

Nuclear Free Local Authorities

briefing



Date: 11th July 2011

No.84

Subject: **Summary of the key points from the NFLA Steering Committee, Manchester Town Hall, 24th June 2011**

1. **Welcome**

The NFLA Chair, Bailie George Regan welcomed all to the meeting, including Councillors Rabnawaz Akbar and Mark Hackett, Manchester City Council's new NFLA representatives.

The meeting also congratulated John Mouat, the Shetland Island Council NFLA officer representative and KIMO Secretary, who had recently been appointed as the Deputy General Secretary of the OSPAR Commission; a post he would take up in October 2011.

2. **National NFLA Forum meetings**

The NFLA Secretary reported on progress with all four national NFLA Forums:

NFLA English Forum – Forum members attended a packed 14th June NCG Westminster seminar on the key issues from the Fukushima disaster, which was developed with support from the NFLA. A joint seminar was also being held in Oxford Town Hall on the 8th July with the UK Mayors for Peace Working Group on Trident replacement and UK nuclear weapons policy. Speakers include Paul Ingram from BASIC and Kate Hudson, General Secretary of CND. Members are encouraged to attend.

NFLA All Ireland Forum – Newry and Mourne District Council hosted a heavily subscribed NFLA All Ireland Forum seminar on Fukushima, Chernobyl and the Mayors for Peace on the 1st April. Wexford Borough Council has joined the Forum and will hold the next meeting in September. Other Councils are also expressing an interest to join the Forum.

NFLA Scotland Forum – the Forum will be holding its next meeting and a nuclear emergency planning discussion on the 1st July in Glasgow City Chambers. The meeting will also be discussing the outcome of the Scottish Parliamentary elections on energy policy and a request to join the Scottish Parliament's Cross-party group on Nuclear Weapons. Members are encouraged to attend.

NFLA Welsh Forum – Cardiff City Council hosted a strategy meeting with member and non-member Councils and nuclear concerned groups on the 3rd June. The meeting agreed to request a meeting with the new Welsh Environment Minister, John Griffiths, and develop a Welsh nuclear free energy briefing. A Welsh Assembly seminar will be pursued and the next meeting is planned for Gwynedd in late October.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES

3. Fukushima nuclear incident

The NFLA Secretary outlined a detailed report of the Fukushima incident and subsequent NFLA actions, some of which was in association with other nuclear concerned groups.

The Steering Committee welcomed the NFLA Policy Briefing on the Fukushima incident and the actions of the NFLA Secretariat in co-ordinating joint letters (with over 35 other groups) stating minimum demands of the UK Government, the nuclear regulators, nuclear industry and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. The joint letter has been discussed directly with Government Energy Ministers and their officials and an ongoing dialogue is taking place.

The NFLA Secretary is also participating, on behalf of the Steering Committee, in a stakeholder dialogue meeting with Chief Nuclear Inspector Mike Weightman and officials from the Office of Nuclear Regulation, in London on July 5th. This will discuss the interim nuclear safety report on Fukushima and its implications for the UK nuclear sector, and allow for comments to be made in anticipation of the final report in September.

The Steering Committee welcomed the recent Nuclear Consulting Group Westminster seminar, which had been fully supported and jointly organised with the NFLA. This was attended by over 100 people including NFLA councillors, MPs, nuclear officials, nuclear regulators, nuclear concerned groups and academics. It was one of the most effective summaries of the key issues around the disaster, the implications of it, nuclear costs and the need for energy demand management. A link to the presentations on the NCG website will be provided and it will also be directly linked to the NFLA website.

Agreed: Steering Committee members welcomed the NFLA Fukushima briefing and agreed that the Secretariat continue to take a focal part in post-Fukushima meetings and policy developments.

4. New Nuclear Build

The NFLA Secretary provided a report outlining the continuing actions by the UK Government to approve a programme of new nuclear power stations in England and Wales.

The Committee was disappointed that, despite the continuing problems raised by the Fukushima incident, the UK Government had decided to publish its National Nuclear Policy Statement (NPS) of 8 sites for proposed new nuclear reactors. These are:

- Hinkley Point, Somerset
- Sizewell, Suffolk
- Oldbury, Gloucestershire
- Wylfa, Anglesey
- Bradwell, Essex
- Sellafield, Cumbria
- Heysham, Lancashire
- Hartlepool, Durham

It was noted that the NPS would be voted on in Parliament shortly and that local MPs should be lobbied to oppose its implementation until at least after the ONR final nuclear safety report.

The Secretariat report outlined 35 issues that were sent to the Office for Nuclear Regulation Nuclear Safety Review for consideration in its interim review report of nuclear safety. These will be followed up as a result of the recommendations and conclusions from the interim report, as a more detailed response prior to the final report.

There was considerable discussion and welcome given to the decisions of Germany, Switzerland and Italy to start a phase-out and eventual closure of all its nuclear reactors over the next decade.

The report outlined continuing concerns over safety issues with the two proposed nuclear reactor designs for the UK – the EPR and the AP1000.

The Steering Committee endorsed that the Secretariat develop NFLA Policy Briefings for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland highlighting how the NFLA policy of a renewable energy mix, microgeneration and energy efficiency can be promoted in each country, without recourse to new nuclear build.

Agreed: To lobby MPs to oppose the ratification of the Nuclear NPS. To send in a detailed response to ONR nuclear safety review. To investigate concerns over the nuclear new build designs. To approve the development of NFLA Policy Briefings on energy policy for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

5. Radioactive Waste Management Policy

The NFLA Secretary provided a report outlining developments with radioactive waste management policy.

The Committee welcomed recent discussion with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and agreed to attend the next national stakeholder meeting.

Members agreed that the NFLA Secretariat should develop a Policy Briefing outlining recent developments over the use of local authority landfill sites for low level radioactive waste in Cumbria and Northamptonshire, despite considerable local opposition.

The Steering Committee endorsed the Secretariat's response to the UK Government's consultation on long-term plutonium management, opposing the preliminary policy view of developing a new reprocessing facility.

The Committee received an update on the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Partnership and concerns raised by Greenpeace on the democratic decision-making process of the Partnership, given Freedom of Information requests of the local Councils involved in it.

Brief updates on CoRWM, NuLEAF and SCCORS were also provided.

Agreed: To note the report. To develop a briefing on low level radioactive waste and municipal landfill sites.

6. Radiation Safety Standards

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on various issues around radiation safety.

The Steering Committee noted their deep concern over the report of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE), which suggested there was no specific link between childhood cancers and proximity to nuclear sites. The Committee endorsed a NFLA Policy Briefing critique provided by Dr Ian Fairlie, and now awaits COMARE's response to this paper.

The Committee endorsed a joint complaint, co-ordinated by the NFLA, to the BBC complaining about the content of a Radio 4 documentary downplaying the health effects of the Chernobyl disaster.

Agreed: To note the report and follow-up responses from COMARE and the BBC, once they are provided.

7. Mayors for Peace and Hiroshima-Nagasaki exhibition

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on the continued expansion of the Mayors for Peace organisation to over 4700 members worldwide.

The Steering Committee endorsed the Mayors for Peace's Executive Board decision to strongly encourage new members to join so as to reach the 5000th member (representing around 1 billion people) landmark by August 6th 2011 – the 66th anniversary of the Hiroshima atomic bombing.

The Committee agreed to encourage NFLA members to co-operate with local groups in providing civic ceremonies for Hiroshima and Nagasaki A-bomb anniversaries in August. It also agreed to support the screening of the documentary film 'Countdown to Zero' in the week of June 21st – 25th.

Members were encouraged to attend the UK Mayors for Peace Working Group in Oxford on July 8th and the joint Mayors for Peace / NFLA seminar on Trident and nuclear weapons policy.

The Steering Committee noted that the next Mayors for Peace Executive Board meeting would be held in Granollers, Spain from November 8th – 11th and would seek to support Manchester and Glasgow Councils in sending representatives to it.

Agreed: To support further co-operation between NFLA and Mayors for Peace and encourage NFLA members to join Mayors for Peace.

8. Nuclear weapons

The NFLA Secretary provided a report with progress in issues around nuclear weapons proliferation and UK nuclear weapons policy.

The report noted that the UK Government had announced its 'Initial Gate' decision commencing the design phase for a new generation of Trident submarines and missiles. The Government had also announced a parallel review of the alternatives to Trident replacement. Both decisions were likely to make UK nuclear weapons policy a significant election issue at the 2015 UK general election, prior to a final decision on Trident replacement which would be made in 2016. The report noted that this would be the central focus of a NFLA / Mayors for Peace seminar in Oxford on July 8th.

The report noted the results of an independent report of a significant fire incident at AWE Aldermaston, which suggested a lack of communication between agencies and other emergency planning concerns. The Committee agreed that the Secretariat would follow up these concerns with the site licensee, the ONR and the emergency services.

The Committee also raised their concerns over safety and emergency planning issues relating to the privatisation of the Coulport nuclear weapons facility.

Agreed: To note the report. To support the NFLA / Mayors for Peace nuclear weapons seminar. To raise concerns over safety and emergency planning at the Aldermaston and Coulport sites.

9. Nuclear transportation and nuclear emergency planning arrangements

The NFLA Secretary provided a report of shared concerns over a large, proposed shipment of radioactive contaminated steam generators from Canada to Sweden, which would pass near to the northern Scottish Islands. The contamination contained in the generators exceeds IAEA guidelines for shipping and a special licence has had to be provided. The shipments have been delayed following further consultations with First Nation communities in Canada.

The Steering Committee welcomed the growing co-operation between the NFLA, KIMO and NGO's in North America and Scandinavia and endorsed that the NFLA Secretariat develop a Policy Briefing, draft Council resolutions and joint media work on the issue.

The NFLA Secretary also outlined plans for an updated questionnaire on various aspects of nuclear emergency planning readiness at the local level. Members agreed this would be very

useful and the focus of this would be considered more fully following the NFLA Scotland discussion on such issues on the 1st July.

Agreed: The NFLA Secretariat develops a Policy Briefing on radioactive shipments and an emergency planning questionnaire as outlined in the report.

10. **Nuclear submarine decommissioning project**

The NFLA Secretary provided an update with the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Submarine Decommissioning Project, which is looking to dismantle and remove the radioactive materials from redundant nuclear powered submarines. The MOD has announced that the initial dismantling will take place in either Rosyth or Devonport, or a combination of both, before removal to an as yet unspecified site. A full public consultation is expected to be issued in the autumn.

The NFLA Secretary, NFLA Chair and Fife Council representatives have been invited to the next Advisory Group meeting in Reading on the 21st July.

Agreed: To note the report.

11. **Finance and administration issues**

The NFLA Secretary noted that all NFLA affiliation fee invoices had now been issued and encouraged all members to process them as soon as was possible.

The NFLA Secretary noted that he would be moving departments within Manchester City Council as a result of a restructure of departments in the authority. This was not anticipated to affect the service provided to NFLA members.

Agreed: To encourage NFLA members to process affiliation fees as soon as possible.

11. **Date and venue of next NFLA Steering Committee meeting**

The next meeting of the NFLA Steering Committee was set to be held in Manchester Town Hall Committee Room 4 on Friday 16th September 2011 from 11am – 1pm.