



Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

Coal Generation in Great Britain – The Pathway to a Low-Carbon Future: Consultation Document (November 2016)

Historic England Response

Historic England is the Government's statutory adviser on all matters relating to the historic environment in England. We are a non-departmental public body established under the National Heritage Act 1983 and sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). We champion and protect England's historic places, providing expert advice to local planning authorities, developers, owners and communities, to help ensure our historic environment is properly understood, enjoyed and cared for.

The majority of the questions in this consultation lie outside Historic England's expertise and responsibilities and we have therefore limited our response to the following:

Consultation Question 4

We would welcome views and supporting evidence on the wider impacts of regulating the closure of unabated coal by 2025, particularly where these are additional to what might be expected without this measure.

Coal- and oil-fired power stations are among the largest and most recognisably industrial complexes the 20th century produced. They had a profound impact on the British landscape and the electricity they generated had a transformational impact on our economy and society. Reaching an unrivalled scale and level of technological sophistication by the 1960's, these enormous installations have been described by our former Chairman, Sir Neil Cossons, as the 'great temples to the carbon age'.

The further protection of any coal- and oil-fired power stations by listing or any associated designated landscape registration (beside the few already protected) is, at this time, very unlikely and a number have been issued with Certificates of Immunity from Listing, thereby giving the energy companies or any future developer the confidence that they will not be afforded statutory protection in planning for change. A selective number of power stations are already protected – best-known of which is Battersea Power Station, a Grade II* listing.

However, Historic England recognise the high technological interest and wider landscape impact of these sites and, to complement our own initial photographic surveys, we have produced guidelines on the recording of redundant power stations together with the archiving of selective records and artefacts - <https://historicengland.org.uk/images->



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[books/publications/englands-redundant-post-war-coal-and-oil-fired-power-stations/](#). A number of meetings have already been held with the energy companies and Energy UK to encourage these companies to include recording programmes within their remediation and demolition strategies, and at Ironbridge B, Shropshire, Uniper Energy have recently commissioned heritage consultants to undertake such work. Any assistance the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy could provide to encourage the owners of both coal- and oil-fired power stations to do the same would be very welcome.

We also note within the consultation document that a workshop has been held with the energy industry and the Planning Inspectorate on the redevelopment of former coal-fired power stations. Such options could perhaps consider how this former industrial use could be celebrated through design, the installation and display of artefacts, and the possible retention of buildings or landscape features of local interest.

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