

Suffolk Coastal District Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the National Geological Screening Guidance.

Sizewell A (defueled), B (operational) and C (planned) are within the Suffolk Coastal District.

The District Councils do not have the resource expertise to comment on the geoscience. Our comments are general, in relation to how our communities feel about the selection of a site to host a geological disposal facility (GDF) deep underground, providing a permanent solution for the country's most radioactive waste. We are content that the described processes can be used to help inform early discussions with communities about their potential suitability to host a GDF. However we have to trust you as the experts in the science and engineering of geological disposal to work with the British Geological Survey (BGS) to identify certain areas as unsuitable for hosting a GDF and carry out further investigative work in the remaining areas with the aim of finding a suitable site.

QUESTION 1

To what extent do you think our proposed approach to providing national-scale existing information about geology relevant to long-term safety is appropriate?

We believe it is appropriate in so far as it is the best available information we currently know but it does not provide a definitive measure of long-term safety. Whether any specific geology can provide a long-term safe environment is a question which no-one can currently answer. If the decision is taken to go down this route then very careful monitoring of the facility will be required and a robust plan for addressing issues if it becomes apparent that radioactivity is not being contained as had been expected.

The description of multi-barrier systems may not be reassuring to some communities; it appears to imply that there is a degree of uncertainty about each level of barrier and it is just a hope that enough levels will provide sufficient robustness if one or more fails. An emergency response plan should be incorporated alongside an ongoing monitoring plan to ensure that any failure can be addressed in a robust manner.

QUESTION 2

The proposed sources of information are summarised. To what extent do you think that these sources are appropriate and sufficient for this exercise?

We do not feel qualified to answer as we do not know what other sources may be available.

QUESTION 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed form of the outputs from geological screening? What additional outputs would you find useful?

The proposed outputs of screening being presented as a series of brief narratives describing the key characteristics of the geological environment of the region seem sensible but their relevance to safety will be a harder narrative to write to satisfy communities. For example, will a rock structure that includes "major faults and fault zones and areas of folded rocks with complex properties" immediately be judged as unsuitable for a GDF? If not, then the justification will have to be explained. If instead this does make an area unsuitable there will need to be some explanation as to the chosen surrounding buffer zone? The display of the findings will be key to a successful consultation with members of the public.

QUESTION 4

Do you have any other views on the matters presented in the draft Guidance?

We think the intention of consulting on this guidance is good but we are unsure whether communities will find that it is really useful. Some may choose to spend limited resources on professional opinions but this could just result in a repeat of the usual arguments about whether nuclear should be included in the energy mix. We certainly find here in Suffolk that there are entrenched views about whether nuclear is "good" or "bad" and no amount of consultation, however well meaning, will change those views. There needs to be clearly

defined positives and negatives for local communities. Maps will need to be provided to a scale on which people can identify their community in order for them to be able to respond fully.

In addition, this Authority supports NuLeAF and we have had regard to their letter to you, in particular the areas where they consider improvements could be made such as identifying gaps in the information supplied and the need for maps and visual representations as well as text. We would echo the need for this to be taken into account.

This response was put together by relevant officers and elected members of Suffolk Coastal District Council.

Regards, Carolyn.

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