

Nuclear Free Local Authorities

briefing



Date: April 2006

Update for Irish Local Authorities

This briefing note updates members and officers of local authorities in Ireland about recent developments and campaign work undertaken by the All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum on nuclear policy issues.

Chernobyl 20 Years On

Representatives from eleven Irish councils attended the conference 'Chernobyl 20 Years On' – the 8th Irish and UK Local Authorities Standing Conference on Nuclear Hazards - at London's City Hall on 23rd March 2006.

Conference delegates were able to discuss the health and environmental impacts of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster and considered a range of sustainable alternatives to nuclear power during the conference presentations.

A conference paper by epidemiologist John Urquhart investigated an apparent rise in infant mortalities in the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster, and asked whether radioactive fallout from Chernobyl could have caused up to 200 infant deaths in the Republic of Ireland. The All Ireland NFLA Forum has called for an independent scientific examination into the claims so that lessons can be learned for public health and emergency responses in the event of a similar accident in future.

Membership update

Monaghan County Council and Bray Town Councils are the newest members of the All Ireland NFLA Forum, having decided to join the Forum in March and April 2006 respectively. We welcome them to the Forum and look forward to working together with them in future. The All Ireland NFLA Forum now has seven members, with three other authorities in the process of considering membership.

UK Government Energy Review

In January 2006 the UK government announced that it wished to consult on securing the country's long term energy needs. The resulting energy review will consider the role that nuclear energy may play in future in the UK.

The All Ireland NFLA Forum will be responding to the energy review consultation to stress our opposition to new nuclear power stations in the UK, which would pose considerable risks to Irish communities but bring no benefits. Our response will oppose the construction of nuclear power stations in Northern Ireland and will emphasise opportunities for generating renewable energy and establishing decentralised energy networks as an alternative to nuclear power.

The All Ireland NFLA Forum is asking local councils in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to adopt the following motion about the UK government's Energy Review:



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The [name] Council is deeply concerned that a UK Government commitment to new nuclear generation will perpetuate the risks carried by communities in Ireland as a result of radioactive discharges to the Irish Sea, nuclear transportation through the Irish Sea, and of nuclear accidents or possible terrorist incidents.

It could also create the conditions for nuclear development on the island of Ireland with associated direct operational hazards and radioactive waste arising.

Sellafield in Cumbria and Wylfa in Ynys Mon / Anglesey have both been suggested as possible locations for new nuclear power stations on the west coast of the UK, presenting particular risks to Irish communities as a result of their proximity.

[Name] Council therefore opposes the construction of nuclear power stations throughout Britain and Ireland; urges the development of safe sustainable renewable energy generation and greater investment in decentralised energy generation and efficiency programmes that can create employment, improve living standards, and more effectively tackle climate pollution that is accelerating global warming; and formally resolves to support the NFLA campaign.

For more information about the Energy Review and how to respond to the UK government consultation please visit:
http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/review/energy_review_consultation.pdf

Campaigns

Sites at Wylfa on Ynys Mon / Anglesey island in Wales, and Sellafield in Cumbria have been identified as possible locations for new nuclear power stations in the UK, should the energy review give the go-ahead to construction. Both sites are on the west coast of the UK, with the Wylfa station only 60 miles from Dublin.

The Welsh Assembly Government in Wales is also considering whether to call for the life of the existing nuclear power station at Wylfa to be extended. Currently it is scheduled to close in 2010.

The All Ireland NFLA Forum is joining Welsh NFLA member councils in opposing development at Wylfa. Plans to build a second nuclear power station at Wylfa in 1988 received considerable opposition from Irish local authorities, and this was an important factor in the decision not to proceed with the project.

The All Ireland Forum will be organising a seminar to consider UK new nuclear build and associated issues in autumn 2006. Dylan Morgan from People Against Wylfa B, the local campaign against Wylfa, and Martin Forwood from Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment have agreed to speak. The seminar will take place in Drogheda and further information about the date and venue will be provided soon.

Joining the All Ireland Forum

The All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum welcomes new member local authorities in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. To become a member of the forum a local authority will need to pass a motion of affiliation and pay the appropriate subscription fee. It is recommended that the motion of affiliation is referred to the council by the Environment Strategic Policy Committee or other relevant committee with cross-party support.

For more information on any of the topics raised in this briefing please contact:

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