

Nuclear Free Local Authorities Irish members meeting

23rd September 2005 at the European Parliament Offices, Dublin

Meeting notes

Present:

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| Margaret Ritchie | Down District Council |
| Tony McDermott | Dublin Regional Authority and South Dublin County Council |
| Michael O'Dowd | Louth County Council |
| Martin Mooney | Newry and Mourne District Council |
| Deirdre de Burca | Wicklow County Council and Bray Town Council |
| George Regan | Dundee City Council (Scotland) and Chair of NFLA National Steering Committee |
| Stewart Kemp | Nuclear Free Local Authorities Secretariat |
| Peter Burt | Nuclear Free Local Authorities Development Advisor |

Apologies for absence:

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| Mark Dearey | Dundalk Town Council |
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1. Welcome

George Regan welcomed everyone to the meeting on behalf of NFLA and stated how pleased everyone in the NFLA movement was that Irish local authorities from both sides of the border were meeting to establish their own network. Local authorities on both sides of the Irish Sea faced a range of common issues in relation to the nuclear industry and should be aiming to influence national policies on nuclear issues.

2. Appointment of chair and note-taker

It was agreed that Michael O'Dowd should chair the meeting and act as chair of an Irish NFLA network on an interim basis, and that Peter Burt would take notes of the meeting.

3. Introductions and update on membership

Introductions were made around the table, and Stewart Kemp reported that all NFLA current members in Ireland were represented at the meeting. Dundalk Town Council were currently considering membership and were expected to join soon.

4. Forum name and terms of reference

A name for the forum to use in future was discussed, and it was agreed that the forum would call itself the All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum.

A proposed set of terms of reference had been circulated with papers for the meeting. Tony McDermott stated that officers from the Dublin Regional Authority were of the view that the terms of reference were compatible with legislation governing the role of local authorities in the Republic of Ireland, and Margaret Ritchie felt that they were also suitable for Northern Irish authorities to adopt.

It was therefore agreed that the following terms of reference would be adopted:

1. To consider and recommend action which can be taken by local authorities to reduce risks to the public from nuclear power and nuclear weapons.
2. To obtain and provide information and take action to help local authorities and the public develop an informed understanding of the risks from nuclear hazards.
3. To consider and recommend action which could be taken by local authorities to support:
 - The safe phase out of nuclear power in the shortest practicable time.
 - Methods which minimise risks to humans and the environment for the long term management of all types of radioactive waste and materials.
 - Efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and technology.
 - Energy conservation and the use of renewable sources of energy.
 - Alternative employment and sustainable economic opportunities outside the nuclear sector.
4. To identify, plan, and organise campaigns on topics of concern relating to nuclear-free issues in Ireland.
5. To allow members to obtain and share information on areas of interest.
6. To provide opportunities for co-operation between local authorities in similar geographical areas on nuclear-free issues and NFLA organisational development.

It was agreed that the terms of reference would be reviewed again in one year's time.

5. Campaign priorities

Campaign issues of importance to local authorities in Ireland were discussed and the following issues were considered to be priorities for the Forum (in order of importance):

1. Sellafield and the Irish Sea.
2. Promoting the use of green energy.
3. Emergency planning relating to a nuclear incident.
4. European Union policies on nuclear issues.

5. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and military nuclear issues.

It was agreed that the forum would not consider issues relating to radon gas, as environmental health officers were already abreast of this issue.

The following specific actions were agreed to commence campaign work on these issues:

- A submission on behalf of the All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum is to be submitted to the Environment Agency for England and Wales in response to consultation over the future of the Drigg radioactive waste disposal facility, with a press release to be prepared to publicise the Forum's position on Drigg.
- A briefing note for Irish local authorities to be prepared on renewable energy, drawing on the experience of best practice from 'Beacon' councils in the UK and identifying methods of renewable power generation with potential for local authority use, including information on the UK Government 'Clear Skies' scheme.
- More information is to be obtained on the work done by ERM Consultants on planning and preparations in the Republic of Ireland for responding to a nuclear emergency, and on the emergency planning framework in Northern Ireland.

6. Organisational arrangements

It was agreed that the Forum would aim to meet two times per year, with meetings arranged to coincide with seminars and other NFLA events so as to minimise time commitments and costs. The next meeting will take place at the 8th Joint Irish and UK Local Authorities Conference on Nuclear Hazards, London, 23-24 March 2006.

Communication between meetings will take place through email discussions. All member authorities should nominate member and officer contacts to whom communications can be directed.

In due course a steering committee for the Forum would be required, but at this stage it was agreed that management arrangements would be kept simple and allowed to evolve over time.

In the immediate future Stewart Kemp, Peter Burt, and the Manchester NFLA Secretariat would provide support to the Forum, but it will be necessary for the Forum to develop its own administrative arrangements in the longer term.

7. Information update

Stewart Kemp reported that the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Environment and Local Government had visited Sellafield earlier in September to enquire about the leak at the Thorp plant in January – April 2005. NFLA had joined Greenpeace to brief committee members about issues at Sellafield the evening before their visit.

The NFLA Annual General Meeting will be taking place in Manchester on 3-4 November 2005 and the 8th Joint Irish and UK Local Authorities Conference on Nuclear Hazards will

be taking place at the City Hall in London on 23 March 2006. Representatives of local authorities in Ireland are welcome to attend.

Stewart Kemp also gave brief updates on progress on the UK Committee on Radioactive Waste Management's consultation programme; the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's future strategy; and the Mayors for Peace '2020 Vision' initiative for disarmament arising from the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty conference.

8. Recruitment of new members

To become a member of the All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities 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.

It was agreed that for the immediate future subscription fees to join the Forum would remain at the UK associate membership level (50% of the membership fee for a UK Authority of the same size), although this could be reviewed in future, depending upon the financial needs of the Forum.

It was agreed that a promotional brochure would be prepared to aid the recruitment of Irish local authorities.

Date of next meeting: 23-24th March 2006, City Hall, London

Summary of actions:

| | Action |
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| Prepare submission on Drigg for Environment Agency. | SK |
| Prepare press release | PB |
| Circulate press release locally | All |
| Prepare briefing note on renewable energy | PB/SK |
| Prepare draft policy on 'Clear Skies' for comment | MO'D |
| Investigate nuclear emergency planning arrangements for the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland | SK/PB |
| Prepare NFLA promotional brochure for recruitment of Irish authorities | SK / PB |
| Circulate table of fees for NFLA affiliation | PB |
| Encourage colleagues in non-member authorities to take steps to enable their authorities to become members. | All |