

# Nuclear power plant site plans released by government

Eight new locations announced by Chris Huhne first guide to future of nuclear power in UK since Japan's Fukushima disaster

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The new sites are all near existing nuclear power stations like Bradwell in Essex. Photograph: Brian Harris/Alamy

The government has pushed ahead with plans for new nuclear power plants in the UK, as it confirmed a list of eight sites where the next generation of reactors can be built.

The eight sites are: Bradwell, Essex; Hartlepool; Heysham, Lancashire; Hinkley Point, Somerset; Oldbury, south Gloucestershire; Sellafield, Cumbria; Sizewell, Suffolk; and Wylfa, Anglesey. All are adjacent to existing nuclear sites. It is the first major announcement on the future of nuclear power in the UK since the Fukushima disaster in Japan.

The energy and climate change secretary, Chris Huhne, had signalled last month that plans for new reactors in the UK were on track after an initial report on Fukushima from nuclear chief inspector Mike Weightman ruled out the need to curtail the operation of stations in the UK.

The plans for new nuclear power plants are part of a series of national policy statements on energy that were published on Thursday, following public consultation.

They will be debated and voted on in parliament, but ministers are hopeful that, with a pro-nuclear majority in the Commons, they will win.

The energy minister, Charles Hendry, said: "These plans set out our energy need to help guide the planning process, so that if acceptable proposals come forward in appropriate places, they will not face unnecessary hold ups."

Nuclear power is one of the issues that divided Conservatives and Liberal Democrats when they entered government, with the coalition deal allowing Lib Dem MPs to abstain. Huhne, a Lib Dem, has since given his backing to new reactors.

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