



Department for
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& Net Zero

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Bill Esterson MP
Chair, Energy Security and Net Zero Committee
House of Commons
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26 August 2026

Dear Bill,

Responses to the public consultation on the draft National Policy Statement for fusion energy generation EN-8

I am writing to share with you a summary of the responses to the public consultation on draft EN-8 from 8 June to 17 August 2026. I hope this helps inform your engagement with EN-8 as it progresses through parliamentary scrutiny, which is due to conclude on 30 November 2026. Subject to the outcome of parliamentary scrutiny and careful consideration of the consultation responses I intend to designate EN-8 in Spring 2027. My Written Ministerial Statement of 8 June 2026, entitled 'Publication of the draft National Policy Statement for Fusion Energy Generation EN-8' provides further detail on this designation process.

We received 35 responses to the consultation, of which 30 came from organisations and 5 from individuals. Of the responses:

- 20% of respondents identified as coming from the wider private sector.
- 17% as being public sector & regulators.
- 11% of respondents identified as being from the fusion sector.
- 6% identified as NGOs or community groups.
- 6% as public and professional individuals.
- 9% as other.
- No respondents identified as academia or research.

Overall, respondents were supportive of the draft National Policy Statement for fusion energy infrastructure. Almost every respondent welcomed the technology-agnostic and open-sited approach, the relationship with EN-1, and the recognition of fusion as a distinct technology from fission. There was only one substantially negative response from a respondent who asserted that there are still major unresolved scientific, engineering, safety and fuel-supply uncertainties that draft EN-8 does not adequately acknowledge.

Across the consultation, most responses felt the draft EN-8 provided a clear and appropriate planning framework for fusion energy infrastructure. Respondents also made some further suggestions. Further clarification was requested on the interaction between the planning and regulation regimes, and how these would accommodate phased or evolving fusion projects. It was also suggested that greater emphasis could be placed on cumulative impacts and on the 'avoid' stage of the mitigation hierarchy, the latter especially in relation to site selection. In addition, respondents felt the draft could have more focus on addressing impacts on water resources and climate resilience, and recognising the wider socio-economic benefits that fusion energy can deliver.

There was broad agreement that EN-8 should remain proportionate and able to accommodate technical innovation, while providing sufficient certainty for developers and decision-makers. A more detailed breakdown of responses by question is outlined in the Annex to this letter.

I hope you find this summary of responses to the EN-8 consultation useful. I am grateful to the Committee for its time and expertise in scrutinising the draft NPS, and I look forward to discussing EN-8 with you further.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Shanks" with a stylized flourish at the end. Below the signature is a short horizontal line.

Michael Shanks MP
Minister of State for Energy

Annex A - breakdown of responses to each question

1. The first question asked respondents whether draft EN-8, when read alongside EN-1 and other relevant National Policy Statements, provides a clear, coherent and appropriate planning framework for fusion energy infrastructure. 88% of respondents agreed or partially agreed. Respondents mostly welcomed the creation of a dedicated fusion planning framework, its technology-agnostic approach and its alignment with EN-1. It was suggested that draft EN-8 is well-balanced and provides a straightforward and proportionate approach creating a level playing field between fusion and other clean technologies and avoiding unnecessary duplication with EN-1. Those seeking changes to draft EN-8 often referred to changes to requirements set out in the Planning Act. Other comments related to how supporting infrastructure should be treated, how cumulative impacts should be measured and the need for the mitigation hierarchy to be applied when selecting sites.
2. The second question asked respondents whether Sections 1 and 2 provide sufficient clarity on the role, scope and assessment principles of the fusion National Policy Statement. 91% of respondents agreed or partially agreed. Respondents generally supported the proposed approach. It was suggested that draft EN-8 provides a clearer explanation of the interaction between the DCO regime and other regulatory regimes, appropriately supplements EN-1 and strikes the right balance to optimise site-selection. Requests were received for greater clarity on consenting for phased developments and multiple-device projects, how the planning and regulatory regimes interact, the importance of climate resilience, water resources and strategic infrastructure planning.
3. The third question asked respondents whether the assessment considerations set out in draft EN-8 are adequate and appropriate for fusion energy infrastructure. 92% of respondents agreed or partially agreed. Respondents generally supported the overall framework. It was suggested that the themes identified correctly reflected those likely to be relevant to nationally significant fusion projects and that a logical structure had been used. Several areas were mentioned where additional emphasis or clarification would be beneficial. The most frequently raised issues related to cumulative impacts, water resources and cooling requirements, cumulative impacts, biodiversity and environmental protection, network connections, and waste.
4. The fourth question asked respondents whether the accompanying Appraisal of Sustainability and Habitats Regulations Assessment are reasonable and appropriate. 80% of respondents agreed or partially agreed. Only 3% of respondents disagreed, with 17% responding “not sure” as it is outside of their areas of expertise or did not have time to digest the accompanying assessments. Respondents broadly accepted that the assessments were appropriate for a strategic, non-site-specific National Policy Statement and that detailed impacts should be assessed at project level. The most common requests were for greater emphasis on cumulative effects, biodiversity, water resources, climate adaptation and further explanation of assumptions used within the assessments. Environmental bodies provided the most detailed comments in this area,

particularly in relation to habitats protection and the application of environmental safeguards.

5. The fifth question invited any further comments on draft EN-8. Respondents generally used this opportunity to reinforce points made elsewhere in the consultation or to raise broader issues such as the need to build public confidence and the capability of relevant decision-makers.