



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Secretariat

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Corporate Services Department

03 FEB 2006

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Chair: Cllr **Peter Lloyd JP**
Secretary: **Stewart Kemp**

Date: 16 January 2006

To: All Local Authorities in the Republic of Ireland

Dear Colleagues

You may have read the attached *Irish Times* article that reports on the efforts of the newly established All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum to secure an assurance from the Northern Ireland Secretary that no nuclear stations will be built in Northern Ireland. The reason for raising this issue now is because the UK Government intends to review energy policy early in 2006 and new nuclear construction will be considered.

The All Ireland Forum will be submitting its case against new nuclear build to the UK Government energy review. The Forum is seeking support from all local authorities opposed to new nuclear stations and has prepared the resolution text attached for consideration by Irish councils. Please can I ask your council to support this resolution and to convey your support to me at the above address. As soon as we have been notified of a substantial number of resolutions having been carried, then we will also seek to raise the matter with the Irish Government. We hope to win the support of the Irish Government for our efforts to prevent any new nuclear construction in Britain or Northern Ireland.

Whilst writing, can I also draw your attention to **8th Irish & UK Local Authorities Standing Conference on Nuclear Hazards** entitled *Chernobyl 20 Years On: Nuclear Costs & Energy Futures*.

The conference will be held in City Hall, London on 23 March 2006. It is the annual opportunity for local authorities in Ireland and the UK to meet and review joint nuclear free policy work. The 20th anniversary of the world's worst nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in the Ukraine falls on 26 April 2006. The conference will review Chernobyl's continuing impact on the environment and receive a presentation on new research about the health impacts. It will also provide an up date on progress with the UK energy review and progress with the UK radioactive waste management policy review. The conference will offer a unique opportunity to be thoroughly briefed about both these key policy issues, their impact on Ireland, and how to engage with them. Conference places are limited and early registration is recommended. Details can be found at www.nuclearpolicy.info or I can forward information on request.

Finally, we are keen to build support for the All Ireland NFLA Forum. I attach a briefing about the Forum's work and would be pleased if your council could consider joining. If I can assist further with any of the matters raised in this letter then please let me know.

Yours sincerely


Stewart Kemp
Secretary



Forum presses Hain to clarify nuclear plans for North

Elaine Keogh

The Irish Times

30 December 2005

Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Hain has been asked to clarify whether the North is being considered as a location for the construction of nuclear power stations.

The call has come from the All-Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum, which includes local authorities from both sides of the Border opposed to nuclear power.

The forum's move follows the energy review, initiated by British prime minister Tony Blair.

In announcing the review it was stated: "The devolved administrations and territorial departments are already involved and will continue to be involved throughout the course of the review."

The forum has written to Mr Hain asking him to give clear confirmation that "on no account will he allow nuclear power stations be built in Northern Ireland".

While Mr Hain is believed to be one of the British cabinet members who oppose nuclear energy, the forum is concerned that the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland may be forced to build nuclear power stations whether they want to or not.

The chairman of the forum, Michael O'Dowd (Louth County Council), said: "Civil society must make its voice heard now to oppose construction of a nuclear facility anywhere on our island, and we will be calling on local councils in all parts of Ireland to make their views known.

"Northern Ireland is well positioned to generate a large proportion of its energy from renewable sources, particularly wind power, and there is also scope for energy-saving programmes to have a big impact. Mr Hain must tell Tony Blair that there is no need or desire for any nuclear power station to be built in Northern Ireland."

Down district councillor Margaret Ritchie said: "The Strategic Energy Framework for Northern Ireland, which was published in June 2004 following extensive consultation, emphasises the role that renewable energy can play in meeting Northern Ireland's energy needs.

"There is absolutely no good reason why this should change just because Tony Blair has been seduced by the nuclear lobby into calling yet another energy review."

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON NEW NUCLEAR CONSTRUCTION

This Council is deeply concerned that a UK Government commitment to new nuclear generation will perpetuate the risks carried by communities in Ireland as a result of radioactive discharges to the Irish Sea, nuclear transportation through the Irish Sea, and of nuclear accidents or possible terrorist incidents. It could also create the conditions for nuclear development on the island of Ireland with associated direct operational hazards and radioactive waste arisings.

This Council therefore opposes the construction of nuclear power stations throughout Britain and Ireland; urges the development of safe sustainable renewable energy generation and greater investment in decentralised energy generation and efficiency programmes that can create employment, improve living standards, and more effectively tackle climate pollution that is accelerating global warming; and formally resolves to support the NFLA campaign and investigate membership of the All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum.

Nuclear Free Local Authorities **briefing**



Date: October 2005

All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum launched

This briefing note updates members and officers of local authorities in Ireland about recent developments in establishing a forum for Irish local authorities to work together to campaign and undertake policy research on nuclear issues that affect Ireland.

All Ireland Forum begins work: Representatives of each NFLA member authority in Ireland met in Dublin on 23 September to discuss arrangements for establishing a forum to allow Irish members to work together. At the meeting it was agreed that a new All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum would be formed to bring together member authorities from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

NFLA's current members in Northern Ireland are Down District Council and Newry and Mourne District Council and the Dublin Regional Authority, South Dublin County Council, and Louth County Council in the Republic of Ireland.

Councillor Michael O'Dowd from Louth County Council agreed to chair the forum on an interim basis, and it was agreed that the forum would meet twice yearly, with an email network to facilitate communication at other times.

NFLA member authorities are asked to nominate a minimum of one member and one officer as contact points to whom communications relating to the forum can be directed.

Terms of reference for the All Ireland Forum: To help guide and focus the new forum's work, the following terms of reference were adopted:

1. To consider and recommend action which can be taken by local authorities to reduce risks to the public from nuclear power and nuclear weapons.
2. To obtain and provide information and take action to help local authorities and the public develop an informed understanding of the risks from nuclear hazards.
3. To consider and recommend action which could be taken by local authorities to support:
 - The safe phase out of nuclear power in the shortest practicable time.
 - Methods which minimise risks to humans and the environment for the long term management of all types of radioactive waste and materials.
 - Efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and related technology.
 - Energy conservation and the use of renewable sources of energy.
 - Alternative employment and sustainable economic opportunities outside the nuclear sector.



THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES

4. To identify, plan, and organise campaigns on topics of concern relating to nuclear free issues in Ireland.
5. To allow members to obtain and share information on areas of interest.
6. To provide opportunities for co-operation between local authorities in similar geographical areas on nuclear-free issues and NFLA organisational development.

The terms of reference will be reviewed again in one year's time.

Campaign work: The new forum agreed to campaign on the following issues (listed in order of priority):

1. Sellafield and the Irish Sea.
2. Promoting the use of green energy.
3. Emergency planning relating to a nuclear incident.
4. European Union policies on nuclear issues.
5. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and military nuclear issues.

To commence campaign work in these areas, the following specific actions are to be taken:

- A submission on behalf of the All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum is to be submitted to the Environment Agency for England and Wales in response to consultation over the future of the Drigg radioactive waste disposal facility near Sellafield, with a press release to be prepared to publicise the Forum's view that the Drigg site is vulnerable to coastal erosion.
- A briefing note for Irish local authorities to be prepared on renewable energy, drawing on the experience of best practice from 'Beacon' councils in the UK and identifying methods of renewable power generation with potential for local authority use, including information on the UK Government's 'Clear Skies' scheme.
- More information is to be obtained on planning and preparations in the Republic of Ireland for responding to a nuclear emergency, and on the emergency planning framework in Northern Ireland.

In support of Irish campaign issues, NFLA representatives recently joined Greenpeace to brief members of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Environment and Local Government who visited Sellafield in September to enquire about the leak at the Thorp plant in January – April 2005.

Representatives of Irish local authorities are also invited to attend the forthcoming NFLA conference with the theme 'Chernobyl: 20 years on' - the 8th Joint Irish and UK Local Authorities Conference on Nuclear Hazards, which will be taking place at the City Hall in London on 23 March 2006.

Joining the All Ireland Forum

The All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum welcomes new member local authorities in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. To become a member of the forum a local authority will need to pass a motion of affiliation and pay the appropriate subscription fee. It is recommended that the motion of affiliation is referred to the council by the Environment Strategic Policy Committee or other relevant committee with cross-party support.

For more information on any of the topics raised in this briefing please contact Peter Burt, NFLA Development Advisor.

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