

New nuclear sites: have your say

Why the government's 'Have Your Say' guide to new nuclear plants is seriously misleading, and the steps you can take to contribute to the consultation and effectively register your opposition to new nuclear build in your neighbourhood.

Nuclear power - is it needed, what will it achieve?

The misinformation in the government's *Have Your Say* leaflet starts on the very first page, where we find:

'By 2023, nine of the ten nuclear power stations that we currently rely on for 15 per cent of our electricity needs are likely to have closed.' On page two it says: 'By 2020, 15 per cent of our energy will come from renewable sources such as wind, solar, tidal and others.'

This confuses 'electricity' with 'energy' in order to make nuclear seem more important and renewable energy only equivalent. According to the government's own 2006 estimates a nuclear replacement programme would provide only 3 per cent of total 'energy' use.

Have your say by challenging these misleading claims – ask the government why their official leaflet contains wrong information.

Criteria and siting

There are several points you can make about the criteria - don't just stick to the ones the government has decided it will use to make a strategic, national decision. Comment on all or any criteria. And don't forget, if you don't say it all now or don't have the necessary information - this is an informal comment period. The formal consultation on the draft, final list of sites won't begin until the Autumn.

A link to the full list of criteria identified by the government can be found at the end of this briefing.

Flooding risk

Ask if the risk of flooding for your local site has been assessed using the most up to date predictions for sea level rise and potential flooding impacts. Whose data are they using and how old is it? Will the site be safe for:

- 60 years of reactor operations
- 100 years for storing the plants total stockpile of highly radioactive spent fuel;
- long enough to operate a packaging (encapsulation) plant for the spent fuel once the last of it is 'cool' enough to package for disposal and
- all decommissioning and clean up activities

Size of site to accommodate all necessary plants

Do the plans show where the spent fuel stores will be or the spent fuel encapsulation plant? The store will hold 60 years worth of spent fuel - the encapsulation plant is meant to enclose it in a form to make it safe for disposal. If it's not clear to you, ask. The facilities are essential parts of a new build site and local councils and others will be asked to sign off on them.

Timing of new build

Sites will be on the final list accepted if the reactor vendors and utilities can prove they will have operating plants by 2025. Look at the information on the site near you - and ask if all plants can be constructed (safely) and have the necessary grid connection by that time. Otherwise, it shouldn't be on the list.

Alternative uses

Under the overall siting process alternative uses for a site should be considered. Do the nuclear plans conflict with other uses the local community would want the site to be used for? Has a local wind farm - or any other project - been knocked back because of an assumption that local people want a reactor?

Planning blight

Given the credit crunch, delays and cost overruns on other new build projects, problems with planning laws - and many other things - it could be another 10 years before any work starts on the proposed site near you. In fact the prospect of a new reactor could actively discourage other industries moving into the area. This type of planning blight is something the Government has refused to answer questions on. Ask if the nominators for the site can prove they can and will build within the specified timeline (in their nomination).

If they can't, what will the government do to ensure there is no long term impact on the area if nothing happens at the site?

Other activities - will decommissioning stop?

Some of the utilities promoting new reactors have suggested that operations on adjacent sites (like decommissioning older ones) might have to stop if new build goes ahead. This is because they believe new build would take priority over all other activities. Does this affect your site? How do local people feel about this?

Emergency planning

This matter has been relegated to 'flag for local consideration' as a criterion - meaning it won't form part of a national strategic overview on where to site new reactors. Yet an accident or terrorist attack resulting in a major release of radioactive contamination would involve national, regional and local resources. Ask if the Government will consider all the resources necessary to deal with an emergency - and insist this issue is considered at a national level.

Public engagement

A key part of the nomination process is that those nominating sites are meant to have engaged with local communities. Do you feel they engaged in a timely and appropriate manner? Were your questions answered? Were all the presentations purely from pro-nuclear people?

Get your response in by May 14

Once the May 14 deadline is past, no additional information will be heard from the public. The government will make a decision on which sites are suitable by winter 2009, and the list of sites will be finalised in a Nuclear National Policy Statement. Listed sites can then start to apply for planning permission.

The proposed sites and the companies nominating them are:

1. Bradwell, Essex, NDA
2. Braystones, Cumbria, RWE npower
3. Dungeness, Kent, EDF Energy
4. Hartlepool, Durham, EDF Energy
5. Heysham, Lancashire, EDF Energy
6. Hinkley Point, Somerset, EDF Energy
7. Kirksanton, Cumbria, RWE npower
8. Oldbury, Gloucestershire, the NDA and Eon
9. Sellafield, Cumbria, NDA
10. Sizewell, Suffolk, EDF Energy
11. Wylfa, Anglesey, RWE npower and the NDA

To have your say just click on the relevant site in the list above. All the supporting documents the nominating company would like you to see should be there, together with instructions about how you can add your comments to the nomination.

The full set of criteria - exclusionary, discretionary, local only

The full Government report on its response to the consultation last year on what should be included in the criteria and how they should be described can be found [here \(pages 13-15\)](#).

A printable version can be downloaded [here](#) (PDF format).