

briefing



Date: 9th February 2011

No.80

Subject: Summary of the key points from the NFLA Steering Committee and Annual General Meeting, Dundee City Chambers, 28th January 2011

a) **NFLA Steering Committee**

1. **Civic reception and welcome**

In the evening prior to these meetings, an official civic reception was held by the Lord Provost of Dundee for the NFLA in the Council Chamber of Dundee City Chambers. The Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-bomb exhibition, which is now on a tour around NFLA members, was also formally unveiled. It will be hosted in Dundee Central Library at the Wellgate Centre from February 1st – 14th 2011.

Bailie George Regan, NFLA Chair, welcome all to the NFLA Steering Committee Meeting and 2010 Annual General Meeting (deferred from November 2010) and to the city of Dundee.

2. **National NFLA Forum meetings**

The NFLA Secretary reported on progress with all four NFLA national Forums - **NFLA English Forum** – the Forum hosted the NFLA 30th anniversary events in Manchester on the 4th November. Its next meeting would be a joint seminar in Westminster aimed at MPs and Lords, and NFLA councillors, with the Nuclear Consulting Group and the Association for the Conservation of Energy. A date for this seminar is being finalised and it is hoped to be held in late March.

NFLA All Ireland Forum – Newry and Mourne District Council and Dundalk Town Council are seeking to host the Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-bomb exhibition in late March and through April. A seminar is being planned around the exhibition and dates and a location are being finalised.

NFLA Scotland Forum – the Forum held its 2010/11 Annual General Meeting on the 27th January in Dundee, re-electing Councillor Euan McLeod and Councillor Audrey Doig as Convenor and Vice Convenor. The Forum agreed to hold three further meetings in 2011 with at least one in Manchester to allow members to attend the NFLA Steering Committee meeting. The next business meeting will be on March 25th in Manchester.

NFLA Welsh Forum – the NFLA Secretary is discussing with Councillor Colin Hughes the holding of the next NFLA Welsh Forum in Denbighshire. The date is being finalised and will be communicated to members shortly.

Agreed: Members were encouraged to attend the appropriate Forum meeting.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES

3. NFLA 30th anniversary commemorations review and A-bomb exhibition

The NFLA Secretary noted that the NFLA's 30th anniversary commemoration events in Manchester on the 4th and 5th November had been both well attended and publicised. The events included:

- The official unveiling of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-bomb exhibition by the NFLA Chair, Mayor of Nagasaki and other dignitaries from Nagasaki.
- The official launch of the Manchester City Centre Peace and Social Justice Trail, which included detailed entries on NFLA and Mayors for Peace.
- A 30th anniversary Steering Committee with a special address by the Mayor of Nagasaki.
- A civic reception for the NFLA and Mayors for Peace hosted by the Lord Mayor of Manchester.
- A board meeting of the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign Association.
- A special event for over 120 Greater Manchester schoolchildren with a talk by a Nagasaki A-bomb survivor.

NFLA members noted their thanks to NFLA staff and Manchester City Council for hosting a successful anniversary event.

The NFLA Secretary also reported that the A-bomb exhibition, which had been kindly provided to the NFLA by the National Council of Japanese Nuclear Free Local Authorities, was now available to be hosted by individual members. A schedule has been agreed and for the next 3 months is as follows:

- January 27th – February 14th, Dundee Central Library.
- Late February – mid March, Clydebank Library (tbc) as part of the 'Clydebank Blitz' 70th anniversary commemoration.
- Late March – mid April, a location in Newry, Northern Ireland.
- Mid April – end of April, a location in Dundalk, Republic of Ireland.

Other members that have expressed an interest include Edinburgh, Shetland Islands, Rotherham and Oxford. Discussions are also taking place with the Scottish Parliament.

Formal partnerships with schools in Manchester and schools in Hiroshima and Nagasaki are also being pursued as a member of the Manchester Peace Trail steering group is visiting schools in the two Japanese cities in April.

Agreed: Members formally thanked the NFLA Secretariat and Manchester City Council for hosting the anniversary events. Members were encouraged to contact the NFLA Secretary to determine suitable dates for hosting the Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-bomb exhibition.

4. New Nuclear Build

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

A number of official consultations have been announced by the UK Government including consideration of its national energy policy statements, electricity market reforms in favour of 'low carbon' energy and funded decommissioning programmes for new nuclear power stations.

The NFLA Secretariat is discussing the development of a special seminar aimed at MPs in Westminster on new nuclear build. It is hoped to hold this meeting either in late March or mid May. NFLA members were keen to attend and cross-party representation was very much encouraged.

The NFLA Secretary also reported that a series of detailed Freedom of Information requests had been submitted to the HSE and the Environment Agency around the safety and design of new nuclear power stations.

NFLA members felt a basic guide to the issues around new build and radioactive waste would be useful for MPs and prospective members and a mobile exhibition would also be considered. Seeking co-operation with other organisations, particularly on a media campaign, was also encouraged.

NFLA members welcomed the creation of a new local groups coalition – Communities Opposed to New Nuclear Energy Development (CONNED) – and agreed to co-operate with it on seminars and other events.

Agreed: To note with concern developments with new nuclear build and continue to highlight key issues around waste, health, safety and financial costs. To develop a Westminster seminar and investigate the possibility of a NFLA Steering Committee in the London area.

5. Radioactive Waste Management Policy

The NFLA Secretary provided a detailed report outlining developments with radioactive waste management policy. The Committee endorsed an official NFLA response to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Draft Strategy and welcomed the Scottish Government's newly published radioactive waste policy. There was also agreement to continue to formally liaise with CoRWM, NuLEAF and SCCORS.

Members agreed that the NFLA Secretariat should seek to respond to the UK Government's consultation on a fixed unit price setting caps on nuclear industry liabilities in the event of an incident.

Members agreed that it would be useful to meet with NDA officials, now that its National Stakeholder Dialogue workshops had been concluded.

Agreed: To note the report.

6. Radiation Safety Standards

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on various issues around radiation safety. Discussion took place over the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) and the continuing delay in its report responding to the German Government's KIKK report on childhood cancers around nuclear sites.

Members approved a request from the local authority marine pollution organisation KIMO International that the NFLA Secretary represents it at the next OSPAR Commission Radiation Substances Committee on February 21st – 25th.

Members were encouraged to remain after the meeting for a special seminar on low level radiation.

Agreed: To note the report and approve for the NFLA Secretary to attend the OSPAR RSC meeting on behalf of KIMO International.

7. Mayors for Peace

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on the continued expansion of the Mayors for Peace organisation to over 4500 members worldwide. It noted with disappointment the decision by the Mayor of Hiroshima to decide to stand down as Mayor in April and agreed that the NFLA Chair send a letter of best wishes to him.

The meeting agreed that the NFLA Secretary send a letter, in co-operation with the World Court Project, supporting its initiative 'Affirmation of Nuclear Criminality' around the continued possession of nuclear weapons, to all NFLA and Mayors for Peace members.

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

8. Nuclear weapons and Submarine Decommissioning Project

The NFLA Secretary provided a report with progress in issues around nuclear weapons proliferation and the Ministry of Defence's Submarine Decommissioning Project (SDP). The report outlined recently published reports from the MOD safety regulator which included some concerns over safety at nuclear weapons sites. Mention was also made that the SDP had nominated Rosyth and Devonport as potential sites for the dismantling of nuclear powered submarines. A meeting of its Advisory Group is planned for 24th February in Birmingham – it was agreed that the NFLA Chair and councillors and officers in Fife would attend this meeting.

The report also noted concerns raised by the HSE of the lack of progress with developing a radioactive waste facility at the AWE Aldermaston nuclear weapons facility and of a radioactive material spill on the site in summer 2010.

An update on Trident replacement noted that, though the 'Main Gate' decision has been formally postponed until after the 2015 general election; research from Greenpeace and CND suggests a large amount of component preparatory work is ongoing, with £2.1 billion of research allocated for it.

The United States Congress and the Russian Duma have approved a joint Strategic Nuclear Weapons Reduction Treaty, which will see significant and verifiable reductions in weapons stockpiles over the next 5 years.

Agreed: To note the report and welcome the US / Russian weapons reduction treaty.

9. Nuclear emergency planning arrangements

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

Agreed: The NFLA Secretariat develops a questionnaire as outlined in the report.

10. Low level radiation and health seminar

Professor Eric Wright of Dundee University and Dr John Urquhart of the Open University provided an informative overview of some of the issues of concern around the effects of low level radiation on human health.

Dr Urquhart's presentation provided information from a recent study of British nuclear test veterans which suggested that one particular test – Grapple Y – could have seen a bomb detonated at a lower trajectory than other tests, and which seems to show higher levels of illness and genetic effects of the servicemen that took part in this test compared to other tests.

Members questioned both speakers in detail.

Agreed: To thank the speakers and publish their presentations on the NFLA website.

11. Date and venue of next NFLA Steering Committee meeting

Meeting Room, Cross Street Chapel, Friday 25th March 2011 from 11am – 1pm.

b) NFLA 2010 AGM (deferred from the November 2010 meeting)

1. NFLA Secretary's Annual Report

The NFLA Secretary provided a detailed report of all the Steering Committee, national Forum and Secretariat business throughout 2010. The report outlined a large volume of work, attendance at meetings and production of original research by the NFLA Secretariat. It also noted staffing changes in 2010 and the close liaison between the Secretariat and individual members.

Agreed: The report was noted and thanks recorded to all NFLA Secretariat staff.

2. Financial report and affiliation rates for 2011/12

The NFLA Secretary provided a summary report of the NFLA budget for 2010/11 and projections for 2011/12. The major economies taking place across local government across the UK and Ireland were discussed in detail and all members were encouraged to be closely involved in the discussions within their own councils over NFLA affiliation.

Members agreed to freeze affiliation rates for the third successive year running and to inform the NFLA Secretariat of any funding issues. A discussion was also held around looking at alternative streams of income, such as charitable trust applications and fund raising events. It was acknowledged that the next three years would be difficult across local government and the NFLA needed to continually emphasise its value for money consultancy service.

Agreed: To freeze membership affiliation fees at current rates for the 2011/12 financial year.

3. Composition of the NFLA Steering Committee

The NFLA Secretary provided a report of the composition of the NFLA Steering Committee and changes to its membership in 2010. Members noted that they were pleased with continued good levels of attendance at meetings from all four national NFLA Forums.

Agreed: To note the report.

4. NFLA Terms of Reference

The NFLA Secretary presented the existing NFLA Steering Committee Terms of Reference, which had been last amended in 2006. Members discussed the possibility of developing a more detailed constitution and it was agreed that the NFLA Secretary present the constitutions of the NFLA Scotland Forum and NFLA All-Ireland Forum to the next meeting for consideration. It was acknowledged that the NFLA Service Plan provided member authorities with all the information they require on the operation of the organisation.

Agreed: To note the report. The NFLA Secretary to bring to the next meeting copies of the Irish and Scottish NFLA constitutions for consideration by the Steering Committee.

5. Election of NFLA Steering Committee Chair

The NFLA Secretary reported that the NFLA Scotland Forum had nominated Bailie George Regan, Dundee City Council, as NFLA Chair for 2011. The AGM elected Bailie Regan as NFLA Chair for 2011 unanimously.

6. Election of NFLA Steering Committee Vice Chairs

The NFLA Secretary reported that the 2009 NFLA AGM had agreed that the Vice Chairs of the Steering Committee would be drawn from the Chairs of each national NFLA Forum. The AGM unanimously agreed to continue this practice and so the Vice Chairs elected were as follows:

All Ireland, North – Councillor Michael Carr (Newry and Mourne District Council)
All Ireland, Republic – Councillor Ollan Herr (Dundalk Town Council)
England – Councillor Ralph Pryke (Leeds City Council)
Scotland – Councillor Euan McLeod (Glasgow City Council)
Wales – Councillor Stephen Churchman (Gwynedd County Council).

7. **NFLA 2011 Annual Policy Briefing**

The NFLA Secretary presented a paper noting that the proposed Westminster seminar would focus on all the key issues in the NFLA's policy work and should be classed as the organisations Annual Policy Briefing. The AGM approved this suggestion and encouraged NFLA members to seek to attend it.

It was also noted that a seminar on low level radiation and health was following the AGM and would be of direct interest to all NFLA members.

Agreed: That the joint Westminster seminar would be classed as the NFLA Annual Policy Briefing for 2011.

8. **NFLA Service Plan 2011**

The NFLA Secretary presented the 2011 Annual Service Plan, which outlined the policy work of the organisation and its key objectives for 2011.

Agreed: To fully endorse the Service Plan and record thanks for the work of the NFLA Secretariat in achieving its aims and objectives in 2010 and 2011.

9. **Date and location of NFLA AGM 2011**

The NFLA Secretary explained that it was NFLA practice that the AGM is hosted by each national Forum on a rotational basis. On this basis the 2011 NFLA AGM should be hosted by the All-Ireland Forum and the NFLA Secretary would investigate a suitable venue with Forum members. The date of the meeting would be either in late November / early December.

Agreed: The NFLA 2011 AGM to be held in Ireland in late November / early December.