

Consultation on the Strategic Siting Assessment Process & Siting Criteria for New Nuclear Power Stations in the UK

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Recommendations

Member's views are sought on the main consultation and on the accompanying environmental study.

It is recommended that comments are received before the 30th September in order to provide a draft response; to be tabled at the October NWG.

Introduction

Following the publication of the White Paper in January 2008 which made clear that the Government believes new nuclear power stations should have a role to play in the UK's future energy mix alongside other low-carbon sources; that it would be in the public interest to allow energy companies the option of investing in new nuclear power stations; and that the Government should take active steps to facilitate this. As part of this ongoing process on the 21st of July 2008 the Government began a consultation which relates to the future of nuclear power in the UK; that is '**Strategic Siting Assessment**' (SSA).

The consultation closes on the 11th November 2008.

Key Points

- The '**Strategic Siting Assessment**' (SSA) is the process which will determine where new nuclear power stations could be sited safely and securely. The attached consultation document sets out the criteria and process that Government propose use to assess the suitability of nominated sites.
- The strategic siting assessment (SSA) is the next step towards a Nuclear National Policy Statement (NPS). Which is intended to help speed up planning applications while making clear that safety and engagement with local communities are key.

- Alongside the consultation on the SSA, the Government is also publishing an Environmental Study which assesses the environmental and sustainability impacts of siting new nuclear power stations in accordance with the proposed SSA criteria. The study is a step in the development of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the proposed Nuclear NPS. Government is also seeking views on the environmental study, deadline 11th November 2008.

Forward Plan

After this consultation is complete the Government envisages the following:

- **Early 2009** - Publishing the finalised criteria and an invitation to nominate sites.
- **Mid to late 2009** – Publication of a draft National Policy Statement with a draft list of sites for public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny. We will publish an Environmental Report alongside the draft NPS as part of the SEA of the NPS.
- **Early 2010** - Publishing a National Policy Statement, describing the criteria and including a list of sites assessed as strategically suitable. This statement will guide the Infrastructure Planning Commission in dealing with specific planning applications. This should enable planning applications to be made under the new system from 2010 onwards.

Attachments

Appendix 1 – ‘Consultation on the Strategic Siting Assessment Process & Siting Criteria for New Nuclear Power Stations in the UK’. BERR, July 2008.

Appendix 2 – ‘Applying the Proposed Strategic Siting Assessment Criteria: A study of the Potential Environmental & Sustainability Effects’. BERR, July 2008.