

# GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION HIGHLIGHTS

## April 2023

*A brief summary of current government consultations of potential interest to RSN members. This is not intended as an exhaustive list of all relevant consultations.*

### **Planning for new energy infrastructure: revisions to National Policy Statements – Department for Energy Security and Net Zero**

The energy National Policy Statements (NPS) set out the government's policy for the delivery of energy infrastructure and provide the legal framework for planning decisions.

Covering renewables, carbon capture and hydrogen, oil and gas pipelines and electricity networks, a range of updates are expected to speed up the planning process so that low-carbon generation can be brought forward at the right time and in the right places, whilst protecting and enhancing the environment on land and sea and ensuring local views are taken into account.

This consultation is more focused and seeks views on:

- clarifying that offshore wind is now a critical national priority, including the related onshore and offshore network infrastructure
- to deliver the 50GW of offshore wind including 5GW of floating wind, we need to cut the process time by over half. The government therefore announced it was introducing the offshore wind environmental improvement package to help accelerate deployment of offshore wind, whilst protecting and enhancing the marine environment
- strengthening the electricity networks NPS to include more detail on the role of strategic planning of networks, which considers the network as a whole, rather than just individual transmission projects
- updating the civil and military aviation and defence interests to reflect the status of energy developments, including offshore wind, and how impacts to civil and military aviation, meteorological radars and other types of defence interests should be managed

This consultation closes on 25 May 2023.

[Planning for new energy infrastructure: revisions to National Policy Statements - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-new-energy-infrastructure-revisions-to-national-policy-statements)  
([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

### **Community benefits for electricity transmission network infrastructure – Department for Energy Security and Net Zero**

Government are consulting on a recommended approach to community benefits for electricity transmission network infrastructure.

The consultation is proposing to create voluntary guidance for industry and communities when developing individual community benefit packages. This guidance will cover how to deliver direct benefits payments to eligible individuals and wider community benefits. They also recommend establishing a recommended level of funding for community benefits in agreement with Ofgem.

In this consultation government are seeking to gain the perspectives and views of different stakeholders to establish an approach that is both fair and effective. This includes stakeholders who could be involved in:

- developing and delivering communities benefits
- communities who could receive community benefits

This consultation closes on 25 May 2023.

[Community benefits for electricity transmission network infrastructure - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/community-benefits-for-electricity-transmission-network-infrastructure)  
([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

## **Increasing planning fees and performance: technical consultation – Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities**

This consultation seeks views on proposals to increase planning fees and to improve the performance of local planning authorities. Government want you to tell them what you think about the proposals to:

- increase planning fees by 35% for major applications and 25% for all other applications
- additional fees for bespoke or 'fast track' services
- make an annual inflation-related adjustment to planning fees
- ring-fence additional fees income
- double fees for retrospective applications
- remove the 'free-go' for repeat applications
- introduce a prior approval fee for the permitted development right allowing the Crown to develop sites within the perimeter of a closed defence site
- build planning capacity and capability within local authorities, including challenges in recruitment and retention, and how these can be addressed
- reduce the Planning Guarantee from 26 weeks to 16 weeks for non-major applications
- improve the quality of the local authority planning service by monitoring more performance measures.

This consultation closes on 25 April 2023.

[Increasing planning fees and performance: technical consultation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/increasing-planning-fees-and-performance-technical-consultation)

## **Technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy – Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities**

The Infrastructure Levy is a reform to the existing system of developer contributions – Section 106 planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy - in England. This consultation will inform the design of the Levy and of regulations that will set out its operation in detail. A further consultation on the drafting of those regulations will be published in due course. Alongside this publication is a report on an earlier design of the Levy, commissioned by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

This consultation closes on 9 June 2023.

[Technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/technical-consultation-on-the-infrastructure-levy)

## **Environmental Outcomes Reports: a new approach to environmental assessment – Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities**

Part 6 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will secure powers to implement a new system of environmental assessment known as Environmental Outcomes Reports. This will allow the government to replace the EU-derived Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment processes with a streamlined system that places greater focus on delivering our environmental ambitions.

The introduction of outcomes-based approach to the Environmental Outcomes Reports allows the government to reflect its environmental priorities directly into plan-making and decision-making process on the largest developments. The feedback from this consultation will help them establish their approach to developing these environmental outcomes across government.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is required to review the two existing sets of environmental impact assessment regulations it is responsible for every five

years to consider whether the regulations have met the intended objectives of the legislation and understand their effect on business. The regulations are:

- the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017;
- the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

This consultation closes on 9 June 2023.

[Environmental Outcomes Reports: a new approach to environmental assessment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/environmental-outcomes-reports-a-new-approach-to-environmental-assessment)

### **Climate change adaptation reporting power: plans for the fourth round – Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs**

The government is consulting on the approach to the fourth round of reporting under the Adaptation Reporting Power (ARP4 Strategy). They want to gather views from infrastructure operators and public bodies. We are asking about:

- the usefulness of reporting
- how to improve on this for future rounds
- what should be contained in the next strategy to benefit reporting organisations and government

The central proposal is to change the timing of round 4. This is so that it can better inform future statutory UK Climate Change Risk Assessments and National Adaptation Programmes. We also want to streamline the reporting requirements.

This consultation closes on 5 April 2023.

[Climate change adaptation reporting power: plans for the fourth round - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/climate-change-adaptation-reporting-power-plans-for-the-fourth-round)