

# Nuclear Free Local Authorities

# briefing



Date: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012

No.104

Subject: Summary of NFLA Steering Committee & AGM, Manchester, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2012

## 1. Introduction

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

Councillor Goodall particularly welcomed Councillor Coutts from Shetland Island Council, Councillor Younger from Perth and Kinross Council, Councillor Powell from Torfaen County Borough Council (observer) and David Reinberger from the City of Vienna Council to their first NFLA Steering Committee meeting.

## 2. National NFLA Forum meetings

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

### NFLA All Ireland Forum –

The NFLA All Ireland Forum Co-Chairs and Secretary, and the NFLA Secretary met officials from the Republic of Ireland Department of the Environment on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October in Customs House, Dublin. The meeting allowed for open discussion of NFLA concerns over a UK new nuclear build programme, radioactive discharges into the Irish Sea and nuclear shipments over the Irish Sea.

The Forum held a useful and informative seminar in Down Civic Centre on the 12<sup>th</sup> October. The keynote speaker was the local MP and former NFLA representative and SDLP Leader Margaret Ritchie MP, who gave an impassioned speech on the importance of being involved in the NFLA's work. Ciara McMahon of the RPII provided an overview of their ongoing study into the potential health effects of the UK new nuclear programme and agreed to provide the final report at the next Forum meeting. The NFLA Secretary gave an overview of UK nuclear developments and Declan Allison of Friends of the Earth highlighted concerns over shale gas extraction in Ireland.

### NFLA Welsh Forum –

The NFLA Welsh Forum held an informative and well attended seminar in County Hall, Cardiff on the 24<sup>th</sup> October. The keynote speaker was Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM talking about the unsuitability of locating Trident submarines at Milford Haven. Carl Clowes from PAWB outlined its 'Manifesto for Anglesey', Dr Nick Pidgeon provided a very interesting presentation on public attitudes to nuclear power, Gareth Clubb from Friends of the Earth provided an overview of the likely effects of climate change on energy policy and the NFLA Secretary spoke about the NFLA's Welsh energy report and nuclear emergency planning report. The Secretary also confirmed Merthyr Tydfil Council had joined the NFLA.

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**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**

### **NFLA Scotland Forum –**

The NFLA Scotland Forum held a short business meeting prior to the NFLA Steering Committee on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> December. The meeting received a Scottish policy update report from the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor and considered its meetings schedule for 2013. The NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor is planning to develop a detailed response to SEPA on its updated radioactive waste permits, which will be sent out to members shortly. The NFLA Secretary also confirmed that North Lanarkshire Council had rejoined the NFLA.

### **NFLA English Forum –**

Linking in with the United Nations International Day of Peace, the Forum supported Manchester City Council's Peace Day event and an afternoon NFLA English Forum seminar, to which all Steering Committee members were encouraged to attend. The Peace Day event included opening speeches, a minutes silence at midday and the official opening of the 2012 Manchester Food and Drink Festival and the 2012 Manchester Peace Festival by the Lord Mayor of Manchester. The midday minute of silence was part of a Mayors for Peace initiative led by the Mayor of Montreal to formally commemorate International Peace Day and all innocent people killed in conflict, including those of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The accompanying seminar considered the international dimension to reducing the proliferation of nuclear and uranium weapons. NIS Director Peter Burt provided an overview of the international nuclear weapons debate and the NFLA Secretary highlighted the role of NFLA and Mayors for Peace in this debate. The ICBUW Secretary Doug Weir provided a very useful overview of the international campaign to ban uranium weapons. The presentations are on the NFLA website.

***Agreed: To note the report. To welcome Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and North Lanarkshire Council as new NFLA members.***

### **3. Membership recruitment and administration issues**

The NFLA Secretary reported that the NFLA AGM report would confirm NFLA membership had increased in 2012. North Lanarkshire Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Council and Galway City Council have joined the NFLA this year. In a year of continuing severe cuts to local government funding this positive development should be very much welcomed.

The NFLA Secretary also reported on a proposal of four types of individual supporter membership, which were to be considered at the NFLA AGM following the Steering Committee meeting. The NFLA Secretary has further developed a report for the NFLA AGM to consider improvements to the NFLA website and the development of the NFLA on social media sites. These potential developments have been undertaken with support from a student intern, Stephanie Remers, who finished her brief spell with the NFLA Secretariat on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

***Agreed: To note the report and thank Stephanie Remers for her assistance to the NFLA.***

### **4. European Network of Cities against Nuclear Power**

The NFLA Secretary reported on meetings held in the 'Eurocities' office in Brussels and at the European Parliament on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September between the NFLA and officers from Vienna City Council over the development of a Network of European Cities concerned about nuclear power and opposing new nuclear build.

The meetings allowed for Vienna City Council staff to outline that they had received official support from a number of leading European cities for this initiative, including Munich, Frankfurt, Hannover, Antwerp, Ghent, Bergen, Nicosia and Dublin. They had also developed formal co-operation with the NFLA, the Mayors for Peace and the Japanese Mayors for a Nuclear Power Free Japan. An informative exhibition was also opened in the European Parliament on uranium mining affecting Europe. A cross-party international panel of MEPs attended the exhibition opening, which is available for use by NFLA member authorities.

The aims and objectives of the Network are:

- As an immediate measure, there should be a moratorium on construction of new nuclear power plants.
- As a next step, all nuclear reactors without state-of-the-art safety technology (i.e. older reactors) should be closed down.
- The eventual aim should be a nuclear free Europe in the medium term.
- Nuclear power is around 30% of European electricity use and an intelligent practical approach should be taken to see gradual decline of this share.
- European Union funds provided through the EURATOM Treaty should not be provided for lifetime extensions or new nuclear power plants.
- Nuclear power plant owners in the EU should, under all circumstances, be held liable for insurance damages from a nuclear accident. A reasonable insurance minimum should be 5 billion euros (UK Government policy is to see an insurance maximum of 1.2 billion euros).
- The recent post Fukushima European stress tests need to be independently verified.
- EU funds should be directed to energy efficiency and renewable energy.

In discussion that followed, the Steering Committee warmly welcomed the development of this Network and co-operation with Vienna and other big European cities. David Reinberger confirmed that discussions were ongoing within Vienna City Council to outline its strategy of meetings and plans for 2013, with a continued emphasis on engagement at the European Commission and European Parliament level.

***Agreed: To formally work with the new European Network and develop joint initiatives with it in 2013.***

## **5. Nuclear new build**

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

### ***Developments relating to a new nuclear reactor at Hinkley Point –***

The National Infrastructure Directorate (NID) planning inquiry into a proposed new reactor at Hinkley Point is expected to publish its recommendations to the Energy Secretary Ed Davey by the end of 2012. There was considerable disquiet at public meetings held by NID of the extremely narrow remit of the inquiry, that considered mainly localised issues and not wider issues, which the NID claimed had already been determined in the UK Government's National Policy Statement on Nuclear Power Generation. The NFLA will continue to monitor this matter.

In late November 2012 the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) confirmed that they have granted a nuclear site licence to EDF (NNB Genco) for developing a new reactor at Hinkley Point. This is a significant step in the process for permission to build a reactor, but it still does not yet allow them to start construction.

The final investment decision by EDF on the construction of new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point has still not been made according to its Chief Executive Vincent de Rivaz. EDF has extensively lobbied the UK Government to set a 'strike price' for new nuclear and indirect cost guarantees and support to make it a sound economic proposition. Media reports suggest the 'strike price' EDF is lobbying for could be as high as £160/MWh – this is over three times the current price for existing electricity. Media reports also suggest that EDF's core funding partner Centrica is planning to pull out of the Hinkley new build project due to its concerns over the economics of investment into the project, and that EDF is courting Chinese, Japanese and Russian utilities to take over Centrica's 20% stake. In an interview with the Financial Times on the 29<sup>th</sup> November Mr de Rivaz still stated that 'much had to be done' before EDF will commit the investment to commence the project. In discussion Steering Committee members believed the economic weaknesses of new nuclear build need to be focused upon by the NFLA.

### ***Generic Design Assessment process for new reactors –***

In early November 2012 the ONR confirmed a further four outstanding issues in its GDA process for EDF's EPR design had been closed, leaving 12 issues still remaining. The ONR

and Environment Agency have given interim approval for the EPR design in November 2011, but had at that point 31 significant issues that had to be satisfied by EDF before final approval would be given. Both regulators have anticipated that all 31 issues would be resolved by the end of the year, and at the ONR NGO Forum, the ONR again stated this was still the case.

### ***UK Government draft Energy Bill and investment decisions on new nuclear build***

On the 29<sup>th</sup> November the UK Government published its Energy Bill on developing new nuclear and renewable energy through extensive reforms to the energy market.

In some of its key initial conclusions on the Bill, the NFLA argue:

- The UK Government appears to be planning to force consumers to subsidise nuclear power through its electricity market reforms contained within the Draft Energy Bill, despite having repeatedly promised there would be no public subsidy for new reactors.
- Offering new nuclear operators a fixed unit price for the cost of spent fuel management and disposal represents a substantial public subsidy. Underwriting nuclear operators' nuclear waste and decommissioning costs also represents a public subsidy.
- Any limit on liability on the costs of nuclear accidents eases the burden on nuclear operators. Paying for commercial insurance could add around half a euro to the cost of a unit of electricity, so a cap on liability represents a subsidy. Though this is being dealt with through a different policy process, this is indicative of the kind of unfair support the nuclear industry is receiving.
- The subsidising of a nuclear technology which has already existed for over 70 years without achieving the expected cost reductions, and which produces a dangerous waste the nuclear industry or Government are not sure what to do with, is certainly not in the interest of the taxpayer or the electricity consumer.
- The significant, though still unclear, level of public financial support to the nuclear industry to build new reactors will take place at the expense of a much more ambitious renewable energy and energy efficiency programme.
- There is real concern over the lack of a UK decarbonisation target for 2030 – media reports suggest a cross-party amendment to the Bill could take place over this issue.

### ***Wylfa and Oldbury -***

In early October 2012 DECC confirmed that the Japanese utility Hitachi had bought the 'Horizon' Partnership and sites to develop new nuclear reactors at Wylfa in Anglesey and Oldbury in Gloucestershire. Media reports suggested they had paid £700 million for the sites, a huge amount of money considered to be over double the odds for the sites, according to the likes of Citibank.

Hitachi may well have become interested in the sites as attempts to develop sites in the United States have floundered, and its local Japanese market has come to a halt since the Fukushima disaster. However, Hitachi's Advanced Boiling Water Reactor design will have to go through the 4 year Generic Design Assessment currently being finalised for EDF's EPR design. Hitachi itself has admitted it will be at least five years before a final investment decision is made.

The NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor has noted that none of Hitachi's recently constructed nuclear reactors have a 'capacity factor' above 73%, whilst two have capacity factors of less than 45%. A capacity factor is the amount a plant generates compared to the amount that would be generated if it was operating at full power all of the time. Nuclear power plants are costed on the basis that they will achieve capacity factors of 80-90 per cent. With a capacity factor of 45 per cent any nuclear power project comes out needing twice the power price to be an attractive economic proposition.

### ***Nuclear industry lavish support for DECC civil servants –***

A report in the Guardian has uncovered the extent of free hospitality which senior civil servants in the Department of Energy and Climate Change have received from the nuclear industry in discussions over the facilitation of nuclear new build. The report is perhaps indicative of the close relationship that exists between Government and the nuclear industry and the beneficial support being provided for new nuclear build in the Energy Bill. The Steering Committee

approved for a letter to be sent direct to the Energy Secretary complaining about civil servants accepting such lavish hospitality.

***Agreed: To note the report. The NFLA Secretary to develop a Policy Briefing on the UK Energy Bill. The NFLA Secretary to draft a joint letter of complaint to the Energy Secretary over the lavish hospitality DECC civil servants have received from the nuclear industry.***

## 6. Fukushima and nuclear safety

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on the state of the stricken Fukushima nuclear reactors and wider issues around nuclear safety standards.

### ***ONR Fukushima follow-up report and European stress tests –***

On October 31<sup>st</sup> 2012 the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) published a progress report on the 38 recommendations it made in 2011 to its analysis of the Fukushima disaster and its impact on UK nuclear safety regulations and operations. It also reported on progress with the findings of the ‘stress test’ reports requested by the European Commission and the Chief UK nuclear inspector.

The key conclusions of the 384 page report are:

- All relevant stakeholders have shown an appropriate level of commitment to address the Chief Inspector’s recommendations and the relevant findings of the Stress Test reports.
- There is clear evidence that adequate progress is being made, with improvements either in place or planned. However, more needs to be done and it is important that all involved sustain their efforts to ensure that all recommendations, considerations and findings are closed out, and that the intended safety benefits are realised.
- ONR will press for the industry to complete the more significant improvements arising in learning from the Fukushima event by the end of 2014 (taking into account, particularly in relation to Sellafield, other priority safety activities and the availability of funding).
- ONR will deliver proportionate and effective oversight of this by monitoring ongoing “Fukushima learning” activities through its operational regulatory programmes (e.g. which relate to civil nuclear reactors, Sellafield, decommissioning and waste management, and relevant UK defence sites).
- ONR will continue to report the progress of Government, ONR and licensees in addressing the recommendations, findings and considerations in appropriate routine reports via its website.
- International cooperation and shared learning will continue to be a significant ONR activity to ensure that the UK nuclear industry maximises the learning from others and shares its own experiences for the benefit of others.

As with previous ONR Fukushima reports the ‘headline’ figure argues that the UK nuclear industry is fit for purpose and has taken account of the issues raised in its Fukushima reports. However, as a number of critical independent reports have suggested, there is sufficient concern in the detail found within the report. In particular, the ONR report outlines over 400 improvement actions from its recommendations that have still not been implemented by the civil and defence nuclear sector. The defence nuclear sector seems to be particularly slow at responding to the recommendations made of it. Of the 178 recommendations that apply to UK defence sites, 70% (120) have so far failed to meet ONR’s expectations. Overall, 58% (426) of the 747 safety recommendations made for all UK nuclear sites are defined by ONR as not yet closed. And nearly a third (265) are described by ONR as needing “further development or provision of evidence / information before ONR can be content that they adequately address expectations.”

Many of these improvement actions relate to emergency control centres and better protection from floods, fires, severe weather and improved back-up power supplies in the event of an emergency incident. The Executive Summary of the ONR report outlines in detail a raft of improvement measures being made by civil and defence nuclear facilities but it also begs the

obvious question in why these improvements are only being made now as a result of an overseas disaster, and were not in place before the Fukushima incident happened.

Such concerns are compounded by the full publication of the 'stress test' reports carried out on the EU's 143 nuclear reactor sites. These have exposed hundreds of problems. According to a report in 'The Independent' it has been calculated that it could cost as much as €25 billion in order to restore proper plant safety. The European report showed that 19 UK reactors at nine sites (Dungeness, Hartlepool, Hinkley Point, Hunterston, Oldbury, Sizewell, Torness and Wylfa) have 108 issues of concern that need to be resolved.

According to the European report, some of the flaws identified include:

- Emergency operating procedures and "severe accident" management guidelines are failing to cover all the plant's possible conditions, though improvements are "said to be planned".
- The report notes that, in some cases "passive measures to prevent hydrogen explosions in case of severe accident not in place."
- At some sites back-up emergency control rooms are not available, nor are back-up diesel generators "physically separated" from normal generators, or mobile diesel generators.
- The pressurised water reactor at Sizewell, a different design from other UK plants, is specifically criticised because "filtered venting systems are not in place".

### ***Fukushima update -***

The United Nations Special Rapporteur considering the Fukushima disaster, Anand Grover, has criticised the Japanese Government for failing to protect the human rights of those affected by the radiation leak. Grover particularly cites the Japanese Government's failure to disperse radiation contamination data from the System for Prediction of Environment Emergency Dose Information (SPEEDI), as well as not conducting widespread medical follow-up checks among on-site nuclear workers who are decontaminating and decommissioning the crippled reactors. He also pointed out problems with decontamination efforts as they apply to children, the elderly and pregnant women.

A Fukushima Prefectural Panel that was assigned to examine the effects of radiation on local residents has finally released full minutes from its closed meetings conducted in 2011. It has admitted that an earlier set of minutes, released via a Freedom of Information Act request, omitted significant sections regarding officials' efforts to discourage urine testing in spite of a Japanese Government recommendation that the testing be adopted. Although urine testing can detect even minute radiation exposure, Fukushima officials refused to use it then, and continue to do so even today. As quoted on the Greenpeace International website, Katsuma Yakagaski, from the University of Ryukyus, said, "They apparently didn't want to reveal that they wanted to avoid conducting urine tests, in an effort to underestimate the damage to residents' health."

Japan's Environment Ministry is conducting thyroid examinations on children from Nagasaki Prefecture in an effort to create control groups, which will be compared with the test results of 360,000 children from Fukushima Prefecture. The Japan Association of Breast and Thyroid Sonology will conduct similar tests in Yamanashi and Aomori Prefectures. The alternate test sites were chosen because they are far from the site of the Fukushima nuclear disaster. Results are expected to be available by March 2013.

Radiation levels in wild mushrooms harvested from areas hundreds of kilometres from the site of the Fukushima nuclear disaster have been found to contain high levels of radioactive caesium. Some measures have shown levels as high as 3,000 Bq/kg of caesium in Aomori, Nagano, and Shizuoka Prefectures, more than 200 km and up to 350 km from the Fukushima plant. In many cases, readings are actually higher than they were in 2011. The Japanese Government's legal limit for caesium is 100 Bq/kg.

***Agreed: To note the report.***

## 7. **Alternatives to nuclear energy**

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on plans to update the NFLA energy reports for England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The NFLA Secretary will shortly update NFLA reports on future energy use in England, Ireland and Wales using a template developed by the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor. These will all advocate the NFLA's preferred energy policy – a combination of a wide renewable energy mix, a scaling up of energy efficiency schemes led by local authorities, and the development of community microgeneration projects.

The Green Investment Bank (GIB) was launched on 28<sup>th</sup> November by the UK Business Secretary Vince Cable. He announced the GIB would be based in Edinburgh to take account of the strong support for renewable energy in Scotland. In a letter to 'The Guardian' the NFLA Chair welcomed the creation of the GIB but opposed the possibility outlined by Vince Cable that it may be used to assist with new nuclear projects, which are not 'green' and were never in the original remit of the Bank. The letter goes on to compare the limitations of the GIB compared to its German equivalent KfW. The KfW has already helped insulate and seal over 2 million homes, employing over 200,000 people. Since 2006, 156 million tonnes of carbon emissions have been saved, around 25% of the UK's total emissions. KfW has the top credit rating possible due to interest rates of 1 – 2% and an additional Government subsidy of £1bn. Through this it has provided a huge total investment of £18.5bn into the renewable energy sector and energy efficiency programmes. Whilst the Green Deal and the GIB are suggesting loans to UK householders will be no more than £6,000, German homeowners can borrow as much as £75,000 through the KfW. As well as loans, it offers grants of 20% of the cost of the works.

The Association for the Conservation of Energy (ACE) has published a detailed report which outlines huge reductions in UK Government funding for energy efficiency projects. ACE calculates the budget for energy efficiency measures for the fuel poor in England has been cut by 44 per cent, from £376m in 2009 to £209m in 2013. ACE estimates the cuts will reduce the number of insulation deployments in fuel poor households in England from 150,000 in 2009 to 100,000 in 2013. As a parallel development to the UK Energy Bill, DECC are also seeking views on a consultation to expand energy efficiency programmes. In discussion that followed, Steering Committee members were keen for NFLA Policy Briefings on green energy, fuel poverty and seminars on such matters.

***Agreed: To note the report. To develop policy briefings on green energy, fuel poverty and the German energy transformation followed up with NFLA Forum seminars on such matters.***

## 8. **Radioactive waste management**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on developments in radioactive waste management policy.

### ***NDA Stakeholder Dialogue –***

The NFLA Chair and the NFLA Secretary attended the annual National NDA stakeholder dialogue on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October in Manchester. The event allowed for a plenary session where the new Chief Executive of the NDA, John Clarke, gave an overview of progress with its key objectives. The meeting provided useful updates on its apprenticeship and skills scheme to fill medium term staffing gaps, an update on the work of the new Dounreay consortium, a brief overview of the next stage of the NDA Overall Strategy, a workshop discussion on the future challenges to its business, an overview of the competition process for operating Magnox reactors and an update (with DECC) on the deep-underground radioactive waste repository process.

### ***Developments at Sellafield –***

The National Audit Office published a detailed report analysing the robustness of safety procedures at the Sellafield facility and its value for money to the UK taxpayer. At the NDA

Stakeholder Dialogue its Chief Executive John Clarke had noted that he accepted and welcomed the main findings of the NAO report and acknowledged the criticisms that were likely from a UK Parliament Public Accounts Committee hearing on the report.

The key conclusions of the NAO report included:

- Over the five decades that Sellafield's nuclear power plants were in operation, its owners failed to plan how to dispose of the radioactive waste and some of the older facilities have "deteriorated so much that their contents pose significant risks to people and the environment".
- In a period of just 10 months, the NDA's progress in 12 of the 14 major buildings and equipment projects considered "critical" for reducing risk, which have a public cost ranging from £21m to £1.3bn, have failed to achieve what they were supposed to and had not provided good value for money to the taxpayer. These cost overruns had added an extra £0.9 billion to the taxpayer.
- There are significant cost uncertainties across all of Sellafield's liabilities which mean the bill to the taxpayer may continue to rise.
- At current calculations it will cost £67.5 billion (around half the UK's public debt burden) to deal with all of Sellafield's liabilities and at least another 100 years before the job is completed.
- There are gaps in the capacity of subcontractors to undertake the required work.
- There has been a long-standing problem, which existed before the NDA was created in 2005, of the site operator starting construction before design risks had been sufficiently addressed.
- There is significant uncertainty as to how Sellafield Limited can meet the performance plan target to complete the silos direct encapsulation plant project in 2017.
- The Authority does not report externally on the performance of its major projects. It is accountable to the Department of Energy and Climate Change for performance, but these projects are outside the scope of the central government assurance from the Major Projects Authority.
- The Authority faces a considerable challenge in decommissioning at Sellafield owing to past neglect.

The Steering Committee welcomed the NFLA media release agreeing with the NAO's analysis and urging the NDA to conduct a root-and-branch improvement at the Sellafield facility.

It was further confirmed by the ONR and the Environment Agency that the Sellafield facility would be prosecuted for sending and disposing of four bags of low-level radioactive waste from its site to the Cumbria County Council Lillyhall landfill site in 2010. The Environment Agency charges are brought under the Radioactive Substances Act and Environmental Permitting Regulations, while the Office for Nuclear Regulation charge is brought under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2009. The hearing will take place on the 12<sup>th</sup> December.

The Irish Government has also published a report by its Environment Department assessing the risks to Ireland of the Sellafield facility. Using a probabilistic risk assessment the scientists involved in the report says there are no discernable health risks to Ireland of incidents at Sellafield or the low level radioactive waste repository. The NFLA has responded to this report questioning its findings and its narrow remit and seeking an urgent meeting with the Irish Government to discuss it further.

#### ***Hinkley Point new reactor environment permits -***

The NFLA Secretary commissioned the independent marine pollution consultant Tim Deere-Jones to analyse the draft permits consultation as part of a joint submission with Stop Hinkley, Friends of the Earth Wales and CND Wales. This assessment argued that the Environment Agency had not adequately taken on board the original concerns of the NFLA and many scientific, technical and environmental uncertainties still remain to be resolved. The submission

also encourages the Environment Agency to fully engage with the NFLA and other supporting groups on this matter, which it has to date largely failed to do.

#### ***West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) consultation -***

The final decision on whether Copeland, Allerdale and Cumbria Councils should proceed to the next stage of searching for a suitable site in the area for a deep-underground radioactive waste repository in the county was due to be made by the three Councils in early October. However, the Councils decided to postpone the decision until January 30<sup>th</sup> 2013 for three reasons – to get further guarantees on the right to withdraw later on in the process, to clarify the detail of a community benefits package and to request more information from DECC and the NDA on alternatives to a deep-underground repository - long-term interim storage.

#### ***Dalgety Bay, SEPA Policy and Dounreay -***

Two recent contradictory reports highlight continued confusion over the health risks of radioactive contamination of parts of Dalgety Bay beach in Fife. A Health Protection Agency press release at the end of October said that risks to public health from radiation at Dalgety Bay are low and should not stop beach users from using the area. It did recommend that remedial work should still continue at the site as a matter of urgency. A separate COMARE (Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment) report has discovered a near-doubling in the incidence of cancers among people living near Dalgety Bay. The report by COMARE found a marked increase in liver and blood cancers close to the site of the contamination, as reported in the Sunday Herald. COMARE have recommended an investigation into potential links between the radioactive site and cancer levels.

The Ministry of Defence brought in mechanical diggers to the cordoned off Dalgety Bay site in late October 2012. It is planned that around 90 pits will be dug to a level of 2 metres to assess the level and extent of radioactive contamination.

On other Scottish matters, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has issued a consultation on discharge authorisations at the Dounreay site. This detailed and complex consultation may well be developing a number of concerning precedents. The NFLA Secretariat and Shetland Island Council are responding in full to the consultation.

#### ***Update on NuLEAF and SCCORS -***

NuLEAF (Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum) held its AGM in Birmingham in October 2012. Councillor Tim Knowles from Cumbria and Councillor Richard Smith from Suffolk are its new Chair and Vice Chair. A meeting between Manchester councillors, the NFLA Secretary and NuLEAF representatives will be organised shortly to discuss Manchester's and other NFLA members' involvement in NuLEAF and its work programme for 2013.

SCCORS (Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances) also met in October 2012 in Edinburgh to discuss internal organisational matters and hold a seminar on Scottish radioactive waste management policy. No authority offered to take on the Chair and Secretariat at present, so Dundee City Council will maintain the Secretariat until the next meeting and Councillor John Mitchell from Scottish Borders Council will remain as Acting Chair. NFLA Scotland members are encouraged to consider hosting the SCCORS Secretariat.

#### ***Ministry of Defence (MOD) Submarine Dismantling Project –***

The NFLA Secretary has been asked by the MOD to re-join its sub-groups taking forward the MOD's post-consultation response report and its thinking prior to final recommendations to Ministers. These meetings are held in Bristol and provide the NFLA with a valuable opportunity to actively engage in the development of MOD policy in this important area.

***Agreed: To note the report. To approve that the NFLA Secretary continues to attend sub-group meetings of the MOD's Submarine Dismantling Project.***

**9. Low level radiation and health issues**

The NFLA Secretary reported that a meeting was held in mid October between members of COMARE and a number of independent consultants who have critiqued their analysis of the potential effects of low level radiation on human health. Other NGO representatives also attended the meeting.

The meeting was partially successful in allowing an airing of some important concerns made by independent panellists that COMARE's last report downplayed a link between low level radiation and increased cancer incidence. The atmosphere of the meeting was at times overly confrontational which by implication reduced somewhat the amount of more measured scientific discussion. NGO representatives hope this meeting will create a precedent for further engagement between COMARE and independent consultants and the wider NGO community.

An issue of concern that arose from the meeting was that COMARE's planned 2012 Annual Report concentrating on the Sellafield and Dounreay sites (which were largely absent from the 2011 report) may now be delayed until its 2013 report as it has been asked by the Department of Health to conduct urgent research on the medical effects of CT scans.

***Agreed: To note the report. NFLA Secretary to write to the COMARE Secretariat to urge them to complete work on low level radiation and health effects around the Sellafield and Dounreay sites.***

**10. Nuclear emergency planning**

The NFLA Secretary noted that he had presented an overview of the NFLA Policy Briefing on nuclear emergency planning at the DECC NGO Forum and the ONR NGO Forum, which had been very well received. In reference to the DECC policy mechanism, it had been approved that the NFLA Secretary, Peter Burt from NIS and Pete Wilkinson from CANE represent the wider NGO community in specific discussions on the current review of UK nuclear emergency planning arrangements. Following an initial meeting where NGO concerns were outlined, future meetings are being arranged, though the NFLA Secretary is becoming increasingly frustrated with delays in this process.

In addition, the NFLA Secretary is liaising with the independent pollution consultant Tim Deere-Jones to follow up its initial briefing on concerns around the transportation of radioactively contaminated heat exchangers from the decommissioned Berkeley nuclear reactor. A more detailed NFLA briefing and a NFLA seminar on this issue and wider concerns over radioactively contaminated scrap metal is planned for the new year.

***Agreed: To note the report. To support a NFLA seminar on contaminated scrap metal.***

**11. Mayors for Peace and Nuclear Weapons update**

The NFLA Secretary provided an overview of the NFLA's involvement in co-operating with the Hiroshima and Nagasaki-led Mayors for Peace and wider issues in the nuclear weapons debate.

***International development of Mayors for Peace -***

As of December 1<sup>st</sup> 2012, 5,490 towns and cities were members of Mayors for Peace in 154 countries. For logistical reasons, a planned Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Board teleconference discussion on the 16<sup>th</sup> November had to be cancelled. It has been decided instead to combine this meeting within an invitation to board members and the wider membership to attend a UN Conference in Oslo on the humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons, where the organisation hopes to hold key events and business meetings.

***UK and Ireland development of Mayors for Peace -***

There are now 86 members of Mayors for Peace in the UK and Ireland. A meeting of the UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace Working Group will be held in early 2013. This meeting will discuss the international developments of Mayors for Peace and how to deepen and increase membership in the UK and Ireland, and will be held in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

### ***Hiroshima and Nagasaki A-bomb exhibition-***

The NFLA's Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-bomb exhibition will be hosted in Edinburgh in late January 2013. It is hoped it will then go on to Fife and Rotherham.

### ***Helsinki Conference cancelled but Oslo Conference goes ahead –***

Under a decision of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation (NPT) Treaty Review Conference it was agreed that a special meeting to seek the development of a Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) should be held. Finland had offered to host the conference and has been working throughout 2012 for it to take place before the end of the year. In late November 2012 the United States Government announced that the conference would have to be postponed because of the major political tensions in the region, particularly the ongoing civil war in Syria, the issues raised by the military attacks between Israel on Gaza and concerns over the development of nuclear weapons in Iran. The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon is involved in discussions for the conference to still take place in the first half of 2013, though this may be an optimistic aspiration.

A second UN Conference on the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear weapon attack, which arises out of a decision of the 2012 NPT Preparatory Conference, will take place in Oslo, Norway in March 2013. This Conference has been a joint initiative of Norway and Switzerland to move the focus away from the deadlocked Conference on Disarmament and discuss in a meaningful way what the actual effects would be on the world today of even a limited nuclear weapon attack. At the 2012 NPT PrepCon 32 other UN members, including the Republic of Ireland, formally supported this initiative.

All UN members will be invited to attend the Conference and its remit is currently being finalised by Norway. The Conference provides an excellent opportunity for groups like Mayors for Peace, NFLA and the wider NGO community to emphasise the destructive power of nuclear weapons in order to move the debate on to why they should never be used and rather banned by international treaty. The UK branch of the NGO ICAN (International Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons) has approached the NFLA Secretariat to inform it of its own report to the Oslo Conference. This will reflect somewhat on the historical work undertaken by many NFLA members in the 1980s and 1990s on what the humanitarian effects of a nuclear weapon attack would have been on their towns and cities. ICAN-UK has also asked if the NFLA would like to be classed as one of its supporting organisations.

### ***NFLA submission to the NET study on Barrow and Trident Alternatives -***

The NFLA Secretariat has submitted a short response to the independent Nuclear Education Trust over the future of the Barrow shipyard (and the wider local economy) in reference to the Trident Alternatives Review being conducted by the UK Government. The Cabinet Office review is considering the possible alternatives to a 'like for like' Trident weapons programme. This is being conducted at the same time as the UK Defence Minister has announced significant investment to Rolls Royce and BAE Systems for the initial design work for Trident replacement, creating tensions within the Coalition Government. A final decision on moving ahead with the programme will not be made until after the 2015 general election.

The NFLA submission notes its overall opposition to maintaining a UK nuclear weapons 'deterrent'. It encourages NET to take up the extensive number of reports around defence diversification to encourage the development of extensive renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, amongst others, in the Barrow area.

***Agreed: To note the report. To accept ICAN-UK's request to become a supporting organisation. The NFLA Secretary to attend a meeting launching the NET report on Barrow and Trident Alternatives.***

## **12. Date of next NFLA Steering Committee meeting**

The next Steering Committee meeting is planned for ***Friday 25th January in Manchester Town Hall from 11am – 1pm. There may also be an afternoon seminar.***

## **2012 NFLA Annual General Meeting, 7<sup>th</sup> December, Manchester Town Hall**

### **1. Welcome by the retiring chair and minutes silence for Councillor Tom Maginnis**

The NFLA Chair Councillor Goodall welcomed all to the Annual General Meeting of the organisation.

A minutes silence was held for Councillor Tom Maginnis, who had been for a number of years North Lanarkshire Council's NFLA representative and who sadly died recently.

In his opening address Councillor Goodall said how proud he had been to chair the NFLA and to have been its first non-Labour Chair, signifying the wide cross-party support for its valuable work. He thanked the NFLA Secretary for all the hard work and assistance he had provided. Councillor Goodall was keen to remain involved in the work of NFLA, particularly in Scotland, as the issues it raised were of real importance.

### **2. NFLA Secretary's and NFLA Forums Annual Report**

The NFLA Secretary provided a detailed annual report which outlined all the work streams and activities of the NFLA Steering Committee, NFLA National Forums and NFLA Secretariat in 2012. The report noted an increase in membership affiliations in the year, wide engagement across all aspects of nuclear policy and meetings with Ministers or officials of the UK, Republic of Ireland and devolved Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Governments. A welcome expansion into the European nuclear power debate with Vienna's new Network would hopefully widen the NFLA's impact in 2013. The positive and strong relationship with Mayors for Peace to lobby on the nuclear weapons issue; and with KIMO International to lobby at the OSPAR Commission level for reducing radioactive discharges into the marine environment, were also very much to be welcomed.

***Agreed: To approve the report and to thank the NFLA Secretary, NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor and NFLA Scotland and NFLA All Ireland Forum Secretaries for their dedicated support of the organisation in 2012.***

### **3. NFLA Financial report and affiliation fees for 2013/14 financial year**

The NFLA Secretary provided an annual financial report for 2012 and a projection to the end of the 2012/13 financial year. Due to a slight increase in membership there would be a smaller and limited overspend for the year which could be covered by existing reserves. The NFLA Secretary also presented a recommendation of a 3% increase in affiliation rates for 2013/14 to take account of inflation. The Secretary noted that affiliation fees had been frozen for four years to take account of the severe financial situation affecting local government, but that this could not continue to be sustained. A 3% increase would only mean around an average £50 / €60 increase across most NFLA authorities.

Following discussion, Councillor Brown moved the report, seconded by Councillor Goodall, and it was unanimously approved.

***Agreed: To approve the report and affiliation fees for 2013/14 and place the report on the NFLA website.***

### **4. Composition of NFLA Steering Committee**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report giving the current composition of the NFLA Steering Committee. There was one vacancy in the NFLA English Forum, but all other Forums were fully represented on the NFLA Steering Committee.

***Agreed: To approve the report and place the composition of the Steering Committee on the NFLA website.***

### **5. NFLA Constitution and Terms of Reference**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report which gave the NFLA's existing terms of reference and a more detailed constitution setting out the structure of the Steering Committee and National Forums. It has been adapted from the existing NFLA Scotland Constitution.

**Agreed: To approve the draft constitution with some minor amendments, and place it on the NFLA Website.**

## **6. Election of NFLA Chair**

The NFLA Secretary reported that the current NFLA Chair Councillor Goodall was standing down as NFLA Chair due to a political change of control within his host Council. The NFLA Secretary, on behalf of the NFLA, thanked Councillor Goodall for his support and leadership of the organisation in 2012.

The NFLA Secretary reported that Councillor Mark Hackett, Manchester City Council, had been nominated by Councillor Goodall to become the new NFLA Steering Committee Chair, and this had been seconded by Councillor Brown of Renfrewshire Council. There had been no other nominations.

**Agreed: That Councillor Mark Hackett would be elected as Chair of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities for 2013.**

Councillor Hackett thanked the NFLA AGM for electing him as Chair. He thanked Councillor Goodall for his active leadership of the NFLA in 2012. Councillor Hackett noted that he been involved and interested in the work of the NFLA for over twenty five years and would enthusiastically work in 2013 to provide leadership across all aspects of nuclear policy.

The NFLA AGM also confirmed all the NFLA Steering Committee Vice Chairs and Forum Chairs for 2013 as follows:

**NFLA SC Vice Chair Scotland – Councillor Macdonald, Western Isles Council**  
**NFLA Scotland Forum Chair – Councillor Thomas, Glasgow City Council**  
**NFLA All Ireland Forum Co Chair (North) – Councillor Carr, Newry & Mourne Council**  
**NFLA All Ireland Forum Co Chair (Republic) – Councillor Dearey, Dundalk Town Council**  
**NFLA English Forum Chair – Councillor Blackburn, Leeds City Council**  
**NFLA Welsh Forum Co-Chairs – Councillor Davies, Caerphilly County Council and Councillor Bridges, Cardiff City Council.**

The next meetings of each National NFLA Forum would confirm these appointments.

## **7. NFLA individual membership**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report which offered the possibility of individual membership of NFLA in four distinct areas:

- Retired NFLA individual supporters (active supporters who are now retired from their own Council but still like to keep informed of its activity);
- Individual NFLA member supporters (active supporters who are not the Council's official representative);
- Individual NFLA non member supporters (active supporters whose authority are not currently members of the NFLA);
- Individual NFLA NGO supporters (active supporters of the NFLA in non governmental groups that share its aims and objectives).

The report suggested a nominal donation to receive information from the NFLA Secretariat and the opportunity to observe (but expressly not vote at) NFLA Steering Committee or National Forum meetings. The AGM was strongly supportive of this proposal as a way to disseminate the work of the NFLA and encourage support of its aims and objectives. A £25 voluntary donation was agreed and each supporter would have to sign an appropriately worded acceptance form.

**Agreed: To offer the opportunity of individual supporter membership according to a strict set of guidelines with a £25 voluntary donation.**

## **8. NFLA Service Plan 2013 and NFLA Annual Newsletter 2012**

The NFLA Secretary placed before the AGM a draft Service Plan to outline key objectives for 2013. The Service Plan follows the same template as previous years and adds in a new section

summarising the key achievements of the organisation in 2012. A draft Annual Newsletter for 2012, which summarises the key activities of the NFLA in the year in a more user-friendly fashion, was also considered. The Steering Committee welcomed both publications and suggested that the excellent professional value-for-money advice that the NFLA Secretariat provides its member authorities should be particularly emphasised.

***Agreed: To approve the NFLA Service Plan and Annual Newsletter and place them on the NFLA website.***

#### **9. NFLA IT developments**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on a number of potential improvements to the NFLA's presence on the internet. These included a potential redevelopment of the NFLA website, the creation of a website blog and developing a series of pages for a presence on Facebook, Linked-in and Twitter. The Steering Committee welcomed the report and felt it was imperative to develop a presence on Facebook and Linked-in and to consider the use of Twitter following this. These forms of social media could assist developing further support for the work of the NFLA and increase its profile nationally and internationally.

The NFLA AGM felt a major development of the NFLA website and development of a blog needed to be fully costed with a series of alternative options provided. The NFLA Secretary was requested to develop these and take them to a future Steering Committee meeting.

***Agreed: To approve the development of a NFLA presence on Facebook and Linked-in and, at a later date, consider a presence on Twitter. The NFLA Secretary will develop a series of options over redevelopment of the NFLA website and the creation of a NFLA website blog.***

#### **10. Date of next Annual General Meeting**

The AGM agreed that the next annual meeting should be held on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

#### **NFLA Annual Policy Briefing 2012**

Following the NFLA AGM an afternoon seminar was held considering international nuclear policy developments and how the NFLA should be involved in them.

Speakers included David Reinberger from the City of Vienna Council, Dr Paul Dorfman from the Nuclear Consulting Group, Professor Dave Webb from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Rob van Riet from Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. The NFLA Secretary will endeavour to place the presentations from this very interesting seminar onto the NFLA website.

**NFLA Secretariat, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012.**