

# STRATEGIC OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

## 23 SEPTEMBER 2008

*Present :-* Councillor Christopher Arnold (Chairman)  
Councillors Nick Barlow, Mark Cory, Pauline Hazell,  
Peter Higgins, Mike Hogg, Margaret Kimberley,  
Kim Naish, Gaye Pyman and Nick Taylor

*Also in Attendance :-* Henry Spyvee

*Substitute Member :-* Councillor Julie Ford for Councillor Julie Young

### 18. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

### 19. A New Nuclear Power Station At Bradwell

#### **Have Your Say**

Mr David McMullen addressed the panel saying that consultants recently carried out a poll on behalf of the Bradwell decommissioners to find out what the residents of Bradwell thought about the decommissioning process. The poll showed an overwhelming majority in favour of returning the site to its original natural state. Mr. McMullen said the site selection process should start with a clean sheet, ranking existing power station sites no higher than Greenfield locations, with a level set of objective criteria, eliminating the institutional bias of the planning process, which the Government's current planning bill seeks to enforce to the detriment of democratic accountability rather than the highly selective approach taken in the Government's strategic siting paper. The local estuary, backwaters and surrounding countryside is protected by a variety of conservation designations which would have undoubtedly included the Bradwell area had the station not been built. Mr. McMullen expressed his concerns that any new build would be unsightly, dominating the current treeless landscape.

Ms. Shirley Swan addressed the panel saying she was not necessarily pro or against nuclear generated electricity, but had concerns about the siting of a new build station just two and a half miles away across the estuary. Ms. Swan believed it was immoral for the Government to rush into any new build without a policy on radioactive waste, especially given that the new stations will generate highly active toxic waste material and become a nuclear dump for at least the next 50 – 100 years, in a shallow estuary down wind from West Mersea Island.

Mrs. Paula Whitney addressed the panel saying she believed the message being given that nuclear energy was necessary was a myth. Mrs. Whitney said electricity is only one-fifth of climate change gases and energy use, and nuclear power provides only one fifth of electricity production. With this in mind Mrs. Whitney said if nuclear energy can only make around four percent difference if the current capacity is replaced with

new nuclear power stations, a greater effect can be achieved by saving wasted energy and energy efficient measures. Mrs. Whitney spoke of the continual rising costs of decommissioning old power stations, a figure that had recently increased by £10 billion and now stood at £83 billion. Just the increase alone would finance twenty per cent of renewable energy by 2020 and with this in mind Mrs Whitney asked that more effort should be given to improving the efficiency of current electricity production and the introduction of more renewable energy, rather than take the route of nuclear energy production. Mrs. Whitney also expressed concern about the issues that remained about the safe storage of radioactive waste.

Mr. Alan Tyne, on behalf of Ms. Val Mainwood, addressed the panel saying Ms. Mainwood would like to bring to the panel's attention the new research commissioned by the German Government on leukaemia risk to children who live near nuclear power stations, and in the knowledge of this report to consider the health issues of nuclear power stations an issue for further scrutiny.

Mr. Ian Clarke addressed the panel and spoke of the risks of the storage of high radioactive fuel on site at nuclear power stations and the threat of acts of terrorism. Mr. Clarke said if the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) around nuclear power stations was extended to four kilometres as was recommended by the Government's Nuclear Emergency Planning and Liaison Group (beyond the current 2.4 kilometre limit), West Mersea Island would fall into the zone, which would mean a partial or total evacuation of the Island in the event of an emergency. Mr. Clarke said a corresponding DEPZ for Sizewell requires persons living in e.g. caravans, tents or day visitors to be immediately evacuated. In the context of West Mersea this could be several thousand people. Mr. Clarke said it is difficult to understand how this could be achieved with only one route by road off the island, and especially if the causeway was flooded during a high tide. Consultants have suggested evacuation zones in some emergencies could go beyond 4 kilometres, up to fifteen kilometres which could potentially require the Town of Colchester to be evacuated. Mr. Clarke expressed his concern about the previously mentioned research into the health risks to children who live near to nuclear power stations, and referred the panel to the research undertaken by the Flood Hazard Research Centre at Middlesex University regards to the threat of storm surge and flooding to the area around Bradwell and expressed concern about the accumulation of hazardous radioactive fuel waste at the Bradwell site, not yet in a safe store state, and suggested Bradwell remained a hazardous industrial site.

Ms. Varrie Blowers, secretary for the Blackwater Against new Nuclear Group (BANNG) addressed the panel. Ms. Blowers said whilst BANNG was a citizen based organisation, it had a diverse membership, members ranging from those that supported nuclear energy to those against nuclear energy. Ms. Blowers said what unites all members is they believe that Bradwell was not a suitable site for a new build nuclear power station. Like previous speakers, Ms. Blowers expressed her concern over highly active radioactive waste storage facilities at Bradwell. Ms. Blowers asked how new nuclear build will plug the gap in energy shortage which experts believe will happen by 2012-2015, given that the new nuclear power stations will not be commissioned until 2021. Ms. Blowers concluded by asking why toy with nuclear energy now; why not start with more environmentally safer energy producing options that would provide sufficient energy and a safe environment for the near and long time future.

Ms. Lesley Mullins addressed the panel saying that given the new power stations will be five times the capacity of the old stations she was concerned about the potential increases in stored radioactive waste and its vulnerability to the effects of storm surge and flooding, in an area geologists say is sinking. In the event of a catastrophe, West Mersea Island and surrounding area that was in the path of south and south westerly prevailing winds would be in the direct path of any contamination. Given this, Ms. Mullins asked how Bradwell could be considered an appropriate safe place for a new build nuclear power station.

Ms. Nolly Martin addressed the panel saying that British Energy claims that nuclear energy was a clean energy with near '0' carbon omissions but you have to ask is this true of the whole life cycle of a nuclear power station, and was indefensible given the carbon cost of uranium extraction and the building and decommissioning process. Ms. Martin said producing nuclear energy was not a cheap option and more serious consideration should be given to the German and Danish policy of greater investment in renewable energy. Ms. Martin said isn't British Energy's claim that producing our own nuclear power will reduce our need to import gas missing the point, as we are still relying on the import of one material source instead of another given we do not have home grown uranium supplies. Given the increasing cost of uranium, and the commissioning and decommissioning of nuclear power stations, Ms. Martin asked what is the real cost of nuclear energy production.

Mr. Barry Turner addressed the panel saying people were being asked to acknowledge Bradwell as the best location for a new nuclear site and radioactive waste dump, with the acceptance that these toxic wastes can be kept safe for the next 50 – 100 years, so it may be moved at some stage to a national long term store, where and when nobody knows. Mr. Turner said these and other issues make this build at Bradwell an unbelievable choice, sited in a shallow estuary, not next to the sea as is more common. Mr. Turner was also concerned for the local fishing industry, including oyster beds, protected wildlife and local tourism which will all be at threat due to this new build. Mr. Turner said the new build would be entrusted to a foreign owned company, with a new untested nuclear reactor design. In conclusion, Mr. Turner asked the panel to support a local view that there are safer places with fewer risks attached for a new build nuclear power station, and in doing so making this area a safe place to live.

Ms. Hargreaves addressed the panel asking whether all the radioactive waste had been removed from Bradwell, and if not, when would this process be completed?

Mr. Ian Newton addressed the panel saying a new wind farm to be installed off the coast line at Clacton would provide sufficient electricity energy for 120,000 homes, 20 per cent of the population of Essex, why couldn't this be replicated in other areas? Mr. Newton said he had witnessed officials measuring radiation levels of garden produce on the island but had never read anything about the conclusion of this study. Mr. Newton mentioned the two mail aeroplanes that leave Stansted daily, plus with consideration currently being given to 'stacking' of incoming aircraft on the east coast, prior to landing at Stansted, this dangerous policy could heighten the expectation of terrorists to use aircraft to breach the Bradwell station. Mr. Newton also expressed concern about the evacuation procedures for emergencies at a time of flooding and storm surges.

Mrs. Pauline Horrigan addressed the panel saying her husband had died of leukaemia just under two years ago, that was due to a subjected high level of radiation. Mrs. Horrigan asked that given her husband had been a local resident for many years, had there been any studies to show how many other people had died of leukaemia who lived in close proximity of a nuclear power station, and if not, why not.

Ms. Charlotte Doyle addressed the panel saying local people were entitled to know more about the health risks of living close to the Bradwell power station. This issue had caused anxiety to her daughter and she didn't wish these fears to be passed on to her grandchildren.

Mr. Martin Dence, an islander for 40 years addressed the panel saying he supported the building of a new reactor at Bradwell. Mr. Dence said that unless we had these new reactors, there would be insufficient energy in the not to distant future. Mr. Dence said many people on the island were in favour of a new build reactor at Bradwell. Mr. Dence, a Colchester member of the Council for Rural England said he was unaware that any of the local members were against any new build at Bradwell.

Mr. John Harrison addressed the panel saying he was disturbed and alarmed by the way local groups had hijacked a local radio station in suggesting there group had got insurmountable support against a new build nuclear power station, and this was to be discussed at their meeting at west Mersea this evening. Mr. Harrison, a chartered engineer all his life, said the Country would require 120,000 wind turbines to provide the energy supply required in the future. He believed other alternative energy generation had to be progressed to provide a diverse energy mix, with no reliance on one form of energy generation.

Councillor Henry Spyvee addressed the panel saying this was a useful and valuable forum and exercise, and welcomed this debate on nuclear energy. Councillor Spyvee thanked the invited guests and speakers for attending the meeting and contributing to the debate. Councillor Spyvee believed there was sufficient reasons for the Bradwell site not to meet the 'siting criteria' and hoped this would be reflected in the declared line taken by Colchester Borough Council, accepting this view might not be the one to change the Government's view on siting. Councillor Spyvee asked the panel to consider the siting of Bradwell as a site for a nuclear power station and the effects to the residents of the Borough of Colchester.

### **A new Nuclear Power Station at Bradwell**

Councillor Arnold introduced the guests to the meeting.

Mr. Adam Dawson, Director of New Nuclear, Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) addressed the audience, saying he welcomed this debate to hear and understand a diversity of views. Mr. Dawson said the Government will ultimately have to make a difficult decision. Mr. Dawson said he was sympathetic to the concerns of local people and was happy to listen and respond if appropriate to do so. Mr. Dawson said whatever is decided in regards to energy policy for the future will not be without cost, but a decision addressing issues of cost and carbon omissions will

need some difficult trade offs to be made.

Professor Robin Grimes addressed the audience and in response to Councillor Arnold to the concerns raised on seismic fault lines said he could offer names of expert witnesses who could come and talk about local concerns. Councillor Higgins said it was his understanding that modern nuclear power stations can be built to withstand earthquakes, for example, nuclear power stations in California are built on the San Andreas Fault line, built to withstand earth quakes measuring 8.2 on the Richter scale, more powerful than any earth quake experienced in northern Europe. Councillor Higgins said earth quakes are not one of his concerns about a new build at Bradwell.

Mr. Dawson said any new build site would be assessed by the safety regulators for earthquake damage potential in the area. The consultation on siting criteria mentions earthquake prone areas and this information will be scrutinised. The issue around earthquakes is one the safety regulators and Government do take seriously and Mr. Dawson encouraged the public to respond to the public consultation paper, available on the BERR website. Mr. Dawson said the recent Japanese earthquake was six times greater than any experienced in England and the local nuclear power station in this case whilst experiencing some internal damage was not breached.

Mr. Bill MacDonald (Nuclear Installation Directorate, Health and Safety Executive) addressed the audience, saying a new build nuclear power station could not be built without the consent of the Health and Safety Executive. A license to build would only be granted if the application met all health, safety and security standards, and this would include seismic vulnerability and flooding vulnerability.

Mr. Nigel Knee (British Energy) addressed the audience saying in the fifty years of nuclear energy production in the United Kingdom there had never been an incident that led to a radioactive leak with exposure to the public. The incident at Three Mile Island had been a commercial disaster, though there had not been any radioactive exposure to the public. Mr. Knee said that when constructing nuclear power stations, all risks were considered, but at some point there had to be a judgement on risks versus benefits.

Professor Andrew Blowers addressed the audience saying that if nuclear power stations were not safe the situation could be calamitous, and the consequences catastrophic. Professor Blowers said the risks could not be evaded and there appeared to be risks with no benefits, and whilst the probability of some risks occurring could be near zero, the consequences of an incident could be catastrophic. Professor Blowers believed the Three Mile Island incident was fortunate not to have been catastrophic, where as we had been less fortunate at Chernobyl, but it illustrated that there will always be a risk, it cannot be evaded. Professor Blowers said living at West Mersea on this side of the estuary; he believed there were no benefits to the islanders.

Councillor Naish said we should not forget people in Cumbria still suffer the effects of Chernobyl, twenty three years after this disaster.

Dr William Nuttall addressed the audience saying we were all electricity consumers and it was right that consumers should be reminded of the benefits of nuclear energy. Dr Nuttall said that until the 1990s the country benefited from cheap energy, but now the

choice of cheap energy had gone. Nuclear energy production is expensive, as is all other forms of future energy production. The choice of cheap energy has gone it is now a choice of expensive energy or very expensive energy. Dr Nuttall respected the local issues raised and empathised with the local public about issues and fears that were large and multi-faceted, but also feared for people who would struggle to pay for future fuel and mortgage bills. Dr Nuttall said a new build power station at Bradwell would generate electricity for London, the economic engine of Europe's mega city in the twenty first century.

Professor Grimes said that in order to provide the electricity the Country will demand now and into the future, should it be nuclear power stations, solid fuel power stations or renewables, I don't think it is a question of either, it would need to be all, there would be a need for a mixture of energy generation types, and it would be foolish to think we only need one type.

In response to Councillor Higgins question of radioactive waste disposal, Mr. Alan McGoff of the Environment Agency addressed the audience to explain there was a long history of seeking solutions on radioactive waste disposal. CoRWM (Committee on Radioactive Waste Management) had looked at long term solutions and concluded that deep geological disposal of higher activity waste was the solution, endorsed by the Government and a route being pursued by other countries such as Finland. The Government had recently published a white paper seeking voluntary communities to host deep geological disposal facilities. The Environment Agency is pleased with this progress as it does not lose any opportunity to remind Government of its responsibilities to secure radioactive waste facilities.

Mr. Knee (British Energy) said that the Sizewell nuclear power station was relatively modern storing a few tens of tonnes of waste per annum. Mr. Knee said it would take time to find and build a disposal site independent of the power stations to store radioactive waste, though the engineering technology was available to do this.

Mr. Phil Heaton of the Environment Agency said that approximately 90% of radioactive waste had been reduced and removed when the fuel was removed from the Bradwell site, the sort of material that would go to an underground repository. There remains a small hazard left on the site that is roughly comparable to something like a cancer treatment hospital, and in terms of fuel clearance, this would take approximately another twenty years to prepare for a care and maintenance period which will last for another seventy five years. This would be preceded by a ten year fuel site clearance, with final remnants removed from site by 2115.

Mr. McGoff (Environment Agency) said a repository was still required for existing waste, let alone new waste, and whilst there was now political momentum to this end, politicians have spoken about underground repositories for the best part of thirty years. Storing waste in this way can be done, but it will need communities to be taken with it. Mr. McGoff emphasised that a repository would be required for current waste as well as future new build waste.

Mr. Knee (British Energy) said the remaining nuclear fuel was currently stored underwater in ponds and this would be the case until a repository was available. The

Government have said that unless there is progress in developing and producing a repository for storing radioactive waste, any new build nuclear power stations consent would not be granted. Mr. Dawson (BERR) confirmed that the Nuclear White Paper stipulated that consent to new build would not be granted unless there is a solution to disposing of nuclear waste. Mr. Dawson also said that the local views and feelings regards nuclear safety and security, the potential cost of nuclear energy and the disposal of radioactive waste was held widely across the country. The priority was to provide a safe and secure solution to radioactive waste to be able to build confidence in the public and thereon a common acceptance. All new builds will need to have the capacity to store radioactive waste for the entire life of the nuclear reactor, regardless of whether there will be an underground repository site.

Councillor Arnold commented that Government (through a piece of work by CoRWM, and to be respected) having done the work on radioactive waste and knowing that deep geological repositories was the way to deal with the waste, it seemed inappropriate to store intermediate waste on site for the entire life of a nuclear power station.

Mr. Dawson said any new build repository would prioritise the storage of all current high level and intermediary level waste from Sellafield, before storing any new build waste. That said, it will take time to build a geological repository that will build community acceptance, and it will be very costly, but in the long run save taxpayers money.

Professor Blowers said that as a former member of CoRWM, the CoRWM recommendations was only to the current legacy of waste, and had given no view on future new build waste. All this waste will impose a burden on future generations, a huge responsibility for this generation to take. Professor Blowers said any new build was of far greater capacity than previous stations, and any spent fuel remaining on site at Bradwell would pose a serious threat for future generations. People should remember any new build will not only be a nuclear power station, but a radioactive waste management facility. Professor Blowers said CoRWM had recommended that any new build waste management facility should volunteer to do so. This was not likely to happen and would be imposed on the community, and on a site in threat of serious inundation by flood water beggar's belief.

In response to Councillor Barlow, Mr. Knee (British Energy) said the impact of climate change was part of the safety assessment for new build modern plants lifetime of sixty years, probably to 2078, if it took ten years to build. The Meteorological Office had been commissioned for future forecast modelling, and engineers invited to show ways to construct a build that would withstand major flooding until the end of the century. The conclusions are that it is practically feasible to build safe nuclear power stations in regards to the threat of flood inundation to the end of this century, and the design could be adapted if the protection requirements changed. Mr. Knee said more information on this work could be provided if required.

Mr. Alan McGoff (Environment Agency) said the new build designs are regulated in respect of commissioning and decommissioning. The Generic Design Assessment focused on the safety and security of the design during the whole life of the build, from start to the end, including a waste management strategy and strategy for decommissioning the plant, a big difference from what happened in the past.

Professor Grimes said technology had moved on since the first generation of Magnox nuclear power stations. We have now entered into the third generation of stations and beyond and these are designed quite differently. The problem experienced with present decommissioning is that the core of the old reactors cannot be removed due to their size. New reactors are much smaller in size and therefore more manageable, and would therefore be able to be removed.

In response to Councillor Higgins, Professor Blowers said the way in which local communities and councils were being by-passed in terms of the process was a concern. Because of this, anti-groups are formed and take communities on their side. We could be building problems for future generations, in 50-100 years time. Professor Blowers felt the decisions being taken were wrapped up in costs, economics and politics, forfeiting the ethical issues of the future. Recent climate change reports suggest future sea level rises up to two metres, which itself suggests we could have a highly defended new build station on an isolated island in a shrinking coast line, which does not make sense, and urged the Government to think not just of the immediate future, but beyond, and the generations to come.

Mr. Dawson (BERR) said the CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the country had in recent times increased dramatically, which in turn contributed to climate change. The Government were determined to address this issue and de-carbonisation was a necessity. The Government was committed to a programme on renewables, in a programme of mixed energy production that included nuclear energy. Mr. Dawson said rising sea levels was a valid concern, but this would be addressed in the Strategic Site Assessment process. Any new build would be protected against tidal surge; this would not be beyond the engineers capabilities. Mr. Dawson confirmed that all future decommissioning processes would be financed by the energy producers and would not be a burden on the taxpayer.

Professor Thomas addressed the panel speaking of the risks to public finances of any new build. Professor Thomas said decommissioning was driven by financial considerations, that we would not be decommissioning for 100 years for financial reasons, and to suggest this was or would not be a burden on the taxpayer was an extraordinary comment to make, that espoused the polluter pays, so the Government says local people will need to look at Bradwell for the next 100 years because we have no money to do anything about it. When Sizewell was built it was said there was a 95% certainty this power station would make money. Completed in 1995 at a cost of £3 billion, the most expensive in the world, the station was given away and when the owners British Energy went bust, they had to be saved by the taxpayer at a cost of £12 billion. Professor Thomas said you might like to ask what the HSE what they were doing at this time, when the station was not having sufficient money spent on it. The decommissioning obligations fell on the Government, and the cost of remaining decommissioning and waste disposal will be provided from the public purse. The Government is now saying no subsidy for nuclear power; developers will pay for it including decommissioning costs. Professor Thomas said the reality is that this doesn't happen and it is the public purse that will always bail out when things go wrong.

Mr. Knee (British Energy) in response to Professor Thomas said he would if requested



provide details of British Energy costs and restructuring.

Mr. Heaton (Environment Agency) said the EA and NII optimum plans for decommissioning are used. Decommissioning could be done in 25 years, but to bring down costs and protect the on site workers the plan was to decommission over a period of 100 years.

Dr Nuttall commented that it is sometimes said the past is a foreign country and they do things differently there. In terms of Bradwell and the reasons for decommissioning slowly, who are these polluters, well it is us the public, and our representatives in parliament that created the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, making decisions made long ago in a different world. Dr Nuttall said he would argue in regards to energy policy we now live in a much better world. Whilst we must never forget that nuclear energy is very political, we should not take a view that Government is as powerful as might be suggested, it is just another stakeholder, the energy companies were the players with a big role to play. The future economic risk is that electricity will be cheap and carbon dioxide omissions will be cheap, but this was not likely in the future, the world was entering into a period of expensive energy. Dr Nuttall said he worried about a world where carbon dioxide omissions are cheap; they need to be very expensive otherwise a lot of people are going to get killed. Dr Nuttall said he thought it was very unlikely that we would have cheap energy in the United Kingdom.

Nigel Knee (British Energy) clarified that one ton of nuclear fuel was equivalent in size to one quarter of a cubic metre, and you would need to create a store the size of a large warehouse to store all waste during the lifetime of a nuclear power station. Mr. Knee said that one of the conditions for granting a licence for a station would be if the emergency planning procedures met the Government requirements.

Mr. MacDonald (HSE) said the Health and Safety Executive and the EA are regulators working independently of the Government, and if a license application did not meet all criteria, a license would not be granted regardless of what the Government were thinking at the time. Mr. MacDonald said the HSE was endeavouring to make the GDA process open and transparent, and the public could look at the NII website for further details and can make comments. The process will take three and a half years to complete and no licence will be granted if the designs do not meet the assessment criteria.

Councillor Kimberley said there were many questions and concerns that remained unanswered and that would require further well publicized meetings for further examination. These included more information in regards to the new research commissioned by the German Government on leukaemia risk to children who live near nuclear power stations, earthquake zones and evacuation procedures. Councillor Kimberley asked whether we still need a new build nuclear power station at Bradwell, and whilst many had serious reservations, she did think it was disingenuous to assume the significant proportion of the people of West Mersea is against a new build.

Councillor Arnold concurred with Councillor Kimberley's concerns about the health issues to the local population and the long term affects to local people, the impact on the seafood industry and the geographical location of Bradwell as a suitable site, in a

shallow estuary as opposed to other coastal nuclear power stations, and that have the benefit of coastal tides to take away the excess heat.

Mr. McGoff (Environment Agency) said all effluent discharges to both the atmosphere and local water to Bradwell is subject to rigorous monitoring. The legal limit of radiation dose is one thousand microsieverts from an artificial, non medical source of radioactivity per year. Latest reports say the most exposed people (for liquid discharge) receive a dose of 10 microsieverts per year, 0.1% of the legal limit, and for terrestrial discharges, 5 microsieverts per year. To put this into context the average dose of natural radiation to the general public is about 2,400 microsieverts per year. Mr. McGoff said the Health Protection Agency can provide this information in more detail if required. COMARE (Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment) have until now not found links to health risks to adults or children living in close proximity of nuclear power stations, but in light of these new German studies, the Government may ask COMARE to examine and comment. Mr. McGoff also explained that if any new build design nuclear power station was found, under the GDA inspection, to have an unacceptable level of discharge to the estuary it would not be accepted. Mr. Heaton (Environment Agency) said tests of sea life / food had only shown a level of radiation that was below any level of concern.

Councillor Arnold said if nuclear power stations and intermediate storage facilities are as safe as the agencies and commercial companies say they are surely there was an argument for a combined heat power plant next to a substantial populated area.

In response to Councillor Arnold, Mr. McGoff said it seems a great shame to waste heat energy to estuaries and seas, but unfortunately this was part of the physics of thermal dynamics and commercial decisions.

In response to Councillor Arnold, Mr. Knee (British Energy) said in regards to cooling processes, more work was still needed to design and model a cooling system that was acceptable to regulators from an environmental perspective. Mr. Knee confirmed that there are currently two power stations discharging in the same way as Bradwell, and all eight of their stations are located close to the coast line, with two of these close to populated areas, those at Hartlepool and Heysham, though it is true many were originally built in remote areas when there was much less understanding of the technology and how it may perform.

Professor Blowers expressed his continual concerns about the local issue of evacuation from the island during an emergency, what are the public to be told during an emergency and why did West Mersea Island remain outside the DEPZ (Detailed Emergency Planning Zone). Professor Blowers said he believed the German health studies was suggestive but not conclusive, but heightened the concerns of people in the close proximity of nuclear power stations and suggested a judgement of the risk had to be made. COMARE's methodology has been questioned within the German study and they (COMARE) may have to revise their approach and methodology about these health issues in what is an arcane area. Professor Blowers also asked if there was already two nuclear power stations operating in conurbations why continue with Bradwell and all the additional risks that this raised.

Dr Nuttall said London's prosperity was our prosperity, and nuclear energy production risks have been proven to be small, so if the Country was to move forward with a nuclear / non nuclear mix of sustainable energy production, the risks needed to be a trade off against the risks associated with the coal industry, carbon monoxide poisoning and the lack of affordable electricity which all kill people. Dr Nuttall also said for any doubters that nuclear power was low CO2, look to the Sustainable Development Commission who whilst not liking nuclear energy acknowledge it is low CO2, and people against nuclear because it causes flooding to the environment, flooding will be more likely if we get our electricity from coal and less likely from nuclear power. Dr Nuttall said on a recent trip to Rumania, a local nuclear power station did recycle waste heat to the local population at cheaper rates.

Councillor Higgins said there was a bias to siting new build on existing sites. Councillor Higgins also said there was still a need for the panel and Council, even without reference to Bradwell, to decide whether there was a strong case for new nuclear power stations. The Council was entitled to take a view that it did not know what was best and perhaps does not support nuclear generation in the United Kingdom at the present time, which was something he believed his group would support and was very struck by the complete lack of an evacuation plan for West Mersea.

Mr. McGoff (Environment Agency) in response to Councillor Kimberley said the Local Health Authority was the independent source the panel should talk to in respect of local health concerns.

Mr. Knee (British Energy) said that since 9/11 we now lived in a different world, and Government assess terrorism threats as part of a comprehensive security regime to provide protection against nuclear terrorism. Mr. Knee considered that nuclear energy would bring an economic boost to the U.K. both locally and generally, and in response to Councillor Barlow about the benefits to West Mersea from a new build, Mr. Knee agreed to provide some further information.

The panel agreed to the proposal by Councillor Arnold, that a Task and Finish Group was needed to make a series of in depth reviews of concerns highlighted within the discussions and which had not been bottomed out.

Drawing a conclusion to the debate, the Chairman thanked local people, invited guests and representatives from BERR, HSE, Environment Agency and British Energy for attending the meeting and for all their contributions to the debate.

*RESOLVED* that the panel agreed the following;

i) That the first stage in the process to move this review forward was to set up a Task and Finish Group to complete more in-depth reviews as soon as possible, reporting their findings to a future meeting of the panel.

ii) The elements of work to be subject to further review would be;

- Earthquake fault lines

- Climate change and flooding / sea level surges
- Local evacuation plan
- Health issues e.g. leukaemia studies by German Government
- Impact of new build waste on West Mersea – discharges into a shallow estuary
- Benefits of a new build to West Mersea Island (and the disadvantages to not going forward with a new build)

iii) An agreed response to the Government consultation on the Strategic Siting Assessment Process and Siting Criteria for New Nuclear Power Stations in the UK. will be drafted and forwarded to the relevant Portfolio Holder to respond on behalf of Colchester Borough Council.