

Nuclear Free Local Authorities

briefing



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Subject: **Main points from the NFLA Steering Committee Meeting
Manchester Town Hall, 16 September 2005**

- Nuclear Decommissioning Policy: NFLAs have seen their hard work rewarded with a second policy success this Summer. NFLA Briefings 47 and 48 reported on the culmination of 16 years NFLA work with the publication of the Nirex list of 537 sites previously investigated for a national radioactive waste repository. The Steering Committee meeting in September was informed of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's preference for a 25 year timescale for decommissioning its Magnox reactors. This policy was advanced by the NFLA Legal Adviser at the Trawsfynydd public inquiry in 2002 but it was fiercely opposed at the time by BNFL and the Health and Safety Executive. It has now found favour with the NDA for the very same reasons advanced by the NFLA Legal Adviser: namely that it is technically achievable and the responsibility of this generation to clean up the mess that it has created.

The commitment by the NDA to a 25 year timetable is contained in its consultation paper on future strategy (see: www.nda.gov.uk). The same paper revises upwards the total decommissioning bill from £48bn to £56bn with an additional £10bn if it is decided by Government that plutonium stockpiled at Sellafield should be declared a waste product for disposal. The consultation deadline is 11 November. The NFLA Secretariat is in the process of issuing a separate briefing paper about this NDA consultation to assist member authorities.

- Radioactive Waste Management Policy: The NFLA Steering Committee received a report on the Environment Agency's consultation that reviewed authorisations for radioactive waste disposal at the national low level waste site at Drigg in Cumbria. The consultation paper reported that coastal erosion could reach the Drigg site within 500 years. The NFLA Secretary suggested that coastal erosion was likely to accelerate as climate change accelerates and therefore a) no new *disposals* at the site should be permitted, though *storage* could continue, b) that the status of the site be altered from a disposal facility to a storage facility, and c) a public inquiry be established to thoroughly examine Drigg's future. The Committee also recognised the serious implications of coastal erosion for the Sellafield complex located north of Drigg on the Cumbrian coast.

Other matters considered included: the decision by the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management to shortlist four waste management options for further public consultation before making recommendations to Ministers in July 2006 (see www.corwm.org.uk); developments with DEFRA's Low Level Waste policy review that is expected to lead to a public consultation later this year; developments within the MoD's ISOLUS programme; DEFRA's consultation on extending Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to include radioactivity, and; the publication of new HSE criteria for delicensing nuclear sites.

- New Nuclear Build Developments: Detailed NFLA Steering Committee submissions opposing any new nuclear construction have been submitted to energy policy reviews being conducted by the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the UK Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee.
- Other News In Brief: Register now for the NFLA AGM and Annual Policy Briefing 3-4 November 2005 (see: www.nuclearpolicy.info). The Mayor of London has provided facilities at City Hall for the 8th Joint UK and Irish Councils Conference on 23 March 2006. A new All Ireland NFLA Forum was launched in Dublin in 23 September 2005.
- Date & Venue of Next Meeting: 11.00am Thursday 3 November 2005, Manchester Town Hall



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