

1. REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Government's Call for Evidence on the MRWS siting process. However, in the time available REDACTED has not had the opportunity to consult with REDACTED REDACTED. The views expressed below are therefore based on REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED (DECC has a copy).

2. REDACTED notes that the Government intends to issue a consultation paper in the autumn. We would ask the Government to provide a minimum 12 week consultation period to allow parish councils and others ample time to consider and respond to the consultation.

3. In REDACTED view some revision to the MRWS site selection process would be essential if the Government wishes to encourage communities to participate in it's ongoing MRWS programme. Decision makers representing local communities are more likely to be attracted into the MRWS process if they are confident that safety, rather than technical or political expediency, will be the primary consideration and, also, if they believe that the benefits for their area are likely to clearly outweigh the costs. The Government's past approach has lacked adequate focus on these important considerations. Four matters in particular require Government attention and review.

4. Firstly, a project to build a Geological Disposal Facility will only have credibility in the minds of potentially interested communities if it is clear that geological and safety considerations are the primary drivers in the site selection process. An initial appraisal of the relative geological suitability of different parts of the country needs to be undertaken. REDACTED believes that the difficulties in undertaking this work have been overstated in the past. The cost of not undertaking such an appraisal and failing to generate credibility for the site selection process in the minds of the public at an early stage will be far greater than the cost of undertaking it. Unless a community is satisfied that there is a prospect of geological suitability, it is most unlikely to be willing to address the many other complex issues associated with a GDF project.

5. Secondly, communities are likely to be doubtful about a GDF site selection process unless they have been satisfied that the Government's policy approach is sound and they understand why alternatives have been rejected. In the past the Government has defended it's policy of geological disposal and voluntarism in terms of 'the international consensus', but without adequately explaining why our diverse geological conditions, our population geography and our past nuclear industry experience makes international practice right for us in the UK. As REDACTED has suggested in the past a Strategic Environmental Assessment of MRWS would go some way towards meeting this requirement.

6. Thirdly, the Government needs to consider presenting the GDF project as an integral part of a wider economic/social development programme that is designed around the specific aspirations of a potentially interested area. The past approach of presenting a GDF as a single project with unspecified community benefits attached will not generate a sufficiently broad base of community interest to carry the project forward. A community needs to be able to see the genuine prospect of a programme of beneficial transformational change. Alongside this the Government needs to consider a more active role for itself in promoting interest in a GDF based development programme. There is no reason why such a proactive role by Government should undermine the principle of voluntarism providing the commitment of ultimately only working

with a willing community remains paramount.

7. Fourthly, the Government should give greater attention to the perspectives and potential role of town and parish councils. The network of such local councils presents the Government with an important resource for the dissemination of information, addressing misunderstandings and gaining the trust of potential host communities. Any reviewed site selection process should explicitly recognise town and parish councils as statutory local authorities and place them appropriately within decision-making arrangements at all stages in the site selection process.

8. REDACTED hopes that the above points are of assistance to Government. We are willing to expand on our views if this would be helpful.