



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

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NFLA English Forum seminar discusses radiation and health, nuclear waste and nuclear emergency planning issues

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities English Forum (NFLA) is holding its next seminar this Friday 24th February in Leeds Civic Hall (1).

The seminar will consider three important issues:

- A new study which provides further evidence of a potential link between an increase in childhood cancers and proximity to nuclear power plants, which will be considered by the former CERRIE member Dr Ian Fairlie (2).
- An overview of the current consultation on whether Cumbrian Councils should formally express an interest to host a deep-underground radioactive waste repository, from the former Greenpeace nuclear issues officer Jean McSorley.
- A briefing on the status of the UK nuclear emergency planning review following the Fukushima disaster, by the NFLA Secretary Sean Morris.

For a number of years there have been concerns over an increase in childhood cancer rates around nuclear facilities. A definitive German Government study suggested such a link may occur, but a study of UK nuclear facilities has downplayed such a link. Dr Fairlie will note a new French study and compare studies from four European countries, including the UK, to argue there is much to be concerned about, particularly with plans to build new reactors at 8 sites across England and Wales.

A key concern over building new nuclear reactors has been what to do with the existing large radioactive waste burden, which accounts for the bulk of the annual budget of the Department of Energy and Climate Change. The UK Government's favoured 'solution' is to build a deep-underground radioactive waste repository, which would be big enough to cover as many as 11 London Albert Halls. Former Greenpeace consultant Jean McSorley will outline the key concerns and issues with such a repository being built in West Cumbria by as early as 2029. (3)

Finally, a major review of the UK nuclear emergency planning regime is currently taking place. This was a recommendation from the Office for Nuclear Regulation's review of the issues raised by the Fukushima nuclear disaster. The NFLA Secretary and former local authority emergency planning officer Sean Morris will provide an overview of the key issues the review is considering. The NFLA have recently surveyed local authorities on nuclear emergency planning issues and will provide the results of this survey within the seminar. (4)

NFLA English Forum Chair and Leeds City Councillor Ralph Pryke said:

"Tomorrow's NFLA English Forum meeting in Leeds brings to a Yorkshire audience three important nuclear issues that will be of interest to councils and to concerned environmental groups. I have been aware of the lively debate around the effects of low level radiation on human health for some time and know that Ian Fairlie will provide an expert analysis of this sensitive issue. I am also very worried about the prospects of building a huge radioactive waste repository just 60 miles from Leeds in West Cumbria, as well as the real necessity of improving the nuclear emergency planning regime in England and Wales after the Fukushima incident almost a year since it happened. This seminar shows yet again the quality and relevance of the work of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities and the necessity of remaining involved with these important public safety matters."

Ends

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Further information - Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930186.

Notes to editors:

- (1) The NFLA English Forum Winter Seminar, East Room, Civic Hall, Leeds, 24th February 2012
Major nuclear issues in England – an update
12.30pm **Registration:** Tea/Coffee
12.45pm **Welcome:** Councillor Ralph Pryke, Leeds City Council and the NFLA English Forum Chair.
12.50pm Dr Ian Fairlie, independent consultant on radiation in the environment – low level radiation and health, what are the risks and should we be worried about them? (confirmed)
1.20pm Jean McSorley, independent radioactive waste consultant – West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely process: answer to our waste problems or the start of new nuclear risks? (confirmed)
1.50pm Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary – the UK nuclear emergency planning review and the NFLA survey of local authority readiness. (confirmed)
2.20pm Panel Discussion
2.45pm **Conclusion**
- (2) Dr Ian Fairlie is an independent consultant on radiation in the environment. He was a member of the independent UK Committee Examining Radiation Risks of Internal Emitters which met between 2001 and 2004.
- (3) According to the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely consultation document a repository could cater for between 631,000 cubic metres to 1,160,000 cubic metres of radioactive waste, which is equivalent to 6 – 11 Albert Halls. See its website for further details: http://www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk/documents/Full_Consultation_Document_-_West_Cumbria_MRWS_Partnership_November_2011.pdf pages 17 and 84.
- (4) The NFLA survey on UK nuclear emergency planning can be downloaded from: http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/NFLA_Briefing_93_Nuclear_EP.pdf

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