

Appendix A: Questions and County Council responses relating to the consultation on a new National Policy Statement for Fusion Energy

1. Do you agree that the planning process for fusion energy facilities should be aligned and maintained with other complex energy generation facilities?

Yes, the County Council would agree that fusion energy facilities should be aligned and maintained in-line with other complex energy generation facilities. By doing this it will maintain consistency for all those involved in the process.

2. Do you agree with the Government's proposal to include all fusion technologies in the NPS process?

Yes, given that fusion technology is still at a very early stage of development, the NPS should include all fusion technologies. This will enable flexibility within the system. It maybe that in the longer term this could be reviewed if it becomes clear that a single technology or technologies become common place. While it is not expected that an NPS to be site specific, but such a national policy statement ought to provide some guidance on appropriate locations might be / not be and expect that promoters would take this into account. There does seem to be some guidance being proposed to help assess reasonable alternatives. This seems to conflict with an open sited /developer led approach. Clearly some locations (in areas flood risk, close/within population centres) are unsuitable.

3. Do you agree with the Government's proposal to take an open-sited approach in the fusion NPS process?

Yes. It is clear at this early stage that fusion companies are already looking at sites and that government intervention is not required in identifying / purchasing sites. Given the range of technologies at this stage, the site of size/ site requirements may vary and therefore the companies are best placed to undertake the selection.

4. Do you agree with the Government's proposal to include all fusion energy facilities in England, independent of capacity, in the fusion NPS process?

Yes. By capturing all fusion energy facilities in the NPS process, this will maintain consistency in the approval system. At this early stage in the development of fusion it will also remove the burden for local authorities in terms of understanding new and very complex technologies

5. Do you agree with the Government's proposal to include both thermal and electrical facilities in the fusion NSIP process?

Yes. See answer to question 4.

6. Do you think the definition of a fusion energy facility, as provided in the Energy Act 2023, is suitable for distinguishing between a fusion energy facility and/or fusion research facility for the purpose of this NPS?

The County Council is not suitably qualified to comment on whether the definition set out in the Energy Act 2023 is appropriate.

7. Do you agree with the Government's proposal to not set a deployment deadline for fusion energy facilities?

Yes. It is not considered necessary as there is already significant investment and momentum in fusion. This is in terms of STEP, but also from private companies who are identifying challenging but rapid.

8. Should developers consider any other factors in assessing reasonable alternatives for fusion energy facilities?

The list identified would appear to be comprehensive and in line with what would be expected.

9. Do you believe that the proposed criteria cover all aspects necessary for assessing the suitability of sites for fusion energy facilities?

Yes.

10. Are there any additional criteria that should be considered in the assessment process?

Proposals should prioritise previously used land, avoid greenbelt, protected landscapes and higher quality farmland and be located where they can assist with regeneration and levelling up. Such criteria could be added.

11. Do you think there should there be a separate set of criteria for different fusion technologies?

Without seeing detailed information regarding each type of fusion technology, it is difficult to fully answer this. However, it would appear that one set of criteria covering all fusion technologies would be adequate at this stage in the process.

12. Do you agree with the proposed model for implementation of the Fusion NPS?

Yes.

Questions and County Council responses relating to the Appraisal of Sustainability Scoping Report

1. Have there been any omissions of policies, plans or programmes relevant to the scoping of the AoS?

No it would appear that all the relevant documents have been identified.

2. Do you agree that the baseline data that have been, or will be collected, are relevant and of sufficient detail to support the AoS?

Yes

3. Do you agree with the selection and definition of key sustainability issues?

Yes, the baseline data looks comprehensive.

4. Are there any key baseline data available that have not been identified that are, or could be, use in support of the issues?

No.

5. Do you agree with the implications and opportunities that have been identified for the emerging NPS EN-8?

Yes

6. Do the AoS objectives and decision-making questions provide a sound framework against which to assess the sustainability performance of the emerging NPS EN-8?

Yes.

7. Do you agree that aligning the assessment scale of the emerging NPS EN-8 with that of the AoS of EN-1 to EN-5 is a reasonable approach?

Yes.

8. Do you have further suggestions regarding the scope of the AoS and its proposed assessment of NPS EN-8 on fusion energy?

No.