



Date: 10 October 2006

No. 57

Subject: Summary of the main points from the NFLA Steering Committee Meeting, Town Hall, Manchester, 15 September 2006

## 1. The Energy Challenge: New Nuclear Build

The Secretary reported on NFLA work in response to the publication on 11 July of *The Energy Challenge* – the Government's response to the Energy Review consultation – including:

- ◆ publishing and circulating to all member authorities an analysis of the Energy Review (as *New Nuclear Monitor No 10*) and work by the Legal Adviser (then in hand but now published as *New Nuclear Monitor No 11*) about guidance to member authorities on responding to a further consultation, launched by *The Energy Challenge*, on the policy framework for new nuclear build. Both NFLA briefing papers can be found at [www.nuclearpolicy.info](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info). Authorities are urged to respond to the consultation on the policy framework for new nuclear build by the deadline of 31 October 2006.
- ◆ in co-operation with Rotherham MBC and the Yorkshire Coal Task Force, developing a conference programme, scheduled for 27 October 2006, to consider the role of 'clean coal' in UK energy policy. See: [www.nuclearpolicy.info](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info)
- ◆ working with the Welsh Anti Nuclear Alliance to produce public information leaflets urging support in Wales for NFLAs and a non nuclear energy policy.
- ◆ discussing with national officers from Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and UNISON the preparation of a detailed research proposal to determine the job growth potential, by Parliamentary constituency and local authority, of a non nuclear energy policy, with the aim of demonstrating that such a policy would deliver more social and economic benefit to more areas of the country *including* those that currently rely on the nuclear sector for local employment.

The Legal Adviser reported that he had prepared a report explaining how the DTI proposed to weaken the public inquiry system so that it would have no significant content other than a discussion of local environmental impact, and that the critical aspect of any public inquiry - the testing of evidence by cross examination - would be removed with respect to: the justification for new nuclear power; the need for new nuclear power; the appropriateness of the site(s) chosen for new nuclear power; the safety of new nuclear power; the steps to be taken to protect the environment and people from radioactive waste; and the security hazards involved both intrinsically and in a post '9/11' world.



**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**

The Legal Adviser had also prepared a detailed analysis of all existing regulatory requirements prior to the publication of *The Energy Challenge*. This analysis had been part funded by Greenpeace and NFLA officers and Greenpeace campaigners will breakdown this analysis into a series of Fact Sheets (of which the first three have been drafted) to be sent to all local authorities, and more widely, over the next three months.

The Legal Adviser will also continue to: work to maintain the maximum range of opportunities to intervene in the overall regulatory process so as to ensure environmental protection, public safety and some semblance of authentic local democratic accountability for an extremely hazardous industry, and; argue that the Government's strategy is legally flawed and that there are risks to industry investment as a consequence.

## 2. **Radioactive Waste Management Policy**

The Secretary reported on the final recommendations submitted to Government by the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM). Subject to Government's response, attention will now turn to the practicalities of implementing CoRWM recommendations, particularly the institutional arrangements for delivery. Public engagement will be required to determine the institutional arrangements for site selection, community consultation, and oversight for construction of a long term radioactive waste management facility (repository). A paper on the options available will be prepared by Fred Barker, formerly of CoRWM and now the LGA Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum (NuLeAF) Executive Director, at the LGA NuLeAF AGM in Kendal on 12 October.

CoRWM continues in being until November and is itself considering institutional arrangements for the implementation of its recommendations, including criteria for site selection. UK Nirex Ltd, the organisation that failed to deliver a national radioactive waste management facility in 1997, is lobbying hard for it to be given the role of overseeing any future repository development – but under a new guise in an effort to escape its past.

Considering the Secretary's report, the NFLA Steering Committee urged its members involved with NuLeAF to attend the NuLeAF AGM on 12 October and make the case for an open, transparent and justifiable decision process to determine future institutional arrangements for delivering a long term radioactive waste management policy. Decisions on institutional arrangements must not be made behind closed doors. If public confidence in long-term radioactive waste management policy is to be maintained, then the open and transparent culture of CoRWM needs to continue.

## 3. **Nuclear Decommissioning Authority**

*Interim storage* of higher-level radioactive wastes will continue to be a matter for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) to manage on its existing sites. The NDA will undertake public and stakeholder consultation about this. Currently the NDA is consulting on its Draft Annual Plan for FY 2007/08 & Socio Economic Policy (see [www.nda.gov.uk](http://www.nda.gov.uk)).

On 16 August the Parliamentary Trade and Industry Select Committee published the results of its latest investigation into the work of the NDA. The Committee concluded that existing NDA liabilities now amounting to over £70 billion were *likely to rise significantly* while NDA income from nuclear reprocessing and MOX fuel fabrication at Sellafield was likely to be much lower than projected.

The Steering Committee decided that information materials highlighting the 'opportunity cost' of nuclear clean up should be prepared for member authority use. Although

meeting the full cost of *existing* liabilities is unavoidable, in order to ensure future public and environmental protection, the Committee recognised that these clean up cost should nonetheless be highlighted to deter new nuclear development. The Steering Committee also decided that any government commitment to potential investors to cap future costs for waste and nuclear plant decommissioning would be an unfair subsidy for new nuclear build. These costs must be met by the industry itself, not the taxpayer.

#### 4. **UK Nuclear Weapons Policy**

The NFLA Steering Committee considered the implications for security and safety, and public expenditure, of extending the operating life of, or replacing altogether, the UK's Trident nuclear weapons system. The meeting supported a draft statement committing NFLAs to work with Mayors for Peace to prevent any renewal of Trident.

The Secretary reported that, with help from the former NFLA Development Adviser, Peter Burt, and the Chair of CND, Kate Hudson, a visit by the Mayor of Hiroshima and a small delegation of international Mayors to the UK in early July had been very successful. The Mayor of Hiroshima spoke at the gates of Aldermaston calling for an end to nuclear weapons. He was received by the Mayor of Reading who declared her Council's support for Mayors for Peace as well as maintaining its support for nuclear free local authority policy work. A meeting between the Mayor of London and the Mayor of Hiroshima resulted in an undertaking by the Mayor of London to write to every council in the UK to urge their support for Mayors for Peace. Extracts from a draft report recording key points from the visit are available from the NFLA Secretariat.

#### 5. **NFLA AGM & Annual Policy Briefing 2006, 7- 8 December 2006**

The Secretary reported on the arrangements made for the 2006 AGM and Annual Policy Briefing to be hosted by Leeds City Council. The Secretary was working towards issuing a first conference announcement (now completed). The Steering Committee urges all member authorities to register. The Annual Policy Briefing will update on developments with the Government's Energy Review. Full details can be downloaded from the NFLA website: [www.nuclearpolicy.info](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info).

#### 6. **NFLA Membership Development in Ireland**

The Secretary reported on arrangements for a conference in Drogheda, Ireland on 30 September 2006, to promote support for NFLA work in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In the 12 months to September 2006 the All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum had doubled its membership to eleven councils (3 in the north and 8 in the south) and several others have the matter under consideration.

#### 7. **Finance**

The Secretary reported on revised estimates for FY 2006/07. The actual overspend for 2005/06 was £5,000 less than the projected figure reported at the June Committee meeting. Nonetheless income was still expected to be lower than expenditure in the current FY and only a very small reserve was expected to be available to carry forward into FY 2007/08. The Steering Committee asked the Secretary to prepare a report on options to bring income and expenditure into balance in FY 2007/08

#### 8. **Date and venue for the next NFLA Steering Committee meeting**

11.00am, Thursday, 7 December 2006, Civic Hall, Leeds

For more information on any of the above matters contact:  
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