



## Working with Communities – Implementing Geological Disposal

### Response form

The consultation is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/working-with-communities-implementing-geological-disposal>

The closing date for receipt of responses is 19/04/2018

Please return completed forms by post or email to:

GDF Team  
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Victoria  
1 Victoria Street  
SW1H0ET

Tel: 020 7215 5000

Email: [GDF-WWC@beis.gov.uk](mailto:GDF-WWC@beis.gov.uk)

### About You

We will only use your personal information for the purpose of administering the consultation and assessing the responses.

**Name (This is a required response):**

**Address / Postcode:** Wood Farm, Westward Ho! Leiston, Suffolk, IP164HT

**Email Address:** wilx@btinternet.com

**Would you like to be updated on Working with Communities policy developments by email? If you answer yes to this question, your email address will be added to our delivery body's mailing list.**

Yes

No

**Are you happy to be contacted if we have any questions about your response? This is a required response.**

Yes

No

**Are you happy for your response to be published with identifying information? This is a required response.**

We will summarise all responses and place this summary on the GOV.UK website. This summary will include a list of names of organisations that responded but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details.

Yes

No, I would like identifying information removed

Comments: None

**Are you happy for your response to be disclosed? This is a required response.**

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information legislation (primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please say so clearly in writing when you send your response to the consultation. It would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded by us as a confidentiality request.

Yes

No, I want my response to be treated as confidential

Comments: [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Are you answering on behalf of yourself or an organisation? This is a required response.**

I am responding on behalf of myself.

I am responding on behalf of an organisation.

## About you - Organisations

If you are responding as an individual, you do not need to answer the rest of this section, go directly to the section titled 'Responding to this Consultation'. **If you are answering on behalf of an organisation, a response is required to the rest of this section.**

**What is the name of your organisation?** Together Against Sizewell C

**Who does this organisation represent?** Residents of Leiston and adjoining areas threatened by Sizewell C.

**What type of organisation is it?**

Please tick **one** box in the table.

	<b>Organisation</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Enterprise Partnership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Civil Society Group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regulator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Charity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Religious Organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic Institution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

If you have selected other, or would like to provide more information, please provide further details. [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Approximately, how many members are there of / employees are there in your organisation?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	1 – 10
<input type="checkbox"/>	11 – 49
<input type="checkbox"/>	50 – 249
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	250 – 999
<input type="checkbox"/>	1000 – 4999
<input type="checkbox"/>	5000 or more
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

**How did you assemble the views of your members?**

Please answer here Through email and direct discussion consultation.

## Responding to this consultation

The questions in this consultation are structured around the 8 main policy points that we believe are key to the Working with Communities policy proposals:

1. Identifying communities
2. Formative Engagement
3. Community Partnership
4. Community Stakeholder Forum
5. Community Agreement
6. Community investment funding
7. Right of withdrawal
8. Test of public support

There will be 10 questions overall, and you can respond to all sections of the consultation, or skip those sections which don't interest you.

Each section contains a brief overview of the consultation document and directs you to further information within the consultation document.

Further information on the consultation, policy proposals and background and context on geological disposal can be found in paragraphs 1.1 to 4.4 of the consultation document.

### How did you hear about this consultation?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Gov.uk website
<input type="checkbox"/>	National Media
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Media
<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Body
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say

### If you would like, you can provide further details about how you heard of this consultation.

Please answer here: Our organisation communicates with and is directly connected to the growing body of disapproval about the government's energy policy, from site-based groups to universities, politicians and media.

## Identifying Communities

### The proposal

Evidence from other infrastructure projects has shown that there is no single agreed approach to identifying the boundaries of a local community. The proposals in this consultation use a combination of the impacts of the development and administrative boundaries. It is proposed that a wide Search Area is identified initially, working towards the identification of a smaller area – which will be deemed as a ‘Potential Host Community’ – as the siting process progresses and the surface and underground sites for a geological disposal facility identified.

A community needs to be identified at the right point to enable the appropriate engagement, which may also include the relevant principal local authorities. This will provide the basis for fair and transparent community engagement for the distribution of community investment funding; to enable the right of withdrawal from the siting process to be exercised; and if the community remains supportive after the engagement and information gathering process, to undertake the final test of public support.

Further information on the policy proposals can be found in paragraphs 4.5 to 4.21 of the consultation document.

#### **1. Do you agree with this approach of identifying communities? Do you have any other suggestions that we should consider?**

Please answer here: Despite the often-used assurances from ministers and Secretaries of State that ‘arrangements are in place’ for the long-term management of radioactive waste, the fact is that there is no universally accepted, nor demonstrably safe means of ensuring the isolation of waste over the long timescales involved. The uncertainties which attend the behaviour of waste over the millennia during which some waste will remain lethal to living organisms makes the deliberate policy of generating more waste from a new nuclear build programme irresponsible and a dereliction of the first responsibility of any government. There should be no new nuclear build. The first stage in any process designed to commit 500,000 cubic metres of radioactive legacy waste bearing 78 million units of radioactivity and an unknown volume of new build waste representing far more radioactivity than that contained in the legacy waste should be to demonstrate the safety of the process. That demonstration has not yet been achieved. The efforts to identify a potential GDF host community are therefore premature. The wide-ranging efforts involved in prosecuting an MRWS2 programme will inevitably generate concern and division in communities. Such disquiet may prove to be unnecessary in the event that disposal cannot be shown to be safe or sufficiently safe to garner the confidence of a potential host community. At present, the RWM is still working to resolve a number of important uncertainties around the safety of a GDF. Some of those uncertainties are potential show-stoppers and it is quite irresponsible and presumptuous of BEIS to couch the language around the GDF process in such positive and imperative terms when such uncertainties exist. The purpose of this approach is clear: if enough people are fooled by the positive language with which BEIS refers to the GDF and the process around it while making few if any references to the problems of demonstrating safety, they will assume that the disposal of radioactive waste in a deep geological repository is only being delayed by the need for a host community to be identified. There is almost total public silence from

the authorities and the regulatory bodies about these technical and scientific uncertainties. Even the EA trumpets the 'safe' method of managing radioactive waste disposal when it is fully aware that these technical problems exist. Mr. Harrington says in his introduction to the consultation document that the idea is to keep the radioactive waste away from people. The truth is – as Mr Harrington should know but perhaps he doesn't – *that a repository has to be designed to leak in order to allow radioactive gas to escape*. The impact of that gas release is unknown. Water ingress and egress, criticality, microbial activity over time, the copper corrosion issue (which has caused the Swedish Environmental Court to refuse authorisation of this means of cladding spent nuclear fuel) are all important issues with which RWM are still grappling and which must be resolved to the satisfaction of an independent group of experts which include critics of the industry. Potential host communities are unlikely to be aware of these and other safety issues which attend the disposal programme and informing people is vital to the openness and transparency brief which this process is supposed to be demonstrating but also important to allow an informed decision to be made.

Assuming that government wishes to operate a parallel programme of resolving the scientific and technical uncertainties around disposal at the same time as putting the search for a potential host community into effect, the appeal for volunteer communities should firstly make it absolutely clear that:

- A number of potentially serious technical and scientific uncertainties about the safety of disposal remain, some of which may not be resolved and which may, therefore, cause the disposal programme to fail;
- The ethical and moral issues surrounding the disposal of waste from a new nuclear build programme have not been discussed, despite a recommendation from the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management that new build waste management should be subject to a separate evaluation process given the much higher concentration of fissile material and heat in fuel from new build reactors up to 60GWd/te new build waste;
- The GDF will be required to contain 500,000 cubic metres of radioactive **legacy** waste and an unknown volume of new build, hotter and more radioactive waste; legacy waste represents 78 million units of radioactivity and new build waste will exceed this amount.
- The morality and wisdom of generating new waste for which there is no proven, safe means of management is an issue which has not been discussed and which will have long term implications for future generations;
- A nuclear waste repository will inevitably leak some radioactivity into the environment, either through the release of radioactive gas as canisters decay or through the egress of water which will inevitably be present in a repository: the impact on health of even low doses of radioactivity is the source of great controversy and the evidence which indicates that contemporary assumptions are wrong is compelling.

## Formative Engagement

### The proposal

Discussions can be initiated by anyone with an interest in a geological disposal facility siting process. To ensure an open, transparent and broad conversation as the siting process progresses, these discussions should be opened up to include people more widely in the community. To move into formative engagement, all principal local authorities should be informed and involved, unless they are content for formative engagement to proceed without their involvement.

To support this aim, a formative engagement team will be established to help build confidence in the community engagement process and to start to understand and answer any questions the community may have. The formative engagement team may include representatives from local government including the relevant principal local authorities. It will also need to include the delivery body, an independent chair and facilitators to ensure transparent, appropriate and constructive discussions.

To help communities shape their role in these early discussions, the delivery body will cover the costs of community engagement activities and provide access to independent support.

Further information on the policy proposals can be found in paragraphs 4.22 to 4.36 of the consultation document.

### **2. Do you agree with the approach of formative engagement? Do you support the use of a formative engagement team to carry out information gathering activities? Are there any other approaches we should consider?**

Please answer here: Ensuring that 'principal local authorities should be informed and involved' is different from saying that those local authorities should be in agreement or required to give approval. This is an abrogation of the responsibilities placed on local authorities. A 'formative engagement team' sound very much like a public relations body. However, while its role of helping the community to understand the issues is admirable, any information programme must be based on evidence and documentation for which the provenance can be identified and vouched for as being from impeccable sources, including from those who challenge the conventional wisdom. TASC does not agree with what amounts to a by-passing of the democratic process by allowing anyone – an individual or an association of a few people – to volunteer. The siting of a GDF is a major engineering project which will cover a large surface area of land and an even greater area of space underground. It will be required to play host to a potentially on-going and never-ending volume of radioactive waste: CoRWM's plea in its final 2007 report that its recommendation for disposal referred only to legacy waste has been cynically ignored by government which sees the report as a 'get-out-of-jail-free' ticket which can and will encompass all radioactive waste including the hotter and more radioactive fuel from new build up to 60GWd/te. Therefore, the presence or potential presence of a GDF in an area is a matter for a community of people, not just an individual and therefore it should be incumbent on a community, represented by councillors it elected and given a mandate by a clear majority of the electorate to accept the invitation to host. In this respect, it is difficult to

get away from the principle that a community must volunteer and that any attempt to short-cut this process should be discarded.

## The Community Partnership and Community Agreement

### The proposals

For the siting process to be successful, the delivery body will need to work in partnership with representatives of the relevant principal local authorities and other representative members of the local community if they wish to be involved, which could include parish, town or community councils, residents, businesses and voluntary and community organisations (refer to Table 3 of the Working with Communities Consultation Document). It is proposed that a Community Partnership would be formed from organisations identified during formative engagement as important to the local area. The Community Partnership should also involve members from the delivery body. Members of the Community Partnership will be responsible for sharing information between the community and the delivery body and entering into dialogue with people more widely in the community about a geological disposal facility.

An agreement will be signed by the Community Partnership to establish a suitable level of engagement and agreement on ways of working between the delivery body and the community throughout the siting process. The agreement will be used to track progress and will enable the community members to hold the delivery body to account in the provision of information.

A community is constructively engaged in the siting process when a Community Partnership has been formed and there is a Community Agreement in place. At this point community investment funding of up to £1 million per community, per year, is made available.

To support the operation of the Community Partnership, a Community Stakeholder Forum could be set up to provide outreach to the people in the community more widely. The Community Stakeholder Forum is proposed to be chaired by a member of the community partnership, and could take the form of open public meetings inviting people from the Search Area and neighbouring local authority areas (as appropriate) to discuss the siting process. This would allow questions to be asked and concerns to be raised and for updates to be provided on the work of the Community Partnership. These meetings could be held at regular intervals and could ensure that anyone who wants to know more about the work of the Community Partnership has an opportunity to do so.

Further information on the policy proposals can be found in paragraphs 4.37 to 4.59 of the consultation document.

### **3. Do you agree with this approach to forming a Community Partnership? Are there other approaches we should consider?**

Please answer here: Yes, but the agreement into which it enters to establish 'a suitable level of engagement and agreement on ways of working between the delivery body and the community throughout the siting process' leaves much to be determined. The 'level of engagement' should be agreed in advance so that it is delivered in increasing levels of detail with the ability for community forum members, on behalf of the public, to trigger 'joint fact finding' aspects of the engagement where particularly

difficult of contentious issues exist. There should also be a 'presumption of disclosure' written into any agreement or constitution to avoid charges of concealing information.

**4. Do you agree with the approach to engaging people more widely in the community through a Community Stakeholder Forum? Are there other approaches we should consider?**

Please answer here: Yes, but the community stakeholder forum must be representative of the wider community and should reflect the composition of the community in terms of pressure groups, youth groups, environmental and social interest groups. The critical issue is how decisions the community stakeholder forum is required to make will be arrived at. Before the formation of the group, a clear and unambiguous constitution needs to be agreed and put to the forum for adoption or amendment until all are satisfied and agreed as to its efficacy. This constitution might form part of the over-arching agreement discussed above.

**5. Do you agree with the proposal for a Community Agreement and what it could potentially include? Are there other approaches we should consider?**

Please answer here: See above. The community agreement will be the bedrock on which confidence or lack of it will be based. If the agreement is wrong, it could undo the process entirely. It must, therefore, have an in-built ability to review and amend as required and as sanctioned by a pre-determined percentage of the community forum members.

## Community investment funding

### The Proposal

The Government will make community investment funding available via the delivery body of up to £1 million per community, per year in the early part of the geological disposal facility siting process, rising to up to £2.5 million per community, per year for communities that progress to deep investigative boreholes that are needed to assess the potential geological suitability of sites. Community investment funding can only be used to fund projects, schemes or initiatives that: provide economic development opportunities, enhance the natural and built environment, and/or improve community well-being. A community investment panel, made up of members of the community and the delivery body would review and decide on applications for funding against agreed criteria. Applications for community investment funding can be made by anyone within the Search Area.

Further information on the policy proposals can be found in paragraphs 4.60 to 4.73 of the consultation document.

### **6. Do you agree with the proposed approach to the way community investment funding would be provided? Are there alternatives that we should consider?**

Please answer here: The principle of compensation for potential host communities is one we support. We have no view on the level of funding except to say that £1m a year seems rather low. Two issues arise: how would the disbursement of the money be decided and with what level of democratic oversight, and, if the principle of compensating communities for in effect agreeing to be custodians of the nation's nuclear waste, why have not the communities around Sellafield, Torness, Sizewell and other sites retaining considerable volumes of nuclear waste at nuclear facilities been benefiting from the same arrangement for years?

## Right of withdrawal

### The proposals

Communities can enact their right of withdrawal at any stage of the siting process; the geological disposal facility delivery body can also withdraw at any stage if they determine that the siting process is unlikely to be successful in a particular community.

Should the right of withdrawal be enacted prior to the siting process having progressed to identifying a Potential Host Community, the people within the Search Area would decide whether they wish to withdraw from discussions.

Further information on the policy proposals can be found in paragraphs 4.74 to 4.82 of the consultation document.

**7. Do you agree with the proposed process for the right of withdrawal? Do you have views on how else this could be decided? Are there alternatives that we should consider?**

Please answer here: The right to withdraw is fundamental to the process and must be available to communities throughout the process.

## Test of Public Support

### The proposal

Before a final decision is made by the delivery body to seek regulatory approval and development consent to proceed with the construction of a geological disposal facility at a particular site, there must be a test to ensure that there is public support to proceed. The test is designed to elicit a final view from the people in the community as to whether they are content for the delivery body to proceed to apply for development consent for a geological disposal facility in their area, and other permissions to proceed from the environmental and nuclear safety and security regulators. The test could be carried out using a range of methods, including a local referendum, a formal consultation or statistically representative polling.

The test will be undertaken by the people within the Potential Host Community, as they will be directly affected by the proposed geological disposal facility development. The Community Partnership will decide when the test of public support should take place and the method by which it is delivered. If at this stage, the principal local authority representatives no longer wish to support the process proceeding, then we recognise it is unlikely that the Community Partnership will be able to launch any test of public support at that time. Without a positive test of public support, a final decision by the delivery body to proceed with the subsequent stages will not be possible.

Further information on the policy proposals can be found in paragraphs 4.83 to 4.89 of the consultation document.

**8. Do you agree with the approach to the test of public support? Do you agree that the Community Partnership should decide how and when the test of public support should be carried out? Do you have views on how else this could be decided? Are there alternatives that we should consider?**

Please answer here: Need regular tests of public acceptability at agreed stages throughout the process, not just one 'final' test. TASC would support a local referendum as the delivery method provided the information upon which the referendum is based is prepared by a representative group drawn from the community stakeholder forum and advisers they wish to engage. The over-riding requirement is to ensure the process and the development it supports to be demonstrably and incontrovertibly supported by a two thirds majority of those within the potential host community as well as those outside the potential host community who will be affected adversely, such as those on the transport routes to the GDF. But this is just the beginning: once the test of support has been demonstrated and the potential host community become the host community, there has to be a mechanism through which on-going public support can be tested at regular intervals so that the community partnership and the community stakeholder forum can reflect the view of the community itself in its representation to the developer/government in terms of its desire to continue or to withdraw. Moreover, and in respect of this, the Agreement and/or constitution must address the relationship between these entities, their responsibilities and their ability to represent the level of public support as expressed at appropriate times throughout the process and through the relationship as set out in the agreement/constitution. The will of the people should drive the process and the

process needs to accommodate the expression of that will through the structure of the various bodies constructed.

## The Role of County Councils, Unitary Authorities and District Councils

### The proposals

This consultation includes proposals which set out clear roles for relevant principal local authorities to perform within the siting process. The relevant principal local authorities for each community will be able to demonstrate their support for engagement with the siting process and the Community Partnership through:

- choosing to be members of the Community Partnership;
- as members of the Community Partnership, deciding to remain engaged in the siting process by not wishing to invoke the right to withdrawal through the Community Partnership; and
- deciding whether to support the test of public support that comes at the end of the engagement process. Relevant principal local authorities will also need to help design and launch this test as part of their role in the Community Partnership.

Further information on the policy proposals can be found in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.12 of the consultation document.

### **9. Do you feel this process provides suitably defined roles for local authorities in the siting process? Are there alternatives that we should consider?**

Please answer here: Member of local authorities should be elected, not officers. They should have the same responsibilities and liabilities as other members of the partnership and not be required to 'show their support for engagement with the siting process' as though it is a duty for them to do so. They should be free to resign, argue for a cessation of engagement, to call for an invocation of the right to withdraw and to argue against the tests (plural – i.e. not only at the end of the engagement process, but throughout it) of public support. Moreover, local authorities may help to design and launch the test of public support, but it should do so in collaboration and in support of the partnership/community forum.

## Other Views

### **10. Do you have any other views on the matters presented in this consultation?**

Please answer here: TASC stresses that the process has to have integrity and openness if it is to generate confidence in the community. The insistence by the ONR, the EA and RWM that disposal is 'safe' is not at all a good start at generating such transparency. Time and again, authorities have been told that obfuscation and selective fact giving is a negative and ultimately divisive method of operating which generates division and distrust. If there are problems with disposal, as there are, far better to acknowledge them and bring a community into its confidence by resolving them – or attempting to – in the public gaze rather than in a 'black box' by which an answer is magically arrived at.

### **11.**

## **End of response form**

Thank you for completing the consultation.

Once this consultation has closed, the Government will consider comments received and publish a summary of the consultation responses and its final policy decision. The delivery body will produce more detailed guidance as to how the siting process will work in practice.