.6 EN-7 requires early engagement with statutory consultees as part of the iterative process for addressing impacts arising from development. This can and should include guidance from statutory consultees to applicants about the quality of the information needed early enough in the process for that information to be collected without causing delays and design changes. Where possible, this will be signposted within the supplementary information pack.

1.8.7 A number of respondents asked for greater clarity on sequencing within the planning process, and at what point applicants should engage with certain bodies. EN-7 only mandates what the Secretary of State must consider at the end of the process, and it is for applicants to decide in what order to address each criterion within their infrastructure design and plans. However, we acknowledge that there are some criteria which are likely better to be satisfied at the beginning of the process, such as whether the site passes the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion and is acceptable to the Ministry of Defence. Other criteria are likely to be considered iteratively as the design of the infrastructure gradually takes into account all other relevant considerations, but this is likely to be site and context specific.

1.8.8 As more applicants progress through the planning process, we will continue to update the supplementary information pack to reflect lessons learned and best practice from both nuclear and non-nuclear projects.

2 Next steps: The process and timeline towards designating the new National Policy Statement EN-7

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Section 2 sets out the process and timeline towards designating the new National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation EN-7.

2.2 Process and timeline

Timeline	Stage
Spring - Summer 2025	Analysis of second round consultation responses and publication of the government response. **Completed** with the publication of this document. Preparation and finalisation of the draft National Policy Statement: • Incorporate feedback from the consultation analysis into the draft National Policy Statement • Finalise the draft National Policy Statement and prepare supporting documents for parliamentary scrutiny Parliamentary Scrutiny in the House of Lords.
Autumn 2025	Parliamentary Scrutiny in the House of Commons by the Energy Security and Net Zero Committee. Revise draft National Policy Statement based on parliamentary feedback and prepare the final version for laying before Parliament. Laying the document before parliament: • Lay final National Policy Statement document before Parliament for formal consideration • Conduct parliamentary debates and secure approval for the National Policy Statement
Late 2025	Final designation and publication:

- Prepare National Policy Statement for publication, including formatting and printing
- Officially designate National Policy Statement and publish it on the government website

This publication is available from: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-national-policy-statement-for-nuclear-energy-generation-en-7

If you need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email alt.formats@energysecurity.gov.uk. Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use