

Nuclear Free Local Authorities

briefing



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No.119

Subject: Summary of NFLA Steering Committee, Manchester, 31st January 2014

1. **Introduction**

The NFLA Steering Committee was opened by the NFLA Chair, who welcomed all to Manchester Town Hall.

2. **National NFLA Forum meetings**

The NFLA Secretary provided an overview of the work of the NFLA Forums:

NFLA Welsh Forum –

The NFLA Welsh Forum hosted the NFLA Annual Policy Seminar in Cardiff County Hall on 6th December. The seminar provided an excellent overview of nuclear proliferation, nuclear security and Parliamentary perspectives on nuclear policy.

Dr David Lowry provided a very useful presentation considering what he perceived as significant weaknesses in the UK and international nuclear security regime. Dr Rebecca Johnson, Vice Chair of ICAN-UK gave an overview of the current issues in the nuclear weapons proliferation debate and the critical events taking place in this debate in 2014 and 2015. Paul Flynn, MP for Newport West, provided an overview of the general ignorance of many MPs to nuclear issues and the importance of trying to lobby and educate MPs across the nuclear policy agenda. Seminar feedback was very positive.

The NFLA Secretary is progressing the development of a Forum public meeting in North Wales. This will be held in cooperation with the groups People against Wylfa B (PAWB), Friends of the Earth Cymru and CND Cymru in Caernarfon in Gwynedd. This public meeting will focus on proposed nuclear new build at Wylfa, provide an overview of the Fukushima disaster and its implications for UK nuclear sites and look at the alternatives to new nuclear build. It will be held in Caernarfon, Gwynedd on 22nd March.

NFLA Scotland Forum –

The NFLA Scotland Forum will hold a business meeting and AGM in Glasgow City Chambers on the 7th February. The AGM will consider dates and locations for NFLA Scotland meetings for the rest of 2014. NFLA Scotland Councils who are interested in hosting a meeting in 2014 should let the NFLA Scotland Secretary know.

The meeting in Glasgow will include a presentation of Scottish nuclear policy matters from the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor. The Policy Advisor has recently been appointed as the NFLA's representative to the Scottish Government's Project Board on radioactive waste.

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NFLA English Forum –

The NFLA Secretary has assisted the Swiss based group, Green Cross International, to hold a joint event with CND in the UK Parliament to coincide with the third Fukushima anniversary. A Green Cross delegation travelled to Japan in August 2013 to consider the problems around Fukushima and the changing nuclear policy debate in Japan. This meeting will be held on the 10th March in Westminster and NFLA English Forum members are welcome to attend it.

A joint NFLA English Forum / Steering Committee seminar will be held in Leeds Civic Hall on the 28th March. The NFLA Secretary is approaching Leeds University academics who will lead on a £30 million project to develop new radioactive waste management technology. The NFLA Secretary also hopes to have a speaker on the development of local authority energy trusts and a speaker outlining progress in the nuclear weapons issue.

NFLA All Ireland Forum –

The NFLA Secretary is liaising with a councillor in Dublin City Council to request if it can host the next meeting of the NFLA All Ireland Forum. If Dublin City Council cannot host the meeting then the NFLA Secretary will look to hold it in either Newry or Dundalk. The seminar will focus on the Irish National Trust's recent legal challenge of UK new nuclear build, challenges for the promotion of renewable energy and the development of a second tranche of Councils promoting sustainable energy action zones.

The NFLA All Ireland Forum Secretary is going on maternity leave at the end of January. The NFLA Secretariat wishes her well. Discussions are ongoing within Newry & Mourne District Council to provide a temporary replacement to assist the NFLA Secretary. Discussions are also ongoing with NFLA representatives about the impact of local government reorganisation in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Agreed: To note the report. To wish the NFLA All Ireland Secretary well as she goes on maternity leave.

3. Nuclear new build

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on a wide range of issues around the proposed development of new nuclear power stations.

Proposed new build at Hinkley Point and European Commission inquiry -

At the beginning of January 2014 the European Commission commenced its consideration of the 'strike price' deal between the UK Government and EDF. This agreement provides a range of financial guarantees to allow for construction of new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point in Somerset. The Government has offered a 'strike price' of £92.50 per megawatt hour of electricity generated for 35 years. This deal calculates the cost of construction of the new Hinkley Point nuclear reactor(s) as around £16 billion.

This is arguably one of the last obstacles to new nuclear build taking place in the UK, as the European Commission needs to give its approval to the deal. Without approval of the deal as a legitimate form of state aid, it is unlikely to go ahead as EDF require the financial guarantees to provide a stable form of medium to long-term profit on the project. The deal is also seen as a test case for the development of new nuclear reactors across the EU. If approved, it is likely that Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia will develop similar schemes. It is noteworthy that Hungary has recently announced it is taking a different direction with the signing of a deal to build new nuclear reactors in conjunction with Rosatom and the Russian Government.

The NFLA Secretary has discussed with a wide variety of groups the best form of action to take in pursuing an effective response to the European Commission inquiry. It is developing a detailed submission to the Commission inquiry in conjunction with the local anti-new build group Stop Hinkley and supported by the Cities for a Nuclear Free Europe (CNFE) network. NFLA is also aware and supportive of the Nuclear Consulting Group's technical response to the European Commission.

NFLA Steering Committee members approved and welcomed the draft submission response which was tabled at the meeting by the NFLA Secretary. The draft response argues that the UK Government – EDF deal does equate to an illegal form of subsidy, would distort the UK and wider European electricity market and should be rejected by the Commission. It has been widely welcomed by NGO representatives from other groups and will be formally submitted when the Commission opens up the inquiry to receive formal comments from external organisations (expected in early March). A joint NFLA / CNFE / Stop Hinkley media release will also be issued with the submission.

An Taisce legal challenge of Hinkley Point planning approval -

An Taisce's (Irish National Trust) legal challenge to the UK Government's decision to give planning permission for construction of new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point was rejected in the High Court. On the 19th December Justice Patterson refused the challenge and the attempt to go to a more substantive hearing.

An Taisce put forward as evidence three pieces of guidance and advice: that of the Espoo Convention Implementation Committee, the EU's guidance on trans-boundary effects, and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12 on trans-boundary effects. DECC's response focused on the ordinary meaning of 'likely' - more than 50% probability. This turned out to be the persuasive point for the judge. The judgement determined that using appropriate assessment examples was not relevant since the Hinkley decision was undertaken under a different policy regime. Relying on other translations of the EIA directive was also not relevant as the English version is to be taken as authoritative. In this area the judge determined that guidance and advice are not law. An Taisce have said they will appeal against this judgement.

Toshiba buy majority stake in Sellafield Moorside / developments at Wylfa and Oldbury -

In early January it was confirmed that Westinghouse, which is 84% owned by the Japanese utility Toshiba, will buy Iberdrola's 50% share in the 'NuGen' consortium (and a part of GDF Suez's share) looking to develop a new nuclear reactor close to the Sellafield site. Toshiba has paid £85 million for its stake in the consortium. Iberdrola has sold its share due to the group's existing large debt burden, whilst Toshiba has got involved in the consortium as a way to ensure Westinghouse's AP-1000 reactor design is taking forward and developed in England.

Toshiba is aiming to build three reactors on the Moorside site. It argues that it will be able to develop its AP-1000 design more quickly than EDF with new reactors built by around 2024. The AP-1000 design has gone through half of the ONR's Generic Design Assessment already, but this process had to be stopped after the RWE / E-on consortium pulled out of new build at Wylfa and Oldbury. These sites were then bought by Hitachi, who is pursuing their own Advanced Boiling Water Reactor designs at these sites.

Toshiba's entry to the market means that two of Japan's largest nuclear utilities have joined the UK nuclear sector. Their interest clearly stems from the ongoing problems in reopening Japan's nuclear sector. Both claim their designs are considerably cheaper to develop than EDF's EPR design and will not require as high a 'strike price' deal with the UK Government. It is also claimed construction will take place over four - five years only. The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) formally started considering Hitachi's design under the GDA process in early January.

Agreed: To note the report. To approve draft NFLA submission to the European Commission and allow the Secretariat to issue it when the EC inquiry permits responses. To approve development of a 'New Nuclear Monitor' and media release when the submission is made.

4. Radioactive waste management

The NFLA Secretary outlined the key issues NFLA is involved with in relation to UK / Scottish Government policies on radioactive waste management.

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS): DECC consultation –

In September 2013, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) announced a fresh public consultation on taking forward its Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) policy of finding a suitable site for a deep underground radioactive waste repository. The new consultation reiterated that development of a 'geological disposal facility' (GDF) remains at the core of this policy. The consultation closed in early December 2013. The NFLA's detailed submission to the consultation was approved at the last Steering Committee meeting and can be found on the NFLA website. The NFLA also supported a parallel submission of NGO members of the DECC NGO Forum.

The NFLA Secretary wrote, on the request of the Chair, to DECC staff running the MRWS consultation process about some of the deficiencies in the consultation process and concerns about public comments made by the Energy Minister Michael Fallon to the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee on the process. NuLEAF also raised concerns about parts of the consultation process.

DECC is expected to prepare a summary report of the submissions received under the consultation process in the summer. Its revised policy towards the siting of a deep underground repository, in the form of a White Paper, is not expected to be published until later in the year. The NFLA Secretariat will monitor this matter closely.

NDA consultation on FED / ILW in England and Wales –

The NDA has responded to the comments made in its initial consultation on solutions for consolidating intermediate level waste and fuel element debris in England and Wales. The consultation recommended concentrating such waste at fewer sites, particularly Hinkley Point and Dungeness. It is clear from its response to this consultation, and in its new consultation, that the NDA has not taken up the concerns raised by the NFLA and many other groups. The NFLA Secretariat reiterated concerns over 'diluting and dispersing waste' rather than concentrating it at each site in a response to the consultation. This updated response was tabled at the Steering Committee and approved. It will be placed on the NFLA website.

Developments at Sellafield –

The NDA has published a pilot Priority Programmes Report considering six key programmes and measuring them against the current lifetime plans for each site and target costs for them. Four of these programmes relate to Sellafield's legacy ponds and silos, and the other two are for the Dounreay and Magnox optimised decommissioning programmes.

For Sellafield, NDA identifies risks to the completion date and cost estimates for sludge retrievals from the first generation Magnox storage ponds; though they claim they are manageable. NDA also expect further delays and significant cost overruns to the 'Silo Direct Encapsulation Plant' (which grouts and packages raw wastes in the Magnox silos decommissioning project) and the 'solid ILW retrievals' project. These are additional cost escalations to the NDA's 2012/13 Annual Report and Accounts. This report showed estate wide decommissioning costs had risen from £54.6 bn to £63.8bn. Virtually all the cost increases are associated with Sellafield projects.

In late November 2013 Sellafield Ltd published 'Key to Britain's Energy future: The Strategy for Sellafield'. The document sets out the vision, mission and strategic objectives for Sellafield Ltd. It outlined 10 strategic objectives as follows:

- Highest standards in environmental performance and health and safety.
- Invest intelligently in infrastructure to ensure security and operational resilience.
- Ensure its stakeholders understand what we do and how we do it.
- Accelerates risk and hazard reduction.
- Complete timely reprocessing and provide ongoing services to the nuclear industry.
- Deliver its major projects through programme and project excellence.
- Be open and transparent about its performance.
- Invest in staff and make best use of supply chain partners.
- Provide local communities with a socio-economic and growth returns.
- Drive taxpayer value for money.

The report does not guarantee 'new missions' but it goes on to mention potential future developments such as plutonium recycling and management, support for Ministry of Defence decommissioning (a strong admission that Sellafield could be a site for submarine decommissioned waste) and seeking opportunities to develop its services to its partners. A major deficiency in the report is no mention about the potential for future centralised spent nuclear fuel storage and waste materials encapsulation prior to the development of a deep underground waste repository (which is currently taking place).

As noted at previous Steering Committee meetings, the Sellafield site has come in for extensive criticism from the National Audit Office, the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee and an audit by the NDA's accountants KPMG. The ONR's Chief Nuclear Inspector's Annual Report put mitigation of the risk and hazard in the legacy ponds and silos at Sellafield as its top regulatory priority. The Steering Committee agreed that it would be useful to request a senior member of the NDA to attend a NFLA meeting in the near future to discuss these concerning developments.

Sellafield's plutonium stockpile –

On the 21st January the NDA published a position paper on approaches to the management of separated plutonium, which summarises the conclusions of these options following discussions with DECC. The main conclusion of the NDA is as follows: "In summary, this work has resulted in NDA concluding that reuse remains the preferred option and, based on the information provided and against our definitions, there are three credible reuse options: - reuse as MOX in light water reactors, reuse in CANDU EC6 reactors and reuse in PRISM fast reactors. We note all the technologies being considered have pros and cons and that no 'perfect' solution exists. It may be that a multi-track approach offers best value for money. All options require further understanding to be developed regarding technical uncertainties and to support this we intend to undertake technical studies over the next 1-2 years with the technology suppliers to establish a consistent level of understanding of risks and uncertainties for each option."

Such conclusions are of concern and have been consistently opposed by NFLA, who advocate immobilising and storing the plutonium safely. The NFLA will monitor this development and seek to raise the matter with NDA and DECC when more concrete proposals are put forward.

Dalgety Bay contamination –

The NFLA Secretary has been in regular consultation with senior officers in Fife Council over plans to mitigate and clean-up radioactive contamination on the Dalgety Bay site formerly owned by the MOD. In mid January, the MOD published four possible options for the management of the waste on the site:

- Exclude potential users of the beach by erecting a big fence. This has the advantage of being easy to construct and manage.
- Coastal defences in key areas would be reconstructed to form a barrier. The aim would be to stop the sea releasing more radioactive materials on the beach. This could also involve a large concrete apron being constructed on the slipway. The radioactive materials would remain in situ.
- Excavation of the area to remove the radioactive materials. The report argues that this would take a long time and may not be 100% effective. This option would incur very high costs both for the removal and treatment of the material.
- An optimised approach which would be a combination of the above options such as excavating part of the site and covering some of it.

The MOD report said the preferred option would be chosen after further detailed appraisal and consultation with SEPA, Fife Council and local community groups. However, in the report the MOD said its likely preferred solution would be the optimised option involving keeping people out with fences, modifying some of the pathways and excavating the material from some areas. This matter will be discussed with Fife councillors and officers in the NFLA Scotland meeting on the 7th February.

Update on NuLEAF, SCCORS and Scottish Government policy–

NuLEAF (Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum) met in Manchester Town Hall on the 21st January. The NFLA Chair and NFLA Secretary were in attendance at it. The meeting discussed the MRWS process, a draft paper on developing community benefits packages, its response to NDA consultations and other actions relevant to its Service Plan. A useful afternoon seminar considered how the NDA were developing its site restoration programme for its estate. The NuLEAF Executive Co-Director Stewart Kemp (a former NFLA Secretary) announced he was retiring at the end of April 2014. The other Co-Director Philip Matthews will be appointed full-time as a result.

The SCCORS (Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances) Secretariat has stalled somewhat due to illness of the current Chair, a North Ayrshire councillor. North Ayrshire Council is writing to Scottish Councils seeking another Council to take over the Secretariat. NFLA Scotland members are encouraged to consider offering to host the Secretariat, which is funded by the NDA.

After considerable lobbying, the NFLA Secretary has received notification from the Scottish Government that the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor can join its Project Board taking forward Scottish Higher Activity Waste Policy. The Project Board is meeting on the 30th January and the Policy Advisor will advise NFLA Scotland of progress at its 7th February meeting.

MOD Submarine Decommissioning Project (SDP) –

The shortlist of five sites which will be considered for hosting intermediate level waste from decommissioned nuclear submarines was expected to have been made public by mid January. The NFLA Secretary understands the matter is still with Ministers and an announcement has been delayed. Pre-engagement workshops for affected Councils, to which the NFLA will be invited, are now likely to be at the end of March / early April in Bristol and Penrith.

Agreed: To note the report. The NFLA Secretary to invite a senior member of NDA to a future NFLA meeting. The NFLA Secretary to attend the SDP pre-engagement workshop.

5. Mayors for Peace update

The NFLA Secretary outlined progress in NFLA's co-operation with the Mayors for Peace weapons issue.

Mayors for Peace International Development -

As of January 1st 2014, 5,860 towns and cities were members of Mayors for Peace in 157 countries.

The Mayors for Peace and NFLA both issued media releases giving their tributes following the death of the former South African President Nelson Mandela. The NFLA media release referred to Mandela's positive role around nuclear weapons disarmament.

The Hiroshima Secretariat is aware that a number of NFLA / Mayors for Peace members are interested in receiving seeds from A-bomb damaged trees (from the Peace Park which successfully flower and are seen as a positive peace memorial) and a peace flame lantern lit from the eternal peace flame in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. The Hiroshima Secretariat is now discussing the logistics and costs incurred in this, along with significant issues in transport. The NFLA Secretary will monitor this issue and inform members when further details are known.

In 2014 there are currently two major events where an international Mayors for Peace presence is being organised for. In the last week of April there will be the final Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference (NPT PrepCon) of the 2010 – 2015 review cycle, which will be held at UN headquarters in New York. In the second week of June, Mayors for Peace is also looking at being involved in a major NGO conference in Sarajevo, Bosnia commemorating the centenary of the commencement of the First World War.

A delegation of Mayors will be in attendance at the NPT, but the closeness of the European Parliamentary elections may mean that some European board members will link in to a 2020 Vision board meeting via Skype. The NFLA Secretariat is ascertaining the presence required for the meeting.

It is more likely that representatives from Manchester and possibly Glasgow will attend the Mayors for Peace meetings and associated events taking place in Sarajevo around June 9th and 10th – which will be the 100th anniversary of the First World War. The Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Mayors for Peace have been invited by the Mayor of Sarajevo to take part in these events, and a large number of international NGOs will also be holding events at this time in the city.

Mayors for Peace UK and Ireland development -

The NFLA Secretary is in the process of developing a strategy paper for how to take forward the launch of an effective UK & Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter that can complement the NFLA, but is separate from it.

The key elements to the strategy paper will consider the following issues:

- Who should be the Council's nominated representative(s) to attend chapter meetings? The Mayor / Provost or a nominated council delegated on their behalf?
- How can a voluntary invoice system be introduced and what should the membership fee be based on – a nominal fee like £120, or a fee based on population?
- What issues shall it consider – Mayors for Peace involvement with the NPT, UK and Irish nuclear weapons policies, other peace promotion issues?
- How will it be administered and how often will it meet?
- What will be its interaction with the NFLA, given different memberships?
- How can NGOs be incorporated into a cross-national chapter?
- How will it interact with national and devolved governments?
- How will it interact with the Ypres and Hiroshima Secretariats?

It is planned to have the strategy paper ready for as soon as is practical.

Manchester City Council are also helping a Norwegian NGO 'Bike for Peace' commence its 2014 world tour in the UK, as part of its campaign to support the Mayors for Peace's 2020 Vision. A delegation including a former Norwegian Prime Minister and 8 Norwegian Mayors will commence the 90 day tour from Manchester Town Hall on the 15th March. They will then travel to Coventry, London and Dover. Arrangements to meet with Parliamentarians, Mayors, councillors, local disarmament NGOs and local cycling groups have been organised.

Agreed: To note the report and welcome co-operation with Bike for Peace. The NFLA Secretary to ascertain involvement in Mayors for Peace's international meetings in 2014.

6. Nuclear Weapons update

The NFLA Secretary provided an overview of various issues relating to the nuclear weapons disarmament debate.

NET independent inquiry on the UK's national defence needs and its international nuclear disarmament responsibilities –

As approved at the December Steering Committee meeting, the NFLA Secretariat has submitted a detailed response to the Nuclear Education Trust's (NET) independent inquiry into the UK's national defence needs in a period of deep defence cuts. The inquiry also considered what the UK's international nuclear disarmament responsibilities should be and whether it is living up to them. The NFLA response is on the NFLA website.

NET is planning to launch their final report at a special event in Portcullis House, Westminster on 11th February. This meeting will be chaired by former Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett and a number of high profile figures will also be speaking at it. The NFLA Chair and NFLA Secretary have been invited to attend the meeting. The NFLA Chair will also be allowed to make a short address on the NFLA submission and in reply to points made in the meeting.

UN follow-up Conference on humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, Mexico –

A follow-up UN Conference considering the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons is being held in Nayarit, Mexico on the 13th – 14th February 2014. Preparations are being made for it and there will be a presence from both the Mayors for Peace and ICAN-UK, who have agreed to update the NFLA Secretariat with key actions from the Conference.

Progress with finding a peaceful solution to Iran's nuclear programme -

The interim agreement on Iran's nuclear programme was fully agreed upon and approved on January 12th and came into effect on January 20th. At this point Iran will freeze elements of its nuclear programme in return for the United States releasing some of the billions of dollars of Iranian oil revenues frozen under UN resolutions. The next and much more difficult stage of negotiations will try and bind all parties into a comprehensive agreement that will ensure Iran cannot build nuclear weapons. The negotiations are expected to take at least six months, with the option of extending them for a year. If the talks break down then it is likely even harsher sanctions on Iran will be put forward to the UN.

Update on Trident replacement progress -

The UK Defence Secretary Philip Hammond published details of the total spend on the initial phases of the Trident replacement programme. Spending on this part of the project, which will not receive its final 'main gate' decision until a Parliamentary vote after the 2015 election, has now passed £800 million. The report provides the first conceptual image of how a new class of Trident submarines will look like. In the MOD's equipment plan it outlines that the UK's annual spending on nuclear weapons will increase from £2.5 billion in 2012 to £4.5 billion in 2022. All this preparatory work is on schedule and awaiting a positive 'main gate' decision in 2016.

The impact of Trident spending on other defence budgets at a time of deep defence cuts has been analysed by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). The RUSI report suggests that Trident replacement will consume over a third of the UK's military expenditure in the 2020's and into the 2030's. RUSI calculate that the whole life costs of a Trident replacement project will be between £70 billion - £80 billion. Around £4 billion of this will have been spent on the work prior to the main gate decision in 2016.

Aldermaston and Burghfield update –

A leaked MOD report published in the 'Daily Mirror' suggests that a number of police officers responsible for guarding the AWE Burghfield facility are under investigation for failing to carry out security duties. The 'Daily Mirror' claims as many as 50 officers are under scrutiny for failing to conduct key duties, including security patrols, and even 'sleeping on the job'.

Meanwhile, an annual review of the standards of accountability and transparency of the AWE owners by the Nuclear Information Service (NIS) has declared it as 'poor' with no significant improvements over 2013. The report argues AWE has ignored calls to adopt best practice in talking to local communities and failed to take an open account in reporting safety issues. This has tarnished its reputation. The report welcomes a review of the operation of the Aldermaston and Burghfield Local Liaison Committees but argues it needs to go further if councillors are to show true independence from the site owners. The report also welcomes the role the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) is playing to improve matters on the site.

Developments at Devonport and Rosyth -

The latest ONR quarterly site report has confirmed that three workers at the submarine maintenance facility at Devonport received an accidental intake of radiation following an incident on the site in summer 2013. The ONR deign it a 'minor' incident during the moving of a large radioactive component of a nuclear powered submarine. Meanwhile, Fife Council and the NFLA have received notification from the ONR of a public consultation that will commence the decommissioning of the Rosyth site. The consultation document is being considered at the NFLA Scotland meeting in February to determine an appropriate NFLA response.

Agreed: To note the report.

7. Fukushima and nuclear safety

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on progress with nuclear safety and the safe control and decommissioning of the damaged reactor site at Fukushima, Japan.

European nuclear safety matters -

The European Commission hosted a Conference entitled 'Taking Nuclear Third Party Liability into the future' in Brussels on the 20th and 21st January. This will discuss the issues related to nuclear third party liability and insurance, in particular in the light of the recommendations adopted by the expert group to the European Commission on nuclear third party liability and the outcomes of the public consultation conducted between 30 July and 22 October 2013.

The draft European regulations would increase the threshold of third party liability paid by the nuclear industry up to £1.2bn in the UK. After this point member states would cover further costs from a major nuclear accident at a civil nuclear site. Though this is a considerable increase to the current situation, the costs of the Fukushima accident are conservatively estimated at around £80bn. David Reinberger of Vienna City Council, and lead officer of the Cities for a Nuclear Free Europe Network, is attending this meeting and has agreed to provide the NFLA Secretary with a full report of the Conference.

As noted at the last NFLA Steering Committee, the European Commission has also announced a new Directive on post Fukushima nuclear safety. This Directive is now being considered by the UK Parliament, initially by the European Scrutiny Committee. Directive 2009/71/Euratom seeks to establish a framework for the safety of nuclear installations and requires all EU member states with nuclear facilities to establish responsibilities for the safety requirements, provide for the licensing of nuclear installations and establish an independent regulatory authority. This was subject to review following the Fukushima disaster and subsequent 'stress tests' on all EU civil and defence nuclear reactors.

The UK Government are concerned that the new Directive is overly prescriptive on national regulatory authorities, rather than being strategic and generic. The Government also argues it will see unnecessary direct involvement by the Commission in the workings of the ONR.

Fukushima update –

A new leak has been discovered at the Fukushima nuclear plant. TEPCO officials have reported a 30 cm opening on the first floor of Reactor 3 and into its basement. Samples taken by remote controlled robots in the reactor measured the radiation as 2.4 million Becquerels per litre of radioactive caesium and 24 million Becquerels per litre for beta-ray emitting substances including strontium. Strontium accumulates in human bones and has been linked to cancer. It is not clear when the leak began and how much water has leaked out. Work is continuing to also remove nuclear fuel from the storage pool in the unstable Reactor 4 and place it in a more secure location. As of January 20th, 198 of the 1,533 fuel assemblies had been moved.

Agreed: To note the report.

8. Alternatives to nuclear energy

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on developments in pursuing effective alternatives to nuclear power.

NFLA Policy Briefings on renewable energy -

Over the past two years the NFLA Secretariat has developed a whole suite of well researched documents for member authorities on various aspects of energy policy highlighting the benefits of renewable energy, microgeneration and energy efficiency. The NFLA Secretariat is now developing a Policy Briefing encouraging Councils to consider developing 'Energy Service Companies' and 'Energy Trusts'. Glasgow, Birmingham and Bristol City Councils in particular have been developing this type of initiative and the NFLA Secretary is liaising with officers from these Councils to develop further information.

Update on the Green Deal and national debate over 'green' liabilities -

By the end of December 2013, DECC figures showed just 626 households had energy efficiency measures installed and financed under the Green Deal scheme. A further 488 had active 'green deal' plans in progress. On a more positive note, the amount of households who received 'cash back' under the Green Deal rose to over 10,500, in a scheme costing around £2.5 million. To receive such deals households do not need to fulfil all of the insulation improvements applicable under the deal. The Steering Committee noted their dismay at such low figures.

Are the UK and the Irish Governments downscaling renewable energy ambitions?

The hugely expensive deal to help fund new nuclear in England and Wales has also corresponded with a noticeable perceived reduction in political support for various types of renewable energy by the UK Government. The most alarming change has been with offshore wind generation. As recently as 2009 the Government had a target of 32GW of offshore wind would be deployed by the early 2020's. In the Energy Bill that has just passed into law this had been reduced to 16GW. Nick Clegg's unveiling of the Government's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy in late 2013 only envisages 8 – 16GW by 2020, and this would only rise to 18GW by 2030.

To add to these disappointing numbers, Bloomberg New Energy Finance have calculated that the UK is in danger of not even reaching the 10GW levels that the UK Government says is possible. This is due to the Government and industry struggling to secure the £20 billion investment required to install such a level of electricity. Whilst expansion of the market in recent years has been impressive, 2013 had seen an array of major offshore wind projects shelved due to a lack of adequate investment.

This is particularly problematic for Scotland, where the most progress to develop offshore wind has taken place. None of the Scottish projects put forward under the UK Government's 'Contracts for Difference' scheme were approved for investment in early 2014. The four proposed Scottish developments did not score high enough in the affordability rankings of the UK Government scheme, putting at jeopardy 2.45GW of new capacity. Energy Minister Ed Davey claimed they were likely to get approval in the next round of 'Contracts for Difference' at the end of 2014 and could still gain subsidies through the Renewables Obligation. The Scottish Government claimed the decision puts in jeopardy the ambitious development of renewable energy in Scotland.

A similar debate is taking place in Ireland where both onshore wind and offshore wind developments have been attacked in a number of quarters for their high build costs and a general lack of community involvement in such projects. This was a matter of some considerable discussion at the NFLA All Ireland Forum seminar in Galway. However, it should be noted that in December 2013 wind energy generation provided a record 24% of Irish energy generation, providing a 5% reduction in wholesale electricity prices in the last few months of 2013. In a letter to the Irish Examiner, NFLA All Ireland Co-Chair Councillor Mark Dearey welcomed this development and urged the Government and the renewable energy industry to understand the need for a greater level of community participation in such energy projects and to look to reduce the level of pylons created by such developments.

Update on shale gas and fracking –

The NFLA are continuing to monitor concerns with the wastewater process from the shale gas extraction process, after an incident involving the dumping of waste water containing low levels of radiation into the Manchester ship canal at Davyhulme. The NFLA Secretary has been in discussion with the independent civil engineering consultant John Busby. He suggests there are two problems with wastewater - the high salinity and the NORM (naturally occurring radioactive materials) content. The wastewater is treated by de-watering, so that the radioactivity is concentrated in the sludge, as are other toxic constituents. One way of dealing with the salinity is to dilute the de-sludged water with other effluent, sewage for instance. The problem then is how much diluent is available. Recourse to reverse osmosis would be expensive and likely to consume more energy obtained in the shale gas. The initial NORM content is variable from differing wells, but is concentrated in the de-watered sludge. In some

cases in the United States it has been unacceptable to send it to normal landfill and it has to be re-directed to low level radioactive repositories. Reuse of flowback worsens the treatment and disposal problem, because it will gather more salinity and NORM. John Busby has postulated that if the fracking wastewater is acceptably treated it could make fracking for gas uneconomic, which may be one of the possible reasons why Caudrilla has reverted to drilling for oil at Balcombe in Sussex.

Agreed: To note the report. To welcome a NFLA Policy Briefing on the development of Local Authority Energy Trusts / Energy Service Companies. To develop further research over the radiological and environmental concerns of shale gas fracking.

9. Low level radiation and health issues

The NFLA Secretary provided a short report on progress with issues relating to low level radiation and health.

OSPAR RSC, February 2014 –

The NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor will represent NFLA and KIMO at the OSPAR Intergovernmental Radiation Substances Committee in London on the 13th February. A joint paper raising concerns over Sellafield discharges and definition of 'close to zero' radioactive discharges into the marine environment has also been tabled.

Agreed: To note the report.

10. Nuclear emergency planning and nuclear materials transportation

The NFLA Secretary provided a report of activity it was undertaking in the area of nuclear emergency planning.

DECC NGO Forum sub-group on nuclear emergency planning –

The NFLA Secretary will be attending the next meeting of this sub-group on 3rd April.

Involvement in European Economic and Social Committee inquiry into crisis communications around nuclear sites -

The NFLA Secretary will be speaking at this inquiry in Brussels on the 12th February. The NFLA Secretary will focus his presentation on concerns over lack of openness and transparency, the need to consider new forms of social media and for NGO's to be brought more fully into this process.

Nuclear transportation concerns –

In NFLA seminars held in Glasgow, Manchester and Rotherham a considerable amount of concern has been raised about the increased levels of transportation of nuclear materials by road, rail and sea.

In the area of nuclear materials transportation by sea, the NFLA Secretariat is particularly keen to raise three major areas of concern –

- the growing number of 'roll on roll off' ships transferring nuclear materials within other mixed shipments (like that of the Atlantic Cartier) and the safety of such transports,
- the lack of information on emergency response to an accident involving a nuclear materials transport in national marine emergency plans,
- the increased amount of shipments containing materials contaminated with low levels of radioactivity.

The NFLA Chair and NFLA Secretary have met with staff in Merseyside CND and with the National Secretary of the RMT Union to discuss taking these issues further in a co-operative manner. A full report on such matters is currently being undertaken.

The NFLA Secretary is also completing a related briefing on the decontamination of nuclear materials and recycled metals then released back into the consumables market. The NFLA English Forum seminars in Manchester and Rotherham in 2013 have provided a considerable

amount of examples and background to the issues around radioactively contaminated metals, and the need for improvements to national regulation.

Agreed: To note the report.

11. Date of next NFLA Steering Committee meeting

The next Steering Committee meeting is planned for ***Friday 28th March in Leeds Civic Hall from 11am – 1pm***, followed by an afternoon ***NFLA SC / English Forum joint seminar*** from ***1.30pm – 3pm***.