



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 24th June 2014

As costs to the taxpayer for nuclear waste management and decommissioning grows by another £6.6 billion, NFLA urges complete review of the NDA and calls for an end to the new nuclear programme

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) is alarmed, but not surprised, to learn that the financial cost to the taxpayer of the UK's hugely expensive radioactive waste legacy has increased by another £6.6 billion, a 7% increase on previous forecasts.

In its Annual Report and Accounts for 2013/14, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) released figures that reported it had raised its 'best estimate' for the undiscounted cost of the clean-up, waste management and decommissioning of UK nuclear facilities over the next 120 years to £110bn, a 7 per cent increase from 2012/13, with Sellafield alone accounting for £79.1bn of that figure. The NDA also raised its total discounted estimate of the costs by 10 per cent to £64.9bn. (1)

The NDA's Annual Report included an endorsement from Baroness Verma that the Government approved of the NDA's plans, despite damning reports from the National Audit Office (2) and the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee of the NDA's management and oversight of the Sellafield site. (3)

As an active participant in the nuclear waste and decommissioning debate, the NFLA is becoming increasingly concerned that a deep and escalating crisis in radioactive waste management is taking place. The NFLA calls on the NDA to urgently bring in to its decision-making bodies key independent figures – such as the Nuclear Waste Advisory Associates for example (4) – to challenge the way it conducts its practices and find new ways to improve its policies and achieve cost reductions.

In these difficult financial times, what part of the public sector would be allowed to get away with a 7% and £6.6 billion increase in its costs? With the NHS facing a £2 billion shortfall in its budget, our armed forces under significant cost pressures, flood alleviation, local government and transport infrastructure all suffering from under investment, the continuing diversion of public funds to the nuclear industry beggars' belief.

It also brings into question again the billions of pounds being offered by the Government to assist EDF in building new nuclear power reactors at Hinkley Point. Surely the priority has to be to spend limited public resources on dealing with the 60 year old problem of nuclear waste management and decommissioning than building new nuclear reactors that will only generate yet more waste? At a time when solar power generation in the UK has just reached record levels (5), when other forms of renewable energy, microgeneration projects and energy efficiency programmes can provide clean waste-free alternatives to nuclear and fossil fuels, the political priorities of the national political parties in energy generation need to be urgently refocused.

NFLA Char, Councillor Mark Hackett said:

"I am greatly alarmed to hear of the large cost increases in the UK's nuclear liabilities. Despite some advances in waste management, the NDA is still not getting to grips with the UK's 60 year old nuclear legacy. NFLA will continue to challenge the NDA over the efficiency of its policies and encourages it to engage with its critics in a more open and transparent manner. The NDA has been in existence for over a decade now and, as far as I can see, is still struggling to get control of the costs of the UK's nuclear sites. Perhaps it is time to review the NDA's structure, as can the public finances really continue to be able to cope with such large cost increases?"

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES



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For more information please contact Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary on 07771 930196.

Notes for editors:

- (1) NDA Annual Report and Accounts 2013-14, 24th June 2014
<http://www.nda.gov.uk/publication/annual-report-and-accounts-2013-to-2014>
- (2) National Audit Office – ‘Managing risk reduction at Sellafield’, 7th November 2012
http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/1213/sellafield_risk_reduction.aspx
- (3) Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee report on ‘Progress at Sellafield’, 11th February 2014 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmpubacc/708/70802/htm>
- (4) Nuclear Waste Advisory Associates <http://www.nuclearwasteadvisory.co.uk>
- (5) ‘Britain and Germany have broken records for generating solar electricity in the last few weeks, according to new industry figures’. Guardian 23rd June 2014
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jun/23/uk-and-germany-break-solar-power-records>

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