



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP

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Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael MP
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
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13 June 2025

Dear Alistair,

Responses to the public consultation on the draft National Policy Statement on nuclear energy generation, EN-7

Thank you for your interest in our emerging plans for nuclear, including the draft National Policy Statement on nuclear energy generation, EN-7, which will support new nuclear projects through the planning system.

I am writing to share with you the responses to the public consultation we held on our draft National Policy Statement for nuclear energy generation, called EN-7, from 6 February to 3 April 2025. I hope this helps inform your engagement with EN-7 as it progresses through Parliamentary Scrutiny which is due to conclude on 23 June 2025, towards formal designation which I intend to complete by the end of this year. My Written Ministerial Statement of 6 February 2025, entitled Consenting and Regulation of Nuclear Energy, provides further detail on this designation process.

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 6 from statutory consultees.

A majority of respondents, 45 (59% of respondents), expressed support for nuclear, for reasons including the impact of nuclear power on economic growth and jobs, and its supply of low carbon, secure and reliable energy. A significant minority of respondents, 23 (30%), did not express clear support or opposition for nuclear. A small minority of respondents, 9 (11%), expressed opposition to nuclear for reasons including its cost, environmental impacts, safety concerns, or a preference for renewables.

Overall, respondents agreed that the criteria and scope outlined in EN-7 were appropriate, and that additional information and guidance would be beneficial for developers navigating the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) regime. In the paragraphs that follow, I will set out the details of how respondents addressed each consultation question.

The first question asked respondents for their view on keeping the 50 Megawatt (MW) electricity generation threshold for including nuclear energy projects in the NSIP regime. A majority, 51%, agreed, because respondents felt that the threshold was fit for purpose, and that the local planning regime would be appropriate to consider nuclear projects at a small scale. Roughly a fifth, 21% disagreed because nuclear projects of any size are sufficiently important and complex that they should undergo the scrutiny of the NSIP regime. A small set of respondents, 16%, answered Not Enough Information, Unsure, or did not answer.

The second question asked respondents whether they believed that the draft National Policy Statement is adequately future proofed to accommodate advancements in nuclear technologies. Just over half, 52%, agreed, because they felt that the criteria in EN-7 are sufficiently comprehensive and flexible enough to account for infrastructure using new nuclear fission technology, whereas 27% disagreed because with some responses arguing the criteria did not take account of how Advanced Nuclear Technologies (ANTs) are safer than conventional large scale nuclear infrastructure. Just under a fifth, 18%, answered Not Enough Information or Unsure, or did not answer.

The third question 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. A large majority, 68%, answered yes and many of these responses either argued in favour of relaxing population density requirements, additional detail in criteria which is referenced in the overarching National Policy statement for energy (EN-1) and other planning and regulatory guidance, or which would unnecessarily restrict nuclear deployment. Most of the 9% who answered no to this question either argued the criteria are flexible enough already or gave no clear reason for their answer. Just over a tenth, 12%, answered Not Enough Information/Unsure, or did not answer.

The fourth question asked respondents to what extent they agree with the proposal to remove the distinction between criteria previously described as either 'exclusionary' and 'discretionary'. A large majority, 68%, agreed because the removal of the distinction was deemed to clarify the requirements in EN-7, while 13% disagreed. Most of those respondents who disagreed had either concluded that removing the distinction would have the effect of relaxing the requirements, or had reached the opposite conclusion that it would make them more restrictive. We will

clarify the impact of this change in the government response, especially on issues respondents were interested in, such as Defence Interests, or site selection where engineering solutions would reduce flood risk. Approximately an eighth, 13%, answered Not Enough Information or Unsure, or did not answer.

The fifth question 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. The largest share of respondents, making up a large minority (36%) agreed, with most giving the lack of evidence to support a change in policy as their reason for their answer, with a smaller number emphasising the importance of keeping the criterion to ensure safety. A smaller minority, 28%, disagreed because they believed the SUPDC is inappropriate for Advanced Nuclear Technologies, believed the SUPDC is not needed to protect the public, or argued the SUPDC is not strict enough and should be changed to prevent nuclear deployment anywhere close to where people live. Just under a fifth, 18%, answered Not Enough Information/Unsure, or did not answer. Most respondents who answered Undecided and Not Enough Information stated they did so because they accepted retaining the SUPDC was the sensible approach for the time being while the safety of Advanced Nuclear Technologies is examined, but that government should look to review this as soon as possible and be ready to review EN-7 sooner than the 5 yearly statutory review point.

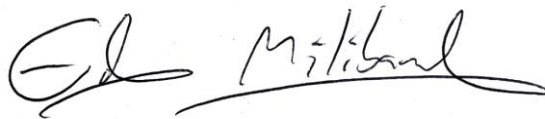
The sixth question asked respondents to provide evidence that would support a change to the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion (SUPDC) in the future. This was a free text only question which approximately 60% of respondents answered. Of the respondents who gave an answer, a larger number suggested the SUPDC should be amended to make it less restrictive. Some suggested it be amended to have different requirements for large scale nuclear and ANTs or it should be removed entirely. Some felt that it should remain or made more restrictive. No respondents provided evidence on the safety and security implications of different ANT designs.

The seventh question 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. Just over half, 55%, answered yes and felt that there were areas of the draft EN-7 where further clarity or guidance is needed, including providing contact details for all regulatory and statutory consultee bodies and guidance on at what point in the development consent application process applicants need to satisfy each requirement. Almost an eighth, 12% answered no and stated they were satisfied with the extent, clarity and detail of the criteria within EN-7, or giving no free-text answer. Almost a fifth, 19%, answered Not Enough Information, or Unsure, or did not answer.

The eighth question 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. A majority, 53%, answered yes. Within the responses answering yes, a total of 58 reasons were given, mostly due to appetite for guidance on the NSIP regime and satisfying environmental and safety regimes and requirements. A fifth, 19%, answered Not Enough Information/Unsure, or did not answer.

I hope you have found this summary of responses to the EN-7 consultation useful, and I look forward to discussing EN-7 with you further.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Miliband', with a stylized, cursive script.

RT HON ED MILIBAND MP

Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero