

Response from Welsh Assembly Government

Dear Sirs

Consultation on revised Funded Decommissioning Programme Guidance for New Nuclear Power Stations

Consultation on an updated Waste Transfer Pricing Methodology for the disposal of higher activity waste from new nuclear power stations

The Assembly Government notes these further consultations on funding arrangements for the costs of decommissioning any new nuclear power stations managing waste arising from their operation. The Assembly Government responded in May 2010 to earlier consultations recommending that there should be an opportunity for public comment on any final, costed, proposals for funding arrangements, including arrangements for the fixed price and premium element for geological disposal, in order to ensure transparency and public confidence. The Assembly Government notes the further detail contained in these consultations.

The Assembly Government has call in and appeal functions in respect of certain applications made to the Environment Agency concerning radioactive waste under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993. The Assembly Government also has relevant planning powers in this area. Section 71 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 also

enables the Welsh Ministers to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of any of their other functions. In the light of these powers the Welsh Assembly Government wishes to respond to both the above consultation papers.

The Assembly Government considers that:

- The high level of interest in exploiting the huge potential for renewable energy reduces the need for other, more hazardous, forms of low carbon energy and obviates the need for new nuclear power stations in Wales.
- We have a way to go in justifying to the public what must be done in dealing with future nuclear waste and therefore supported the call for a public inquiry on dealing with the waste arising from new nuclear build on the grounds of concern over the safety and security of its management.
- This carries with it the implication that any proposed new nuclear power station must contain credible plans for nuclear waste management.
- We should maximise energy savings from energy efficiency and low carbon energy production from renewables in Wales.

However the Assembly Government notes that any decisions about new nuclear power stations rests with the UK Government and currently the IPC Planning Process.

The Assembly Government therefore wishes to make the following comments in respect of the two consultation papers mentioned above. The Assembly Government:

- supports the continuing intention of the UK Government that the full costs of waste management and decommissioning of any new nuclear power stations should be met by the operators;
- notes the more detailed proposals in the current consultations for funding decommissioning and waste management costs arising from new nuclear power stations;
- considers that there should be an opportunity for public comment on any final, costed, arrangements for funding decommissioning and waste management costs arising for individual new nuclear power stations, or groups of new nuclear power stations with a single operator;
- considers that any assessments provided by the independent Nuclear Liabilities Financing Assurance Board as to the robustness of funding arrangements should be made public.

Yours faithfully

ROBERT J T WILLIAMS
Head of Radioactivity and Pollution Prevention