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Nuclear Free Local Authorities, Scotland.
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1.0 New Nuclear Monitor

1.1 Nuclear power is not the answer to tackling climate change or security of supply, according to the Sustainable Development Commission. Even if the UK's existing nuclear capacity is doubled, it would only give an 8% cut in CO2 emissions by 2035 (and nothing before 2010). This must be set against the risks.¹

1.2 The House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee² has concluded that new nuclear stations will be of little or no short-term use in filling the anticipated electricity 'generation gap' in Britain, and crucial questions of security, cost, and effectiveness remain unanswered. The committee raise concerns over the risk of terrorist attacks, but also focus on the full costs of nuclear generation, such as the disposal of waste and decommissioning. It says the economic viability of new nuclear plants has not been proved. The answer lies in building many more gas-powered electricity plants and boosting production from sources of renewable energy like wind and waves. "Over the next 10 years, nuclear power cannot contribute either to the need for more generating capacity or to carbon reductions as it simply could not be built in time," the report said.

1.3 A group of 8 Labour MPs have written a pamphlet called 'What's in the Mix: The Future of Energy Policy'. Published by SERA, the report has been submitted as evidence to the Energy Review. The MPs argue that an energy mix centring on renewables and energy conservation, but excluding new nuclear power generation, is the way forward for Britain's future energy supply. The MPs are Alan Whitehead, Joan Walley, Michael Meacher, Colin Challen, Helen Goodman, Nia Griffith, Mark Lazarowicz and David Chaytor.³

1.4 Claims that more nuclear plants are needed to protect the climate don't withstand analysis, according to renowned international energy expert, Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute. Nuclear is a dying industry, and efforts to 'revive' this moribund technology will divert investment from cheaper market winners – cogeneration, renewables, and efficiency. The idea that 'we need every energy technology' suggests that we have infinite amounts of money. In fact, it is essential

¹ "The role of nuclear power in a low carbon economy" Sustainable Development Commission, March 2006. <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/060306.html>

² House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, April 2006, "Keeping the Lights on" <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmenvaud/584/584i.pdf>

³ http://www.sera.org.uk/publications/whats_in_the_mix.mar06.pdf

that we buy the fastest and most effective climate solutions. Investment in nuclear power worsens climate change by buying less solution per dollar.⁴

1.5 New research shows that the UK can meet its electricity needs, reduce the need for imported natural gas, and tackle climate change without a new nuclear power programme. The research, 'A Bright Energy Future,'⁵ forms part of Friends of the Earth's submission to the government's Energy Review. The report models how Britain's energy sector could develop over the next 25 years if the Government is serious about tackling climate change. It showed that carbon dioxide emissions from generating electricity can be reduced by up to 70% by 2020 without resorting to nuclear, and natural gas use for the power sector can be at least stabilised and in many cases reduced - meaning less of a reliance on imports.

1.6 A group of 40 of Britain's leading energy and climate scientists have written to the Prime Minister to say that building more nuclear reactors is not the solution to global warming. Nuclear power is "a limited, inflexible, expensive and potentially dangerous energy source which creates unique problems", they say. Alternatives including greater energy efficiency and renewable sources are more likely to deliver safe, secure and climate-friendly energy.⁶

1.7 The long awaited climate change programme review was published on March 28. As a result, the government reckons that, at best, the UK will manage 15 – 18% below 1990 carbon dioxide emissions levels by 2010. Government figures released on March 30th reveal that UK carbon dioxide emissions rose again in 2005 and are now higher than they have ever been under Labour. All Labour manifestos published before the last three general elections contained the promise to deliver a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010, compared with 1990 levels. The review did not contain any major new policy initiatives to put us back on track, but the Government said that many crucial decisions would be made during the Energy Review.

1.8 The last week of the Energy Review consultation period, which closed on 14th April saw the publication of a string of responses from nuclear utilities, which might give some clues as to how likely reactors are to find private finance. Submissions will eventually be available on the DTI website, unless a request for confidentiality has been made, but only those submitted in January and February are currently available.⁷ The French generating company, EdF, which owns London Electricity, has offered to build 10 new reactors, provided that the price of the electricity generated is guaranteed for years to come and there is a fast track planning process for any new plants.⁸

1.9 EdF, Eon - the German nuclear company that owns Powergen - and RWE - the German owners of nPower - could all join forces with British Energy (BE) to build new reactors. A deal might involve the acquisition of all or part of the 65% of BE's equity that is likely to be sold by the Government. The utilities think new reactors might be more acceptable if built by a British company. Mike Parker, the Chief Executive of BNFL, says the energy review, as well as the waste and licensing processes, must result in firm government and public support for new reactors: "An amber light is not enough. Only a green light" can provide the climate needed to support launching a new reactor project. "Otherwise investors will sidestep the UK."⁹

⁴ Green Future Magazine, Mar/Apr 2006 <http://www.greenfutures.org.uk/features/default.asp?id=2479>

⁵ www.foe.co.uk/resource/evidence/bright_future.pdf

⁶ Sunday Herald 9th April 2006 <http://www.sundayherald.com/55029>

Letter to Tony Blair signed by 40 scientists, dated 10th April 2006
http://www.sgr.org.uk/climate/letter_TonyBlair_NucPower_10apr06.html

⁷ <http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/review/responses.shtml>

⁸ Channel 4 News 12th April 2006 <http://www.channel4.com/news/special-reports/special-reports-storypage.jsp?id=2164>

⁹ Nucleonics Week 6th April 2006 Vol. 47 No. 14

1.10 The arrival of the Scottish Power submission on the DTI website will be keenly awaited. The Herald reported that it said the government should not commit to a major nuclear build programme now, and that investment in this form of generation must not crowd out development of renewable energy such as wind.¹⁰ Whereas the Scotsman said that the company wants a new nuclear programme.¹¹

1.11 A controversy has arisen over the activities of the group of trade unionists campaigning for nuclear power under the banner of Nuklear21. The group, which includes Amicus, held a mass lobby of Westminster on 29th March. The Scottish Sunday Herald has revealed that Nuklear21 has been given support by the state-owned company British Nuclear Group (BNG), part of BNFL. It says BNG has admitted that it had been paying "travel and business expenses" for Nuklear21 union representatives since April 2005, as well as paid time off and "administrative support facilities" such as offices and communication systems.¹²

2.0 New Nuclear Monitor - Scotland

2.1 Energy Minister, Malcolm Wicks, travelled by plane to Edinburgh for an Energy Review consultation meeting at the end of February. He was quoted in *The Scotsman* as saying that Scotland should 'grow up' and accept the possibility of new nuclear power stations¹³. He also strained relations within the Scottish Executive coalition by appearing to brand Scottish Liberal Democrats, as "environmental fundamentalists". Wicks, who toured a wave power project in Fife, made clear that he doesn't think renewables and energy efficiency will be enough to meet our climate change objectives.

2.2 Labour's Scottish conference backed seemingly contradictory resolutions on nuclear power.¹⁴ The first resolution sponsored by Amicus and the NUM said the government must "*support the fact that immediate plans must be started to replace or renew our existing coal-fired and nuclear generating stations where required*". The second resolution, which was put forward by SERA and supported by the Co-op Party, was passed unanimously, unlike the first. It recognised "*the concerns about nuclear waste, acknowledging that all forms of energy have a carbon footprint and that uranium is not a renewable resource*".

2.3 Jack McConnell issued a defiant warning that he would decide on new nuclear power stations for Scotland, and he would not be swayed by Westminster or by lobbying from his own Labour movement. This followed a resolution at the Scottish Trades Union Congress to support new reactors. McConnell insisted that the decision on whether Scotland should have a new generation of nuclear stations would not be influenced by political considerations. Planning decisions have to be taken purely on planning grounds, and should not be influenced by politics. McConnell said under the terms of the devolution settlement and the Electricity Act of 1989, Scottish ministers have complete control over decisions on electricity generating stations. "*We are very clear that we will not consider a new generating station for nuclear power until such time as we believe that the matter of nuclear waste has been resolved.*" He added: "*People have to be very careful about using planning for political purposes and I do think that the powers that we have to approve a generating station, those powers under the Electricity Act, have to be used very carefully indeed and that is why we await the report on nuclear waste.*"¹⁵

¹⁰ Herald 14th April 2006 <http://www.theherald.co.uk/business/60106.html>

¹¹ Scotsman 14th April 2006 <http://thescotsmanscotsmans.com/business.cfm?id=567762006>

¹² Sunday Herald, 5th March 2006 <http://www.sundayherald.com/54448>

¹³ Scotsman 23rd Feb 2006 <http://thescotsmanscotsmans.com/index.cfm?id=277762006>

BBC 23rd Feb 2006 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/4743226.stm>

¹⁴ Herald 27th Feb 2006 <http://www.theherald.co.uk/politics/56984.html>

¹⁵ Scotsman 13th April 2006 <http://thescotsmanscotsmans.com/politics.cfm?id=561362006>

2.4 Nicol Stephen, the Scottish Liberal Democrat leader insisted at the Lib Dems Scottish Conference that he would not compromise on his anti-nuclear approach in order to enter another coalition with Labour after the next Scottish Parliamentary elections in May 2007.¹⁶ His uncompromising stance was bolstered when Sir Menzies Campbell wholeheartedly endorsed the Scottish leadership's tough anti-nuclear policy.¹⁷

2.5 But it was clear at the Conference that the Party is not unanimous in its opposition to new reactors. An amendment from Edinburgh Pentlands to the leadership's motion about radioactive waste questioned the anti-nuclear stance. Caithness MP John Thurso also spoke in favour of keeping the option open at a Fringe meeting. Edinburgh city councillor Sue Tritton claims that the leadership has tried to stifle open debate on the issue. She says her attempts to get a conference debate on the party's outright opposition to new nuclear power stations have been blocked three times.¹⁸

2.6 Meanwhile SNP MP, and Westminster Spokesperson on Energy, Mike Weir, derided the Government's energy review as a complete sham, after Solar Century Director, Jeremy Leggett, a Government advisor on renewables, said that the Government had given up on renewables and was intent on going down the path of building new nuclear stations. Mr Weir said: "This proves that the energy review is a complete sham. The speed of the review and the fact that it comes so soon after the last review came out against nuclear, shows that it is a fig leaf for a decision in favour of nuclear. Scotland has a huge potential for renewables, yet the present government seems determined to undermine it by insisting on nuclear and supporting a transmission regime that works against renewables in northern Scotland. Scotland neither needs nor wants nuclear power stations. The SNP energy review will set out options for a non-nuclear future."¹⁹

2.7 Meanwhile the Tories are also conducting a wholesale review of their energy policy, at a UK level. It will reach conclusions this summer. It is possible that they may drop their long-standing support for nuclear power. David Cameron accused Tony Blair of prejudging the Government's energy review in favour of a new generation of nuclear power stations. Officials say the party leadership has "a completely open mind" and its traditional support for nuclear power will count for nothing. If the Tories oppose more nuclear plants, Mr Blair would look isolated, with Liberal Democrats and many Labour MPs hostile.²⁰

3.0 Nuclear Waste News

3.1 The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM), has taken further steps to avoid its recommendations being seen as a green light to new nuclear reactors.²¹ It has stressed that its findings will not mean the issue is solved. Its July report will make recommendations on nuclear waste management options, but this will only be the start of seeking a solution.²² CoRWM envisages a lengthy, three-stage process of deciding on a storage method, setting out a clear implementation plan, and then arguably the most difficult resolving issues of public confidence.

¹⁶ Scotsman 24th March 2006 <http://thescotzman.scotsman.com/index.cfm?id=458162006>

¹⁷ Scotsman 25th March <http://news.scotsman.com/politics.cfm?id=463762006>

¹⁸ Edinburgh Evening News 23rd March 2006
<http://edinburghnews.scotsman.com/opinion.cfm?id=455922006>

¹⁹ http://www.snp.org/snpnews/2005/snp_press_release.2006-04-14.3527788892/view?searchterm=Energy%20Review

²⁰ Independent 19th April 2006 <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/article358566.ec>

²¹ "Tackling the UK's Nuclear Legacy" by Tim Hirsch, BBC 14th Feb 2006,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/4700106.stm>

²² CoRWM's Draft Report for January 2006 Plenary. 5th Jan 2006,
<http://www.corwm.org.uk/pdf/0700.2%20-%20Final%20report%20-%20draft%20for%20January%202006%20plenary.pdf>

3.2 In response to representations made by NGOs, the Committee has produced an updated statement²³ on the new reactor build issue which says that if new reactors were built “significant practical issues would arise, including the size, number and location of waste management facilities” and that the social, political and ethical implications (for example the creation of further burdens on future generations) of a deliberate decision to create more nuclear wastes need to be considered.

3.3 CoRWM’s draft recommendations are expected to emerge at its next plenary session to be held in Brighton on 25th – 27th April 2006.²⁴ There will then be a period of further public consultation before the final report is delivered to Government in July. Committee chair, Gordon MacKerron, says the main dilemma is choosing between the improved storage of radioactive material, which assumes that Britain will still be politically stable 100 years from now, and an early commitment to deep underground disposal, which means the waste would be out of reach of any future technological advances. He said: “There is very likely to be some mixture of options in our recommendations. It would be very surprising if one size fitted all from now on.”²⁵

3.4 Members of CoRWM met at the Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh at the beginning of April. The potential for a terrorist attack on waste facilities was mentioned on several occasions, as an argument for burying it underground, along with the possibility that institutional control over stored waste might collapse at some point in the future, and many of the coastal sites where existing nuclear facilities are located could be flooded due to coastal erosion and sea-level rises. A rod that CoRWM has made for its own back is the fact that its storage options are planned for 300 years. Environment groups that have tended to support above-ground, monitorable, retrievable storage options at the site of production, usually envisaged that storage buildings would have a life of around 100-150 years, which would mean that most issues of sea-level rise and loss of institutional control could be avoided

3.5 Despite the scepticism expressed about deep dumping of waste by the Inquiry Inspector after the Nirex Inquiry, as well as the Environment Minister at the time, John Gummer, a majority of the committee clearly has confidence that the safety of deep “disposal” option in the long-term will be adequate. A minority of members do not. So it is likely that CoRWM’s recommendation, at least for the higher levels of waste, will be for a deep dump.

3.6 It was noted, however, that, according to Nirex, only 8% of existing radioactive is safely packaged and stored.²⁶ This situation must be dealt with urgently, and in any event much more quickly than the “deep disposal option” could possibly be implemented. It is likely to take at least 40-50 years before a deep disposal site can be brought into operation. Once the facility is opened many wastes would need to be stored for considerably longer for various reasons, not least of which is the time it would take for waste emplacement. So it is possible that the Committee will support the interim storage of waste in facilities which could be built as quickly as possible, and which would be resistant to terrorist attack, for a period of up to 100 - 150 years. These stores could be designed to make replacement easier in order to maintain flexibility for those making decisions in the period 2050 – 2150.

3.7 But the Committee is concerned that the necessary research and development for the “deep disposal option” will not take place if it does not recommend taking a definite decision to

²³ CoRWM statement on new build, March 2006

<http://www.corwm.org/pdf/1593.1%20-%20New%20build%20statement.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.corwm.org/content-777>

²⁵ Sunday Times 2nd April 2006

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-528-2113960-1187.00.html>

²⁶ Times, 19th January 2006

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-1995585.00.html>

ultimately place the waste in a deep repository. Members are concerned that in the Netherlands where deep disposal has been delayed for 100 years, research has mostly stopped. However a minority of the committee feel that such a decision can be left to people in 40 or 50 years time, provided that the research and development funding is maintained.

3.8 With the current low level waste dump - at Drigg in Cumbria, - filling up, new options for the long term management of those lower-level wastes which cannot go to Drigg are needed. DEFRA has published a consultation document on proposals for dealing with solid low level radioactive waste. The consultation period runs until 31 May 2006.²⁷

3.9 A terrorist attack on a train carrying waste nuclear materials across Britain could spread lethal radioactivity across an area of 100 sq kilometres, and result in the deaths of up to 8,000 people, according to a new report released by Greenpeace. The report by John Large does not make comfortable reading – it concludes that the technology and resources needed to mount a successful attack are well within the capabilities of determined terrorists.²⁸ Meanwhile Ken Livingstone has ordered a risk assessment into the safety of trains carrying spent nuclear waste fuel across London to ascertain if they represent a viable terrorist target.

4.0 Sellafield News

4.1 The THORP reprocessing plant, which closed on 21st April 2005 following a major spillage of highly radioactive liquid, is unlikely to re-start before the Autumn at the earliest. It is now known that dissolved waste fuel, containing 20 metric tons of uranium and 160 kilograms of plutonium, started to seep from a broken pipe feeding one of two accountancy tanks sometime around July 2004. The pipe is thought to have undergone a major fracture around January 2005. The NDA currently estimates the cost of the shutdown at £50 million, although "a significant amount of that will be covered by insurance." Reprocessing revenues have been deferred rather than lost.

4.2 British Nuclear Group (BNG), which operates THORP on behalf of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), says its chosen solution for re-opening the plant will mean a reduced throughput. However the Company says it is still confident that it can complete all work currently scheduled until THORP's expected closure around 2010. BNG wants to operate the plant using only one accountancy tank. The problem is that because of mistakes made during construction it is quite likely that the pipe leading into the second tank will fracture in the same way the first pipe fractured.

4.3 The NDA has issued an assessment of options for restarting or not restarting THORP.²⁹ Options considered include 'virtual reprocessing', which would involve sending UK plutonium and waste to overseas customers rather than reprocessing the actual overseas spent nuclear waste fuel. Another option is to send the overseas spent nuclear fuel elsewhere – probably France - for reprocessing. But the report concludes that a restart, subject to approval by the safety inspectors of the NII, is the strongly-favoured option. The NDA is refusing to release the costs of the THORP accident and prolonged closure.

²⁷ A Public Consultation on Policy for the Long Term Management of Solid Low Level Radioactive Waste in the United Kingdom, DEFRA, 28th February 2006

<http://www.peoplescienceandpolicy.com/llw/index.html>

Sunday Herald 19th March 2006 <http://www.sundayherald.com/54715>

²⁸ Report into the risks of nuclear transportation in the UK, Large Associates, March 2006.

www.greenpeace.org.uk/transporthazards.

²⁹ Assessment of issues associated with THORP non-restart and restart options, NDA, March 2006

http://www.the-nda.org.uk/documents/assessment_of_issues_associated_with_thorp_non-restart_and_restart_options_published_2_march_2006.pdf

4.4 The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) has outlined 49 actions and recommendations, which BNG will have to carry out. The NII says that following the completion of its investigation a "legal scrutiny" was under way to determine if the weight of evidence amassed supported a criminal prosecution for breach of health and safety laws.³⁰

4.5 During April the NDA will begin looking at all the options for UK spent fuel including reprocessing, ongoing wet storage, dry storage in new purpose built stores and dry cask storage. The future role of THORP in managing spent fuel will be considered as part of this review.

4.6 The notorious spent fuel storage pond at Sellafield – B30 - has now received yet another warning from the European Commission. The Commission says it has breached rules designed to keep tabs on nuclear materials to stop them being diverted illegally for non-peaceful uses. The 50-year-old Magnox storage pond has inadequate records so the amount of plutonium can only be estimated. European safety inspectors have complained they cannot get proper access to the site, because radiation exposure rates are so high that time spent on the plant is restricted to less than an hour a day for individual workers.³¹

4.7 The mixed-oxide (MOX) nuclear fuel plant at Sellafield will only produce one-quarter of the plutonium-uranium fuel it was originally designed for, according to the NDA. Because of "immature technology" and engineering problems.³² The production plan this financial year was to increase the number of fuel assemblies produced from 4 to 12. It is now thought it will only be possible to produce eight. The original design capacity throughput rate for the plant was 120 tonnes per year (te HM/yr). This is now not considered feasible. The NDA's target for the plant is now only 40 tonnes, but production for the next few years is expected to be around 32 tonnes.³³

5.0 Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

5.1 Robot submarines have uncovered vast deposits of radioactive sludge that was left in underground storage tanks at Sellafield, decades ago and forgotten. This has helped push up the bill for decommissioning from £56bn to around £70bn - but that could rise higher if more forgotten deposits are uncovered.³⁴ However, this figure excludes decommissioning British Energy's seven nuclear power stations, and dealing with the Ministry of Defence's nuclear sites and the long-term storage of the waste. Adding those all in would bring the total cost to around £160bn.³⁵

5.2 On 30 March 2006, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Scottish Ministers approved the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's (NDA's) Strategy, which sets out how the it will tackle the formidable nuclear clean-up challenge.

5.3 The European Commission completed its formal state aid investigation into the transfer of assets and liabilities from BNFL to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) concluding that BNFL had complied with the polluter-pays principle by covering the costs of decommissioning its plants and therefore had received no state aid. The commission noted, however, that the NDA will continue to operate commercial facilities, such as the four operating magnox stations. So the commission imposed strict conditions - the NDA will have to ensure that it does not use aid to undercut wholesale prices when selling electricity directly to business consumers, said the

³⁰ Nuclear Fuel Magazine 10th April 2006 Vol. 31 No.8

³¹ Guardian 16th February 2006 <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/economics/story/0,,1710892,00.html>

³² New Scientist 25 February 2006,
<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg18925404.000.html>

³³ NDA SMP Update 16th February 2006
[http://www.nda.gov.uk/News--SMP_Update_\(1403\).aspx?pg=1403](http://www.nda.gov.uk/News--SMP_Update_(1403).aspx?pg=1403)

³⁴ Independent 30th March 2006 <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/article354488.ece>

³⁵ Independent on Sunday, 2nd April 2006 <http://news.independent.co.uk/business/news/article355080.ece>

commission. In the cases of the Thorp and Sellafield Mixed-oxide Plant, if NDA enters any new contracts to operate them longer than planned, it must make sure all incremental nuclear liabilities generated by such contracts are covered.³⁶

5.4 The controversial EC decision, helps clear the way for BNFL's £1bn sale of its clean-up business, British Nuclear Group, to private companies within the next 18 months. Some fear that the decision to allow the transfer of clean-up liabilities to the NDA will set a precedent for the new nuclear plants, especially as there is no legal requirement for nuclear reactors to establish a segregated decommissioning fund.³⁷

6.0 British Energy

6.1 The government's decision to bailout British Energy, in 2002 has left the taxpayer facing "a large and uncertain liability", according to the National Audit Office (NAO).³⁸ The potential bill facing the government for cleaning up British Energy's nuclear liabilities has risen by almost £1bn to more than £5bn. The increase is more than the whole NHS deficit. The NAO was also scathing about the "weakness" in the way the Department of Trade and Industry appointed financial advisers during the restructuring of the company.

6.2 Under British Energy's restructuring plan completed last year, the government agreed to indemnify the company against any shortfall in the nuclear liabilities fund which meets the clean up costs. In return British Energy contributes 65% of its net cash flow to the fund. The increased liabilities will not mean the company will have to pay more to the fund.³⁹ So the amount the taxpayer has to pay will depend on the company's future financial performance. Such uncertainty "places a significant risk in the hands of the taxpayer," according to NAO.⁴⁰

6.3 Meanwhile, Chancellor Gordon Brown announced plans to sell-off part of its £6.5bn stake in British Energy. Under the terms of the rescue deal, the taxpayer took a 65 per cent majority stake in British Energy - in return for it agreeing to pay more towards future liabilities and those it was meant to have covered as a private sector company when the Conservative government privatised the industry a decade ago.⁴¹

6.4 A dispute has broken out between the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee and the DTI. A few weeks ago the DTI was unable to explain its accounting policies to the Committee. Two DTI officials were questioned about the use of a "discount rate" in assessing the cost to BE of dealing with its waste liabilities. Helen Goodman and other MPs on the PAC asked why the DTI had not used the normal discount rate set out for public bodies in the Treasury's green book. The Treasury green book that governs such public sector liabilities says 3.5% rate should only be used for the first 30 years with 3% and 2.5% being used over a longer period. But the DTI has admitted that it has used a discount rate of 3.5%. If the green book had been followed the cost of the liabilities would have been far higher than the £5.3bn figure used by the DTI.⁴² The issue is important because the government wants to sell its stake in BE.

³⁶ Reuters 4th April 2006 http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/newsarticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyid=2006-04-04T125449Z_01_L0461184_RTRUKOC_0_UK-ENERGY-BRITAIN-NUCLEAR-EU.xml

³⁷ Guardian 5th April 2006 <http://business.guardian.co.uk/story/0,,1746946,00.html>

³⁸ Guardian 17th March 2006 <http://business.guardian.co.uk/story/0,,1732769,00.html>

³⁹ Guardian 25th February 2006 <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/publicservices/story/0,,1717544,00.html>

⁴⁰ http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/05-06/0506943.pdf

⁴¹ Telegraph, 23rd March 2006

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/money/main.jhtml?xml=/money/2006/03/23/cnbbiz23.xml>

⁴² Guardian 18th April 2006 <http://business.guardian.co.uk/story/0,,1755587,00.html>

Uncorrected Oral Evidence to the Public Accounts Committee 27th March 2006

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmpubacc/uc1025-i/uc102502.htm>

7.0 Chernobyl

7.1 After two decades, the legacy of the Chernobyl disaster is still casting its poisonous shadow over Britain's countryside. The Department of Health has admitted that more than 200,000 sheep are grazing on land contaminated by fallout from the explosion at the Ukrainian nuclear plant 1,500 miles away. Emergency orders still apply to 355 Welsh farms, 11 in Scotland and nine in England as a result of the catastrophe in April 1986.⁴³

7.2 John Urquhart's research, released at the NFLA Conference in March, which estimated that Chernobyl may have led to over 1,000 infant deaths in the UK, was covered by The Sun newspaper.⁴⁴

7.3 Last September a report by the International Atomic Energy Authority's (IAEA) Chernobyl Forum claimed that, apart from thyroid cancer, there were very few serious health effects. Most of the problems were caused by psychological distress or radiophobia, it said. It predicted 4,000 cancer deaths in total. As the IAEA's primary role is the promotion of nuclear power, playing down the effects of the world's worst nuclear disaster is part of its agenda.

7.4 A report by two UK radiation scientists for the European Green Party⁴⁵ says that Chernobyl could kill up to 60,000 people - 15 times as many as officially estimated. The scientists accuse two UN organisations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO), of downplaying the impact of the accident. Zhanat Carr, a radiation scientist with the WHO in Geneva, says an extra 5000 deaths were omitted from an IAEA/WHO report because it was a "political communication tool". Elizabeth Cardis, a radiation specialist from the WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer in Lyon, France, says that 30,000 to 60,000 cancer deaths is "the right order of magnitude".⁴⁶

7.5 A new Greenpeace report, which involved work by 52 respected scientists and includes information never before published in English, has revealed that the full consequences of the Chernobyl disaster could top a quarter of a million cancers cases and nearly 100,000 fatal cancers. The report also looks into the ongoing health impacts of Chernobyl and concludes that radiation from the disaster has had a devastating effect on survivors; damaging immune and endocrine systems, leading to accelerated ageing, cardiovascular and blood illnesses, psychological illnesses, chromosomal aberrations and an increase in foetal deformations.⁴⁷

7.6 Ten former European Environment Ministers, including Michael Meacher, have called on Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Mohamed ElBaradei to reform the Agency's mandate and withdraw its promotion of nuclear technology. The former Ministers highlight the contradictory roles the IAEA plays in the international arena. On one hand, the IAEA is tasked with stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and providing technical assistance to support the nuclear disarmament process. On the other, the IAEA's mandate promotes the dangerous myth of peaceful nuclear power. The former environmental ministers call on the UN to propose amendments to the IAEA statute at the

⁴³ Independent 14th March 2006 <http://news.independent.co.uk/environment/article351153.ece>

⁴⁴ The Sun 23rd March 2006 <http://www.thesun.co.uk/article/0..2-2006130570.00.html>

⁴⁵ European Greens Press Release 6th April 2006
http://www.greens-efa.org/cms/default/rubrik/6/6270.greensefa_org@en.htm

⁴⁶ New Scientist 6th April 2006
<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg19025464.400-how-many-more-lives-will-chernobyl-claim.html>

⁴⁷ Greenpeace 18th April 2006 <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/news/chernobyl-deaths-180406>
<http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/chernobylhealthreport.pdf>

BBC 18th April 2006
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4917526.stm>

forthcoming IAEA Board of Governors and General Conference in mid September.⁴⁸

8.0 Nuclear Licensing

8.1 The nuclear industry has been lobbying for new licensing arrangements for new reactor designs in which all major issues (environmental, security, safety and waste) are dealt with behind-closed doors. This would leave local authorities, the public and Parliament with little oversight at a public inquiry.⁴⁹ Now as part of the Energy Review, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has been asked to report by the end of June on the potential role of pre-licensing assessments of candidate designs.⁵⁰

8.2 HSE issued a discussion document on 27th March which reviews the pre-licensing process for potential new reactors. Comments are invited by 28th April.⁵¹ The document says "*potential licensees may wish to reduce project and commercial risk, by seeking preliminary, or pre-licensing regulatory assessments of prospective reactor designs, before large-scale financial commitments are made*".

8.3 The Welsh Anti Nuclear Alliance (WANA), Greenpeace and the Nuclear Free Local Authorities are calling for full public involvement in the process. The current attempt to place consideration of the safety of new nuclear power station designs beyond public scrutiny will not work. It will guarantee heavy opposition at the specific site stage. Those Local Authorities and populations prejudiced by non-disclosure of detailed information on safety and excluded from its scrutiny at a public inquiry, are unlikely to go away.

⁴⁸ Greenpeace International Press Release 12th April 2006

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/releases/former-environmental-ministers>

⁴⁹ Guardian 21st January 2006 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/frontpage/story/0,,1691750.00.html>

⁵⁰ HSE Press Release 23rd January 2006 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/press/2006/e06005.htm>

⁵¹ HSE review of the pre-licensing process for potential new build of nuclear power stations, 27th March 2006. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/energyreview/discussion.htm>