



Subject: **Summary of the main points from the NFLA Steering Committee Meeting, Civic Hall, Leeds, 20 January 2006**

## 1. **DTI Energy Review**

The Legal Adviser reported on: the Government announcement that there would be an Energy Review this year; research that he was undertaking, funded jointly by NFLAs and Greenpeace, on decision-making processes that would be required to allow the Government to arrive at such a policy, and how that policy would be implemented at any specific new site; submission of a letter jointly by NFLAs and Greenpeace to the Minister for Energy seeking swift reassurance that a) if the Energy Review were to recommend support for new nuclear plant, there would be a further round of public consultation on any such proposals in line with Government commitments; and b) that the procedures for consultation relating to the development of nuclear energy policy would match those applicable to the development of nuclear waste management policy and the previous Energy White Paper *Our Energy Future: Creating a Low Carbon Economy*.

Work with the Chair of the All-Ireland Nuclear Free Forum, seeking an assurance from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland that no nuclear power stations would be built there, was also reported.

**Update:** A public consultation on the Energy Review was announced towards the end of January and will continue through to 14 April 2006. The consultation document is available at: [www.dti.gov.uk/energy/review](http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/review). A briefing paper to assist authorities in their response to the Energy Review consultation is in preparation and will be circulated separately.

## 2. **8th Joint Irish & UK Local Authorities Conference on Nuclear Hazards, City Hall, London, 23 March 2006**

The Secretary reported progress with conference arrangements, including conference accommodation, conference reception, programme finalisation, workshop development and conference promotion.

The programme will review the legacy of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the approach to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 26 April 2006 and report on the opportunities for local authorities to contribute to a national strategy to meet energy needs and cutting carbon emissions without resort to new nuclear stations. *Conference programme and registration details are at: [www.nuclearpolicy.info](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info) or available from the NFLA Secretariat.*



**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**

### 3. **Local Authorities and Climate Change**

The Legal Adviser introduced a very detailed report on local authority activity to both raise awareness and increase efforts to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and maximise the use of energy from renewable sources. The Legal Adviser urged all members of the Committee to report on their initiatives in these areas to demonstrate that they were playing their part in promoting renewable energy, energy saving and meeting UK carbon emission reduction targets to avoid any requirement to resort to new nuclear generating capacity. The Legal Adviser reported on the work of the Cities for Climate Protection programme and recommended that information about this be incorporated into the 8<sup>th</sup> *Joint Irish and UK Local Authorities Conference on Nuclear Hazards*, City Hall, London, 23 March 2006. Considering the report the committee decided:

1. *That the Secretary seeks to establish from Steering Committee members what action their authorities are taking to cut carbon emissions, save energy and procure from renewable energy suppliers.*
2. *That NFLA members involved in the Cities for Climate Protection programme be invited to participate in a panel discussion at the NFLA organised Conference at City Hall, London, on 23 March 2006.*

### 4. **Radioactive Waste Management Policy**

The Secretary reported: progress with the DEFRA and devolved administrations review of low level radioactive waste policy; the note of the first meeting of the new MoD ISOLUS (Interim Storage of Laid Up Submarine) steering group; further work of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (see below); DEFRA's consultation on its draft Magnox discharge decision document; Dounreay's consultation to identify the best practicable environmental option for managing the continuing discovery of hazardous radioactive particles on the sea bed and on nearby beaches; and on new concerns about the safety of liquid high level radioactive waste storage at Sellafield. Cllr Risby reported on the continuing work of the Local Government Association's Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum and the appointment of its first Executive Director.

**Update:** CoRWM's open meetings in February to April are as follows:

- 27/28 February, **Manchester Town Hall**, Albert Square, Manchester M60 2LA. Tel: 0161 234 3404

Day 1 will focus on CoRWM's business, including arrangements for options assessment in March and April. The afternoon of Day 1 will include discussion of the role of costs in option assessment, and the approach to take to Plutonium management. Day 2 of this meeting involves a panel discussion on the merits or otherwise of long-term interim storage, with particular focus on the ability of this option to provide adequate levels of safety and security over a period of a century or longer. This will be followed by a discussion about the need (or otherwise) to be able to retrieve wastes from long-term management facilities. Both discussions will help inform CoRWM's options assessment at subsequent meetings.

- 28/29/30 March, **Holiday Inn Brighton-Seafront**, Kings Road, Brighton, Sussex BN1 2JF. Tel: 01273 828250

This meeting will undertake CoRWM's Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis. Day 1 will review the findings from public and stakeholder engagement, focussing on comments on specialist judgements of option performance ('scoring'), and **public** and stakeholder views on the relative importance of the different assessment

criteria ('weighting'). During day 2, CoRWM will undertake its own weighting of the assessment criteria, taking into account public and stakeholder views. During day 3, CoRWM will use computer software to generate a ranking of options, based on the specialist scores and CoRWM's weights. Sensitivity testing will then explore the impact of varying scores and weights on option ranking.

- 11/12 April, **Dynamic Earth Enterprises Ltd**, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AS. Tel: 0131 550 7800

This meeting will undertake CoRWM's holistic assessment of long-term management options. Day 1 will review the findings of public and stakeholder engagement and start to build up an overall picture of the pros and cons of each option, including for example the extent to which ethical and environmental principles are met. Day 2 will complete this assessment. It will then compare the findings with the results of the MCDA, to enable CoRWM to identify preferred options for managing wastes in the long-term.

- 25/26/27 April, **Thistle Brighton**, King's Road, BN1 2GS. Tel: 0870 333 9129

This meeting will formulate CoRWM's draft recommendations to Government, covering preferred options, or combinations of options, and implementation issues, such as community involvement, partnership and benefits.

*The meetings In March and April provide opportunity to observe CoRWM's options assessment and formulation of draft recommendations as they happen. Attendees will be the first people to find out what CoRWM's preferred options and draft recommendations will be.*

## 5. **Nuclear Decommissioning Authority**

The Secretary reported on: the Trade Industry Committee inquiry into the work of the NDA; the attendance by Cllrs Regan and Rurnney, together with the NFLA (Scotland) Policy Adviser, at the Scottish NDA Stakeholder workshop on 6 December 2005; the approval by the NDA Board of its draft strategy on 15 December 2005; and the attendance by the Secretary at the first meeting on the NDA National Stakeholder Nuclear Materials Issue Group on 10 and 11 January 2005.

*The Committee decided that the Secretary respond the Trade and Industry Committee setting out concerns about the conflict of interest within the NDA between its nuclear waste clean up responsibilities and continued radioactive waste generation by the Magnox nuclear stations, THORP reprocessing plant and Sellafield plutonium/MOX fuel fabrication plant.*

## 6. **UK Nuclear Weapons Policy: Trident Replacement and Aldermaston Development**

The Legal Adviser reported his inquiries using freedom of information legislation to establish the decision making procedures about the extension of the UK's strategic nuclear deterrence programme. He informed the meeting that at Aldermaston and Burghfield the Government announced last year a development programme of £350 million to include new facilities which are stated to be there to maintain the existing warhead for the Trident missile but essential to the development and manufacture of new nuclear weapons. One proposed facility, a laser plant capable of simulating a nuclear explosion, and therefore said to be necessary now that physical testing is effectively outlawed, was subject of an outline Notice of Proposed Development to West Berkshire Council in 2003/4 and, in 2005, to a Notice in respect of reserved matters. Although Crown immunity from planning controls looks likely to end this year, the laser plant was processed under the present immunity and West Berkshire took a very limited

view of its role despite objections on planning and non-traditional grounds from campaigning groups.

The NFLA Secretary, English Forum Secretary and the NFLA Development Adviser have worked together to prepare a seminar, to be hosted by Reading Council, on the above matters and wider issues associated with any extension of the UK's strategic nuclear weapons programme. The seminar will be held on 24 February and all member authorities are invited (details from Sean Morris on 0113 247 4341).

*Considering the report the NFLA Steering Committee agreed that the Legal Adviser continue his work to ensure accountable decision making within the UK nuclear weapons programme.*

## 7. **Freedom of Information**

The Legal Adviser reported on his work to use freedom of information (FoI) legislation to obtain information about Government policy towards: new nuclear build; risk assessment for emergencies relating to radioactive materials; decision making on the extension of the strategic nuclear deterrence programme; and strategic environmental assessment. Using the FoI Act the Legal Adviser had also sought to establish: policy in Northern Ireland towards nuclear energy; arrangements by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate for pre-licensing nuclear power station designs; information about the causes of recent incidents affecting the safety of high level waste storage at Sellafield; and planning policies in areas hosting nuclear power stations. The Legal Adviser reported that he intended to use the FoI Act to investigate arrangements within the nuclear industry for dealing with pandemic 'flu (following the presentation on this matter provided to the NFLA 2005 Annual Policy Briefing in November 2005).

## 8. **2006 NFLA Work Programme**

The Secretary introduced a summary of the NFLA Secretariat's main activities, targets and timescales in the period until the 2006 NFLA AGM. The programme included a proposal to reconvene the NFLA Organisational and Development Working Group before the end of April 2006 to consider longer-term NFLA strategic priorities.

## 9. **NFLA Development Advisers Report**

The Development Adviser introduced a report that recapped: continuing work to attract new NFLA member authorities; progress with the development of the All Ireland NFLA Forum; and press and promotional work.

## 10. **NFLA Staff**

The Secretary reported the departure to pastures new of Clare Frisby, NFLA Administrative Worker for 7 years, and her replacement by Ms Jo Southall. He reported the extension of the Development Advisers contract until 31 March 2006 following consultation with the Chair.

For more information on any of the above matters contact:  
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