

ADDRESSING THE MANAGEMENT OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE IN SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



Case Study 4 December 08

OUTCOME: Suffolk County Council is developing local planning policy on the management of radioactive wastes in the county. This policy will be the predominant "material consideration" in determining planning applications for specific developments for the management of radioactive wastes.

BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY: Adoption of an explicit local planning policy on the management of radioactive wastes, taking into account:

- national policies for managing radioactive wastes
- a strategic approach to waste management at local and regional levels
- local public consultation and
- independent examination

BACKGROUND: In England and Wales, national planning policy is set out in Planning Policy Statements (PPS). The primary focus of plan making is then at regional and local levels:

- Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) set out a spatial plan for the region that must conform with Government policy. Draft RSSs are prepared by Regional Assemblies. The Secretary of State is responsible for issuing revised RSSs after examination in public and consultation on proposed changes.
- Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) are a series of documents that outline local planning strategy, identify specific sites for development or conservation, and criteria against which specific development proposals will be judged. The LDF defines a local authority's policy on the development of land.
- A particular type of LDF – the Minerals and Waste Development Framework (MWDF) - covers minerals and waste policy. In two tier areas minerals and waste matters are the responsibility of the County Planning Authority.

In the autumn of 2008, Suffolk County Council consulted on a [Waste Issues and Options document](#) which is the second stage in the process leading to the development of a Waste Core Strategy. Once adopted, the Core Strategy will form part of a suite of documents that make up the Suffolk MWDF.

POLICY OPTIONS: The Waste Core Strategy Issues and Options document puts forward a number of policy options for planning waste development within the County for the next 10 to 15 years.¹

For Low Level Wastes (LLW) and Very Low Level Wastes (VLLW), consultees were asked:

- should storage of radioactive waste be allowed at the Sizewell nuclear power station site?
- should radioactive waste generated at Sizewell be treated, stored and disposed of at the site?
- should non-nuclear industry radioactive waste be treated, stored or disposed of at Sizewell power stations?
- if LLW or VLLW radioactive waste was to be disposed of at Sizewell power stations should the Site Licensing Company or the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority be asked to provide a package of community benefits to offset the perceived impact of the use of the site for such purposes on the local community even where this may go beyond the normal requirements set out in Circular 05/05 Planning Obligations?

For Intermediate Level Wastes (ILW) and Spent Fuel (SF), the options were ...

- is it reasonable to allow ILW and SF to be treated and stored at the Sizewell nuclear power station site pending its long term disposal at the proposed national radioactive waste repository?
- should only ILW and SF generated at Sizewell should be treated and stored at the site?

Views were then sought on these options through a series of consultation questions.

PROCESS: The consultation document was published on the website of Suffolk County Council on 11 August, 2008. The document was available as a download and printed copies were available from Suffolk County Council upon request. The consultation was promulgated to all statutory and non-statutory consultees listed in the Statement of Community Involvement (e.g. all Town, Parish and District Councils, Environment Agency, British Energy and Magnox South). The Site Stakeholder Group for Sizewell was not specifically consulted, nor were any 'roadshows' or focus groups undertaken. The consultation closed on 17 October, 2008.

RESPONSES: Suffolk County Council received responses from: Magnox South (Site Licensee Company for Sizewell A), Haverhill Town Council, Environment Agency, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Needham Market Town Council, Suffolk Preservation Society, Waste Recycling Group, Shotley Holdings Ltd, RSPB East Anglia, Babergh District Council, Greenview Environment Ltd and an individual respondent. This represents approximately 29% of the total number of respondents.

¹ Text from [Suffolk County Council, Waste Development Framework](#)

NEXT STEPS: A further Issues and Options document will be published later in 2008 that will identify potential strategic sites for residual waste treatment facilities and potentially also for non hazardous landfill. Responses to both consultations will be analysed and combined to produce a final document – Draft Waste Core Strategy - in July 2009. Following a further period of consultation, the resulting Waste Core Strategy will be submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2009 with a Planning Inspector examination in public being held late Spring 2010.

It is anticipated that the Inspector's report will be available in October/November 2010 allowing adoption of the MWDF by the Council at the end of 2010. This end date is consistent with the existing Waste Specific Site Allocation.²

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NuLeAF encourages all waste planning authorities to develop local planning policy on managing radioactive wastes and has produced a [Briefing Paper](#) for planners to assist in this task.

² Text from [Suffolk County Council, Waste Development Framework](#)