



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

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NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 4th January 2011

NFLA supports creation of community alliance concerned and opposed to new nuclear build in England and Wales

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) today announces its support for the new community alliance established recently by local community groups campaigning over the potential development of new nuclear power stations in England and Wales.

Communities Opposed to New Nuclear Energy Development (CONNED) were established following a recent meeting held in London between local and national groups. In its opening media release, CONNED have raised particular concerns around significant preliminary site development works for new build at the Hinkley Point and Sizewell reactor sites, over a year **before** formal planning approval may be given (1).

The new CONNED coalition includes the following groups –

- **Bradwell:** Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group, Bradwell for Renewable Energy
- **Heysham:** Heysham Anti-Nuclear Alliance - www.heysham-anti-nuclear-alliance.org
- **Hinkley Point:** Stop Hinkley - www.stophinkley.org
- **Oldbury:** Shepperdine Against Nuclear Energy - <http://shepperdineagainstnuclearenergy.blogspot.com>
- **Sellafield:** West Cumbria & North Lakes Friends of the Earth
- **Sizewell:** Shut Down Sizewell - www.shutdown-sizewell.org.uk, Communities Against Nuclear Expansion – www.suffolkcane.org.uk
- **Wylfa:** People Against Wylfa B - <http://stop-wylfa.org>

This year is a critical year in the energy debate. In the NFLA's view, the UK Coalition Government's concerted support for new nuclear build still has a number of critical hurdles to pass –

- **Safety, design and security** – It is likely that the two proposed new nuclear build designs will only be given 'interim' and not 'complete' consent by the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency this summer, due to a number of detailed safety issues that remain to be resolved. The NFLA have raised with both organisations a number of critical safety, design and security issues that have come to light, and will continue to do so this year (2).
- **Costs** – The financial costs of new nuclear build are huge and continually rising. A number of the UK Government's proposed reforms of the electricity market could see such costs and liabilities effectively being transferred on to the consumer through much higher electricity bills to partially pay for new nuclear build. Recent experience in Finland and France shows huge cost over-runs (billions of pounds) in the building of new nuclear power stations.
- **Waste** – There are still no long-term solutions to the management of high and intermediate level radioactive waste. Deep uncertainties remain over the development of a deep-waste repository in West Cumbria (should Councils there choose to go ahead with this scheme). Creating new nuclear waste simply exacerbates this intractable problem and provides future generations with major dilemmas in dealing with this new and avoidable legacy.
- **Effects on health** – The UK Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) has still not published its analysis on the official German Government 'KIKK' report, which noted higher childhood cancer rates within 5kms of a nuclear reactor. This response was originally due to be published in March 2010. The NFLA will be holding a short seminar in Dundee on the 28th January 2011 to highlight some of these concerns (3).

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NFLA Chair, Bailie George Regan, said:

“I am delighted that respected local community groups have agreed to establish a joint alliance providing a united front of concern over the development of new nuclear build in England and Wales. The NFLA will co-operate with this group and hopes it can help in influencing policy-makers to rethink support for new nuclear power generation. The NFLA believes a more enlightened energy policy combining a wide renewable energy mix, microgeneration and Council-led energy efficiency programmes is the safe, clean, cost-effective and sustainable way forward. The challenge remains to influence politicians of all parties of the benefits of such policies.”

Ends.

Further information

Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930186

Notes to Editors:

(1) The media release of the new community alliance follows –

CONNED Press Release

30 December 2010

New Alliance Warns of Pre-Emptive Strike by Nuclear Industry

The nuclear industry is already starting site preparation works at two of its favoured locations for new power stations - even before it has applied for permission to build the plants. This warning that the industry is “jumping the gun” comes from a new alliance of local organisations opposed to the government’s plans for a nuclear revival.

Communities Opposed to New Nuclear Energy Development (CONNED) brings together groups around seven sites earmarked for possible development – Hinkley Point in Somerset, Sizewell in Suffolk, Bradwell in Essex, Wylfa on Anglesey, Oldbury In Gloucestershire and Sellafield in Cumbria and Hartlepool in County Durham.¹

- At Hinkley Point, Electricite de France (EdF) has already dug trenches and boreholes across a 430 acre stretch of previously untouched countryside, but now wants to devastate the whole area, moving enough earth to fill Wembley Stadium twice over.
- At Sizewell, planning permission has been granted for large amounts of clay and peat to be moved to investigate the local topology and geology. Rare reptiles, including biodiversity action plan species such as adder, will be displaced. A series of test bores have also been undertaken, damaging local footpaths.

“It’s clear that the industry wants to give the impression that everything is signed, sealed and delivered, hoping that the opposition will fade away,” says CONNED spokesman Crispin Aubrey. “In fact this is far from being the case. Opposition is strong and some investment analysts even argue that it will be extremely difficult for the companies to finance these expensive white elephants². Our local countryside will then have been trashed in vain.”

A series of hurdles still have to be overcome by the companies wanting to build new nuclear plants before they even get planning permission. These include regulatory approval for their new reactor designs, agreement on how much they will contribute towards decommissioning and waste costs and,

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crucially, building consent from the Infrastructure Planning Commission. All these will take much more than a year to be finalised.

The government also still has to gain approval for a new bundle of financial support measures announced in December 2010, including a guaranteed carbon price, without which the nuclear industry says it cannot operate new power stations economically. The latest cost estimate for the Hinkley Point twin reactors is £9 billion, an increase of £1 billion from just a year ago.

CONNED argues that the country is in danger of sleep-walking into a future where Britain is once again in hock to an industry with a massive legacy of dangerous waste and a voracious appetite for public subsidy.

Ends/

Notes:

1. Although Kirksanton and Braystones in Cumbria were excluded from the government's most recent list of approved sites, the developers are planning to appeal.
2. Evidence by Peter Atherton, Citibank investment advisor to House of Commons Energy and Climate Change Committee, 14 Dec 2010
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmenergy/uc648-ii/uc64801.htm

What is happening on the ground?

At **Hinkley Point**, EdF is applying to West Somerset Council for permission to devastate 430 acres stretching from the Severn Estuary to the village of Shurton. This involves filling in a beautiful valley and even starting excavation of the power station foundations. The plans include:

- Removal of the majority of trees and hedges.
- Closure of existing footpaths and bridlepaths, including the coast path.
- Stripping topsoil and vegetation to make a terraced area for the proposed nuclear reactors.
- Re-routing underground streams.
- Excavation of more than 2.3 million cubic metres of soil, sub-soil and rocks. This would be enough to fill Wembley Stadium twice over.
- Construction of a jetty out into the sea.

At **Sizewell**, permission has already been granted for earthworks to test the hydrology and topology of the site. A further 650,000 cubic metres of soil and subsoil could later be moved from an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- Clay and peat are being moved onto nearby land as part of a "heathland regeneration project", but the significant amount of clay in the spoil and lack of preparation of the ground mean that this new area is never likely to return to heathland.
- Adder, slow worm and grass snake are all present on the site, as are badgers, otters and water voles. All are being displaced as part of the preparatory work.

The aim of CONNED is to raise public awareness about the consequences for health, the environment, safety and security of potential new nuclear power developments, as well as supporting alternative energy strategies. The alliance is supported by national campaign groups, including Greenpeace, the Nuclear Consultation Group and Nuclear Free Local Authorities.

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(2) NFLA responses to the HSE and EA 'Generic Design Assessment' can be found on its website – <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info>. Some detailed points are made in a NFLA press release that can be downloaded from:

[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/news/NFLA nuclear reactor design PR 100310.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/news/NFLA_nuclear_reactor_design_PR_100310.pdf)

(3) NFLA AGM and Special Seminar on the potential effects of low level radiation on public health, Dundee City Hall, Friday 28th January 1pm – 3pm. Speakers include Professor Eric Wright of Dundee University and Dr John Urquhart of Newcastle University.

Further information can be provided by the NFLA Secretary, Sean Morris on 0161 234 3244 or s.morris4@manchester.gov.uk.

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