



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

For immediate release, 24th March 2009

NFLAs call on Government to hold a nuclear enquiry and stop delaying local energy revolution.

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities have called on the Government to hold a public inquiry into whether the construction of new nuclear reactors will create a net benefit, compared to the problems caused by producing yet more radioactive waste. It says the Government should stop delaying the launch of a local energy revolution, which it will have to launch sooner or later if it is to tackle climate change.

In 2003 the Government promised a "step change" in energy efficiency. It said plans included encouraging local authorities to take the lead, acting as catalysts for change. Some local authorities have indeed been carrying out some innovative climate change strategies, but without the central government support these schemes will never be ambitious enough or at the scale required to meet carbon abatement targets. We are still waiting for the step change in energy efficiency which was promised six years ago.

The NFLA was responding to a consultation, which closes today, being carried out by the UK Government on the 'Justification' for building new nuclear reactors. This process is required under European law. Potential nuclear reactor operators must show that the benefits outweigh the potential health risks. The legislation also gives the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change the power to hold a public inquiry.

The NFLA's response to the consultation notes that nuclear investment will damage the nascent local energy revolution which local authorities are leading. This could also damage efforts to tackle climate change. It also notes that nuclear power capital costs are out of control and recent international studies have cast 'significant doubt' over the official risk attached to radiation doses received by people living near nuclear reactors.

NFLA Secretary, Sean Morris, said:

"The cost of building new reactors is spiralling out of control. A sustainable energy policy based on energy efficiency and renewable energy would be cheaper and create more jobs. Local authorities stand ready and waiting to lead a local energy revolution - implementing a massive energy efficiency programme and decentralised energy programme which will stimulate our local economies. We call on the Government to stop this headlong rush towards creating yet more nuclear waste, when we have no idea what we are going to do with the waste we have already created. At the very least it should hold an inquiry as part of this justification process."

Ends

Further information on the NFLA consultation response and for additional comment - Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930196.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES