

Community Engagement



POSITION STATEMENT



Community Engagement

Introduction

If the UK is to meet its recycling and recovery obligations we must build new facilities, as well as maintain and operate the current infrastructure to required legal and environmental standards.

As part of the process we know that genuine engagement with all our stakeholders is key, and we have a duty to build a strong relationship with the communities we work in. The local community has a vital interest in key issues such as noise, traffic, pollution and social implications. This Position Paper is for them.

We want to remove the "myths" that grow from ill-informed communication. Our goal is to provide balanced, factual and scientific evidence that all risks have been considered, all stakeholder groups consulted and ample opportunity for input given. The desired result is to make community opinion count.

With new developments we believe it is vital to take advantage of local knowledge. This can be achieved with community

liaison groups during the design, planning, construction and operational management process, on a day-to-day and long-term strategic basis.

Effective community engagement requires active discussion about how facilities will affect them. The benefit we see in this dialogue is a much better chance the facility will be built to the standards of excellence we require, be sympathetic to the surrounding environment and quickly become integrated within the community.

At the moment we have active dialogue with 40 individual groups around our UK operations. We still acknowledge the need to enlarge our scope of engagement with 300 plus sites to consider.

The issues

With increasing social awareness, lobbying, and action groups, it is clear people want a greater say in local development so effective engagement is essential. By listening to the experiences and ideas of people in these communities, we can find solutions that make a lasting difference.

By the very nature of our business, the facilities we operate and the ones we want to build are designed to ensure that waste is treated and disposed of in the most environmental and socially acceptable way. These facilities are predominantly landfill, materials recovery facilities, compost sites, chemical treatment plants, waste transfer stations and energy recovery facilities.

There are a number of issues that we need to address as part of the engagement process:

- Noise, pollution, traffic, social issues and impact on asset value
- How to increase trust in our company
- The role we play in local employment and environmental education
- Transparency and effective communication of our actions
- Engaging all our stakeholders including the hard to reach groups
- Measurement and reporting of the issues and progress
- Gaining acceptance that these facilities are indeed the 'local community's'
- How we promote excellence in facility operation and its success. This is vital to local authorities that have sub-contracted this obligation to us on their behalf



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OUR POSITION

1. Veolia Environmental Services staff will be actively encouraged to inspire and engage with local communities through a range of CR activities, including "paid leave" employee volunteering, fundraising and sponsorship through the Veolia Foundation.
2. We will encourage training and development of our staff to ensure they are well equipped to meet the challenges and subsequent benefits community engagement brings.
3. We will encourage our staff to work with local community projects by offering advice and participating in the appropriate committee decisions.
4. Veolia Environmental Services will actively promote links with local schools and other learning establishments to develop environmental education.
5. Dialogue with stakeholders should commence at the earliest opportunity. We will be honest and transparent regarding our operations and plans for facility development. Feedback will be given after all consultations detailing outcomes and reasons for them.
6. To engage hard-to-reach groups we must research the diversity in each community and find out the best way to communicate with them.
7. We will encourage local authorities with whom we work to build early public engagement into their processes for waste planning to ensure that people are involved from the beginning in discussion of "need" for facilities.
8. In order to discuss local issues that impact the whole community we will run regular liaison groups led by an impartial chair. Where appropriate we will also employ stakeholder surveys, residents' panels and community groups to help a mutual goal be achieved. Websites and email offer a range of opportunities for more targeted and instant communications and we strive to use this mix of mediums to improve communications and transparency.
9. We will respond in a timely manner for all reasonable requests for information.
10. Through the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme and the operation of its own Landfill Tax Charities & Trusts, the company will continue to support community led projects that meet ENTRUST regulations and guidance.
11. We will report our community engagement activities through our Annual Review, where an overview of our Corporate Social Responsibility is published. This information will also be available for viewing and comment via our website.
12. Veolia Environmental Services will strive to be a responsible neighbour that engages the community in two-way communication, giving them a sense of ownership and pride in what has been achieved.

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/// A RESPONSIBLE NEIGHBOUR THAT ENGAGES THE COMMUNITY ///