

CIVIL DEFENCE
SECRET

A-war

civil defence opposed

23/4/85

By GORDON DEAN

An Edinburgh councillor opposes plans to recruit 4,000 volunteers to help Lothian Region in the event of a nuclear attack.

Councillor Richard Kerley, chairman of Edinburgh District Council's liaison committee — a link between the district council and the city's community groups — said yesterday that information in his possession showed that Lothian Regional Council's civil defence planning group proposed to enlist workers from community-based groups and organisations.

The logistics suggested setting up a network of special emergency committees, the appointment of local controllers and the selection of neighbourhood leaders.

The proposals are outlined in a minute of the civil defence planning group marked "Not to be communicated directly or indirectly to the Press or any person not authorised to receive it."

Councillor Kerley said last night that the documents showed quite clearly that the civil defence planning group proposed to recruit people involved in community councils and other community groups to help them in their planning against the eventuality of nuclear attack.

IDIOCY

He was concerned that this was being seriously discussed by an official committee of the council and that these discussions were being kept secret.

The network of emergency committees, says the minute, will be needed for a range of purposes such as transferring information speedily, passing survival advice to the population, organising assistance to those unable to help themselves, preparing each community to survive for a time without outside help and safeguarding essential supplies such as food, medicine and water.

On the need for volunteers, Councillor Kerley said the document indicated that in the event of a nuclear attack the statutory bodies would not be able to deal with the situation alone. Regional and district organisations would need considerable assistance, particularly in helping those who could not help themselves.

Non-local authority organisations such as the Health Board would also need assistance.

Councillor Kerley said he was happy to support the idea of emergency planning for "genuine" civil emergencies but what was being proposed by this committee was simply ridiculous.

"The most useful thing we can do is to negotiate to try to prevent such attacks occurring. Nothing being proposed by this committee will make any contribution to negating the effect of a nuclear attack."