

19 June 2007

STATEMENT BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD HALL IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION REGARDING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

1. Keith Banham, a Professor of Physics, from Imperial College, London was quoted as saying in the Sunday Herald *"that nuclear new build would be too little, too late, too expensive and too dangerous. Every man, woman and child in the UK is committed to paying over £30 per head per year, for over thirty years to clear up the waste from existing reactors. No industry with a record like that should be allowed a second chance."* Banham also went on to point out that it takes at least ten years to build a nuclear reactor. *"We need to act now to stop global warming"* he said, *"Germany already has more wind power capacity than all the UK wind and nuclear reactors together and in five years would have installed as much solar energy."*

2. Tim Jackson, a Professor at the Centre of Environmental Strategy at the University of Surrey, said this is the wrong time for Tony Blair to be issuing an invitation to nuclear lobby. He added *"the Prime Minister should be strengthening this government's weak willed commitment to energy efficiency demand reduction and renewable energy – not mortgaging the future for countless generations to hazards of nuclear power"*.

3. In a joint letter from Scientists for Global Responsibility Stuart Parkinson said *"many are sceptical of nuclear energy and believe measures such as controlling energy demand, improving energy efficiency and expanding renewable energy are superior options"*. Parkinson attacked the governments record on energy efficiency and renewable as peace meal and half hearted. He pointed out the cost of clearing up the legacy of the past sixty years of nuclear power was upwards of over £100 billion.

4. In a policy paper published by the government in 2005 Uranium Supplies are Finite. Estimates vary as to how long existing economic extraction of uranium may last, but figures are between forty to eighty years at current rates of use have been quoted and recognised by the government.

5. If a new generation of nuclear plants were commissioned in the next few years it would be unlikely they would be on stream until 2025. If the expected life time of a nuclear power plant is twenty to forty years it is entirely possible that within a lifetime of this new generation a reduction in uranium reserves will impact significantly on the economics of nuclear power generation.

6. In this discussion paper it also makes a point *"it may well therefore be cheaper and easier to make the necessary savings in CO² through well targeted energy efficiency policies in these sectors before building a new raft of nuclear capacity"*.

7. A recent paper from North Yorkshire County Council pointed out that approximately 30% of CO² emissions from the County are generated by household appliances, if we could reduce these emissions by 15%, ie. Half, we could easily meet the Kyoto agreement on CO² emissions. That could be done by conservation and insulation of people's homes in a manner which my motion suggests.

8.Can it be done? Yes is the answer.

In a reply to an email that I got from the Centre of Alternative Technology. It said *"suppose half the home of the UK were to get cavity wall insulation and top ups to their loft insulations, which would be about 10 m properties at a cost of £400, each, roughly £44m. Replacing boilers would cost more, perhaps £1,000 to £5,500 per property so £10billions, but this is not additional money as boilers need replacing every ten to fifteen years anyway. These measures could be rolled out starting immediately,"*

9.Angele Merkle in Germany has initiated a programme to upgrade 5% of substandard housing each year, so that by 2025 there will not be any. We could do that here. It is likely to be ten years at least before the first nuclear station would be up and running by which time we would be half way there. Would insulating save more energy than the nuclear route would generate, yes many times over. Electricity is only 12% of the energy used in the homes. In contrast 80% of the energy used in our homes is heat. The measures that I have described would save a quarter of our UK domestic energy use.

10.It is happening now.

In Kirklees they have instigated a free insulation programme for all homes regardless of income throughout the area. In a press release issued by Councillor Cooper from Kirklees he said *"this would see an average saving on individual fuel bills of £150 a year, resulting in approx £4.5m that would go back into local economy. This is a huge amount of money and also generate between forty and sixty new jobs".*

11.In a critical report issued by the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) in 2006 – Is Nuclear the Answer. It says this of the government's energy policy, *"The governments' policy focuses more on supply than on demand management. Over half the gas we use in the UK for example is for heating and cooking and nuclear power will obviously do nothing to replace this."* The report goes on *"energy efficiency must therefore remain the absolute lynch pin of any future energy strategy, our energy challenged the governments energy review of 2006 –Our Energy-demonstrates little if any understanding of this priority."*

12.In the further quote from the SDC*"the UK has some of the best renewable energy resources than anywhere in the world, this is particularly the case offshore, where the theoretical potential for renewable and wind power is considerable."*

13.In a briefing paper issued by the Friends of the Earth in 2006 - Nuclear Power Climate Change and the Energy Review it points out that nuclear will not provide the necessary savings in CO² emissions and says *"broadly speaking emissions savings from switching from fossil fuels to nuclear are comparable as switching to renewable energy, but not as great as the savings that can be achieved through energy efficiency."*

14.Members/Chairman we can afford to go the route I suggested in my motion. We need to have the political will to do so for the benefit of future generations yet unborn.

The Swiss have calculated that the current waste nuclear programme would have to remain safe for over one million years.

I ask you to support this motion.