

## **Nuclear Industry Association Response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's 'Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system' consultation.**

The Nuclear Industry Association (NIA) welcomes the chance to respond to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's 'Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system' consultation.

The NIA is the trade association and representative body for the civil nuclear industry in the UK. We represent around 280 companies operating across all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle, including the current and prospective operators of nuclear power stations, international designers, and vendors of nuclear power stations, and those engaged in decommissioning, waste management and nuclear liabilities management. Members also include nuclear equipment suppliers, engineering and construction firms, nuclear research organisations, and legal, financial and consultancy companies.

Due to the diversity of our membership, our views in this submission will cover high-level, industrywide matters. Our members may choose to make their own detailed submissions.

### **Executive Summary**

The NIA welcomes the positive intent in 'Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system' consultation and the recognition of the importance of reforming the planning system to unlock clean energy.

Nuclear is essential to the UK's energy mix as the only single technology that can provide clean, firm, and sovereign electricity, as well as providing a source of clean heat at scale. Nuclear currently supplies around 15% of our electricity from just over half a square mile of land, and according to United Nations' analysis, nuclear has the lowest lifecycle carbon, lowest land use, and lowest impact on ecosystems of any electricity source.<sup>1</sup>

We strongly support efforts outlined in this consultation to reform the planning system as the functioning of the planning regime has been challenging for energy projects. In particular, the system has not been proportional in assessing projects and considering the urgency of deploying low carbon energy sources to combat the climate crisis.

We would encourage the Government to apply a Net Zero Duty on all relevant public authorities to ensure proportionality in the planning system to facilitate and expedite the delivery of low carbon energy projects.

### **Chapter 9 – Supporting green energy and the environment**

#### **Question 73: Do you agree with the proposed changes to the NPPF to give greater support to renewable and low carbon energy?**

- a) We agree with the proposed changes to direct decision makers to give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and proposals' contribution to meeting a net zero future.

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<sup>1</sup>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2022), *Carbon Neutrality in the UNECE Region: Integrated Life-cycle Assessment of Electricity Sources*. Available at: [https://unece.org/sites/default/files/202208/LCA\\_0708\\_correction.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/202208/LCA_0708_correction.pdf). Accessed: 22 September 2024.

**Question 81: Do you have any other comments on actions that can be taken through planning to address climate change?**

- a) We would encourage the Government to apply a Net Zero Duty on all relevant public authorities and Government Departments to ensure proportionality in the planning system to facilitate and expedite the delivery of low carbon energy projects.
- b) Given the UK's urgent need to address climate change, all public authorities should have a clear statutory duty to prioritize the development of low-carbon energy sources and take a holistic view of environmental considerations.
- c) Public authorities and regulators must also be adequately resourced to accelerate the delivery of low carbon nuclear projects, essential for addressing climate change and our net zero future.

***Further Information***

The NIA is happy to provide more context, or any clarifications desired on the content of our response and to ask our members where appropriate for additional information that may be useful.

Please contact Lauren Rowe, Senior Policy Analyst for the Nuclear Industry Association, at [Lauren.Rowe@niauk.org](mailto:Lauren.Rowe@niauk.org) to do this.