

Nuclear Free Local Authorities **briefing**



Date: 16th October 2017

No.165

Subject: Summary of key points and actions from the NFLA Steering Committee meeting, Manchester, 29th September 2017

1. Introduction by NFLA Steering Committee (SC) Chairman

The NFLA Steering Committee Vice-Chair, Councillor David Blackburn, welcomed members to the meeting in Manchester Town Hall. The Chairman encouraged members to stay on for the afternoon meeting discussing the radiation risks and dangers of fracking.

2. National NFLA Forum meetings

The NFLA Secretary provided an overview of the work of the four National NFLA Forums across the UK and Ireland.

NFLA All Ireland Forum -

The NFLA All Ireland Forum held its autumn seminar and meeting in Meath County Council offices on the 22nd September. The meeting included presentations from a speaker of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland about how they were seeking to support Councils in developing renewable energy strategies; Justin Browne from Power Capital Ireland, talking about how Ireland needs to ramp up its take-up of renewable energy and what role Councils could play in it; and the NFLA Secretary, talking about Brexit and the Irish Climate Mitigation Plan.

The well attended seminar allowed councillors from across Ireland to note their frustration with the lack of co-ordinated support from central government to encourage Councils to develop innovative renewable energy projects. It was agreed that the Secretariat develop a response to an Irish Government consultation on the mix of new renewable energy as an opportunity to develop a blueprint for a decentralised energy island of Ireland.

NFLA English Forum –

The NFLA English Forum autumn seminar will be held in the Guildhall, Hull on the 6th October. This meeting is focusing on renewable energy and subsequent job opportunities being considered and developed, particularly in the north of England. Speakers include Simon Burgess from Siemens Energy discussing the role in promoting decentralised energy strategies; Richard Burgess from the Spencer Group about their innovative renewable energy facility in cooperation with the Council in Hull; and the NFLA Secretary on the future development of decentralised energy, in cooperation with community energy and private sector renewable energy schemes.

The NFLA English Forum will also host the upcoming NFLA AGM and a special joint seminar with the Mayors for Peace looking at international nuclear developments. This will be held at the Leaf Centre, Manchester.

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES
WORKING FOR A NUCLEAR FREE, LOW CARBON WORLD**

NFLA Welsh Forum –

The NFLA Welsh Forum will hold its autumn seminar in Cardiff County Hall on the 13th October. The seminar will include presentations by Dr Carl Clowes of People Against Wylfa B and Roy Pumfrey of Stop Hinkley on their ongoing concerns with the development of new nuclear reactors at these sites; Tim Deere-Jones will talk about real concerns over the potential dumping of dredged radiologically contaminated sediment from a proposed Hinkley Point C at a site close to Cardiff Bay; Joseph Kidd from Marine Wales on progress with marine, wave and tidal energy in the country; and Tony Cooke of Cardiff Community Energy on the benefits and challenges for community energy schemes.

NFLA Scotland Forum -

The NFLA Scotland Forum will hold a business meeting, elections and autumn seminar on the 25th October in Glasgow City Chambers.

The autumn seminar will consider the issue of nuclear transportation and emergency planning concerns with speakers from Nukewatch and Highlands Against Nuclear Transports. The NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor will consider Scottish radiation waste strategy and wider concerns over aging nuclear reactors with an overview from the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor. Dr David Toke of Aberdeen University will also consider the real benefits of developing Scottish decentralised energy policy.

Agreed: To note the report.

3. Implications of the EU referendum vote on nuclear policy

The NFLA Secretary gave a round-up of key nuclear policy issues around the UK leaving the European Union.

Leaving Euratom – concerns and creating a domestic safeguards regime –

As part of leaving the Euratom Treaty, the UK Government has announced its intention to establish a domestic nuclear safeguards regime. The aim will be to ensure the UK continues to maintain a position as a ‘responsible nuclear state’ and ensure that withdrawal from Euratom does not weaken future safeguards standards.

The UK Business and Energy Minister Greg Clark said the new regime will deliver to existing Euratom standards and ‘exceed the standard’ that the international community would require from the UK as a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He added the government will be exploring a number of options for “smooth transition” from the current Euratom regime to a domestic one. There remains considerable concern within the nuclear industry and the medical sector that investment and operations could be hampered if Britain fails to replicate the regulatory regime provided by Euratom.

As an example of such concern, EDF has warned that its nuclear power plants could suffer extended outages if a new safeguard regime and other measures were not in place when Britain exits the European Union in 2019. The regulation chief for EDF’s British unit also said at a Parliamentary hearing that construction of Hinkley Point C would be delayed unless Britain had a new regulatory regime to replace the Euratom regime.

Along with a safety regime, the UK is in talks with four states instrumental to the supply of fuel, materials and expertise in the UK nuclear sector outside the EU – the United States, Canada, China and Japan. The UK will need to agree these international nuclear cooperation treaties within wider trade talks with these states to coincide with leaving the Euratom safety regime.

The European Commission has also stated that a review of Euratom following the UK’s withdrawal will be considered over the next couple of years. This may consider the concerns states like the Republic of Ireland, Austria, Germany and Italy have over the support Euratom gives to the promotion of nuclear energy.

'Brexit', energy policy and Ireland -

The UK Parliament's EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee is questioning experts on the implications of Brexit for Northern Ireland's energy supply, and on the UK's planned withdrawal from the Euratom Treaty at a meeting in mid-September. The Committee will be considering:

- What extent is Northern Ireland reliant on imported energy, from the British mainland or elsewhere, for its energy security?
- What might the effect of Brexit be on either planned or currently operating interconnectors between the UK and the island of Ireland?
- Is it feasible for the single electricity market on the island of Ireland to be maintained after Brexit?

The Committee are also considering issues relating to the Euratom arrangements including:

- Will investments in nuclear power plants by other countries both within and beyond the EU still be viable after the UK withdraws from Euratom?
- What will be the implications of withdrawing from Euratom for the ownership and management of nuclear waste in the UK and in the EU?
- What would experts expect and wish to see in the UK Government's upcoming Nuclear Safeguards Bill?

The NFLA Secretariat will look to publicise the findings from this meeting in a new briefing on Brexit which will be published shortly.

Agreed: To note the report.

4. Nuclear new build

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on issues around the proposed development of new nuclear power stations in England and Wales.

NFLA New Nuclear Monitor 49 and progress at Hinkley Point, Moorside and Wylfa -

A detailed summary of progress in the new nuclear debate at Hinkley Point, Moorside and Wylfa, was published as NFLA New Nuclear Monitor 49. It was developed for the NFLA was developed by Professor Steve Thomas of Greenwich University and the NFLA Policy Advisor Pete Roche and a summary of it was presented by Dr Ian Fairlie at the Medact / IPPNW workshop on new nuclear in early September. This report is on the NFLA website –

<http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/briefings/nfla-new-nuclear-monitor-49-uk-new-nuclear-policies-recent-changes-and-likely-developments/>

Since this NFLA report was published, the Finnish utility Teollisuuden Voima (TVO) has filed an appeal to the European Commission over proposed French state aid to Areva, who also design the EPR planned for Hinkley Point. The Finnish and French companies are locked in a legal dispute over several years of delays and cost overruns of the Olkiluoto 3 EPR new nuclear reactor project in southwest Finland. TVO argues in its appeal that the French restructuring and recapitalisation plan does not provide sufficient guarantees to TVO that the necessary resources are available for the Olkiluoto project. TVO also considers that the plan does not ensure that Areva is able to meet all current and future liabilities during the last phases of project completion and until the end of the guarantee period. Such an appeal could put the Areva – EDF merger under threat and have wider consequences for the Hinkley Point scheme.

The announcement in the UK Government's 'Contracts for Difference' energy auction that new proposed offshore wind projects could be as cheap as a strike price of £59.50 per MW (and, even with back-up intermittency issues, at £70) has had a major impact in the media and amongst energy specialists. The contract for Hinkley Point C has a strike price of £97.50, and adjusted for inflation, is now around £103. Much of the specialist media and energy commentators claims this is a 'game-changer' for energy prices and puts all of the proposed new nuclear projects under threat.

The financial problems besetting Toshiba, who had sought to develop the Moorside site close to Sellafield, continues. Though Toshiba has managed to stave off bankruptcy to the entire group,

it is having problems in selling off profitable parts of its business to deal with the huge financial hole that its US Westinghouse nuclear subsidiary has left it. Though both the South Korean Kepco and Chinese state nuclear utilities may be interested in taking over the Moorside site in Cumbria, major questions remain over whether the AP-1000 reactor design will be pursued (a new design will require a four year assessment from the nuclear regulator). Toshiba has postponed any further local consultation for the foreseeable future.

Hitachi, who are seeking to develop a new nuclear reactor at Wylfa, is not in such a parlous financial state, a recent meeting between the UK and Japanese Prime Ministers suggests that both governments are considering some formal state support for the facility, and are looking for funding partners on the Japanese stock exchange. Horizon has announced it will shortly recommence public consultations and meetings with local stakeholders at Wylfa.

Developments at Sizewell and Bradwell -

Despite two local consultations, the Sizewell new build site is heavily dependent on success at Hinkley Point C. It is expected a third local consultation will be issued either towards the end of this year or early 2018. At present, discussions are ongoing in Suffolk around proposed new roads and bypasses that would be developed in the event of a new reactor being built at Sizewell. Even this though remains very much contingent on the development of Hinkley Point C.

The Chinese Hualong One reactor design planned for the Bradwell site has been placed by nuclear regulators under the Generic Design Assessment process. It was originally adapted from French EPR technology but is simpler in a number of areas. The GDA process is likely to take 4 – 5 years and could be more complicated for the nuclear regulator given that China does not have the same kind of nuclear safety regime as European, American and Japanese utilities. The Bradwell site is also contingent on developments at Hinkley Point.

Developments with Small Modular Nuclear (SMR) Reactors -

Coinciding with the announcement of the rapid reduction in costs of offshore wind developments, a report led by Rolls Royce and NuScale has argued that the UK Government should prioritise the development of small modular reactors. Rolls Royce claim these could eventually come into operation at a 'strike price' of £60 per MW of electricity generated.

Despite much recent publicity for the technology, the NFLA and others have noted previously there are major barriers for growth of the sector. There would need to be a large amount of orders for them to make the sector cost competitive, and a huge supply chain would have to be developed. They would also require regulatory approval, at a time when it is stretched with existing activity. Furthermore, they remain a real proliferation risk, and to create the sort of larger deployment that would be necessary to make them economic, could be sited much closer to larger urban areas.

The Nuclear Industry Association has been in detailed, closed talks with the UK Government over seeking progress and formalized support for the sector. It is now over a year since the government sought companies to take up designs for such reactors. At the BEIS NGO Forum the Government claimed an announcement on this area would be given 'soon'. The NFLA Secretariat will monitor this issue.

Agreed: To note the report and continue to monitor developments.

5. Radioactive waste management

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

UK Radioactive Waste Inventory published -

The latest edition of the UK Radioactive Waste inventory has been published by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). It notes that over 90% of UK radioactive waste is low (LLW) or very low level (VLLW), with 9.7% intermediate level waste (ILW) and 0.3% high level waste (HLW). To date, the inventory notes that nearly 870 cubic metres of vitrified HLW has been produced and 5,780 canisters have been filled and stored at Sellafield. A further 630 cubic

metres (making a total of **1,500 cubic metres**) is still to be dealt with (as it is at decommissioned or operating sites) by 2125. There is as yet no solution as to where such waste will finally be 'disposed' of – UK policy would be to build a deep underground radioactive waste repository, sometimes known as a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

To date, there are over 31,000 cubic metres of packaged ILW, resulting in over 60,000 packages. The total amount of packaged ILW expected to be dealt with by 2125 is forecast at **449,000 cubic metres**. By 2125 there will also be a forecast **of 1.6 million cubic metres of LLW and 2.72 million cubic million of VLLW in packaged form**. A further 1 million cubic metres of radioactive waste has already been 'disposed' of (it is in waste storage sites around the UK) in the UK.

The 2017 estimate for how much it will cost to decommission nuclear reactors and deal with this huge radioactive waste legacy is now put at **£119 billion over the next 120 years**. This is broadly unchanged from last year, but the uncertainty around this figures remains high and it could actually be anywhere between **£97 billion and £222 billion**. And such figures are based on the current legacy, the figure would inevitably increase if new nuclear reactors are built.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) Summit and update -

The NDA held a national stakeholder engagement exercise in Workington, West Cumbria on the 18th and 19th September. The NFLA was represented at this meeting by the NFLA English Forum Chair Councillor Blackburn, the Irish Forum Co-Chair Councillor Dearey, NFLA Manchester representative Councillor Fletcher-Hackwood and the NFLA Secretary.

This meeting allowed for a full engagement with the new CEO of the NDA, David Peattie, as well as presentations from the UK Government, the Chair of the NDA board and other senior NDA representatives. The most useful part of the event was 'The Big Waste Debate' where both sides of the debate over long-term storage of high and intermediate level waste was discussed. Some concern was also raised by nuclear site councils over proposed changes to the decommissioning process for Magnox sites, allowing for a shorter 'Care and Maintenance' programme. While the Summit was again attended by a magnitude of 9 to 1 of supporters of nuclear power, the meeting was useful for the NFLA contingent.

Update on the process to develop a deep underground waste repository -

It is now expected that consultations to move the UK Government's policy on radioactive waste management forward will commence in late 2017 / early 2018. Two consultations will be launched – one on the definition and associated issues of appropriate 'communities' that can 'volunteer' to consider hosting a deep underground waste repository will be raised. The second will publish RWM's geological survey of England, Northern Ireland and Wales to consider the parts of each country suitable and unsuitable for locating a repository.

It will probably be well into 2018 when the Government will ask local authorities / communities if they wish to put themselves forward to take part in a process to register an interest to 'volunteer' to host a deep underground repository. If they do, the process will run quite differently to the last one – which ended when Cumbria County Council declined to move forward with it in 2013 – with a much longer process envisaged and the Government in much more of an advocacy role.

IPPNW / Medact Conference workshop on the global nuclear legacy -

The NFLA Secretary was one of the speakers at a workshop within the Medact / IPPNW Conference on the 6th September in York University. The workshop considered the global legacy of radioactive waste and was chaired by Alex Rosen, a Vice Chair of IPPNW Germany. As well as the NFLA Secretary, who considered the UK radioactive waste and decommissioning legacy – the presentation will go on the NFLA website and be emailed to member authorities – there were presentations on the position in Canada and Switzerland.

The workshop emphasised that dealing with the nuclear legacy was a very difficult, and it often seemed, intractable public policy dilemma. Similar debates on whether a deep underground

repository or a more shallow and smaller on-site variant, as being put forward in Scotland, are taking place around the world. Issues of environmental safety, intergenerational equity and storage or disposal were all raised. It was a very useful event involving influential health professionals from around the world.

Update on NuLEAF and SCCORS -

The LGA's NuLEAF (Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum for England and Wales) group held a meeting and AGM in London on the 19th July. After discussion, it was agreed by the majority of the members that one of the Vice Chairs of the groups should be reserved for a NFLA member, and Councillor Fletcher-Hackwood of Manchester was elected as a Vice Chair. This will allow the NFLA's views to be considered fully for all NuLEAF responses.

A NuLEAF business meeting also took place in Workington prior to the NDA Stakeholder Summit on the 18th September. The meeting allowed for an update on UK Government / NDA policy and discussion of required actions from the summit.

COSLA's SCCORS (Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances) group last met in Edinburgh City Chambers prior to the local elections. Its Chair though was not re-elected in the May local elections. It is expected Edinburgh City Council will continue as the Secretariat for SCCORS and a new chair be appointed shortly. The NFLA Secretary is in communication with the SCCORS officer in Edinburgh.

Agreed: To note the report.

6. Alternatives to nuclear energy

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

NFLA Policy Briefing on Scottish renewables -

Over the past few years, the NFLA has been heavily involved in the promotion of both renewable energy and decentralised local authority driven energy. The latest report outlines a number of positive developments in renewable and decentralised energy in Scotland. NFLA has also responded in detail to the Scottish Government's Climate Change and Energy consultations, and it welcomes the energy proposals that were put forward in the Government's 2017/18 programme for government.

The key measures recently announced by the Scottish Government include:

- The phasing out of fossil fuel vehicles by 2032.
- A doubling of investment in active travel to £80m a year.
- Tackling air pollution with four Low Emissions Zones by 2020 in Scotland's four largest cities.
- A deposit return scheme for bottles and cans
- A new Just Transition Commission to help Scotland reduce emissions fairly.
- A state-owned Scottish energy company to assist consumers find cheaper bills and reduce fuel poverty.

Offshore wind 'strike price' comes in at half of Hinkley Point C variant -

The UK Government announced the successful bids from the renewable energy sector for its 'Contracts for Difference' competitive auctions scheme. Most noteworthy was that three offshore wind projects have come in at a historic low 'strike price' of £57.50 per megawatt hour. That is over half what was being achieved four years ago, and is around half the strike price of the proposed Hinkley Point C nuclear scheme.

Renewable UK commented on the results of the auction: "Offshore wind is now an industrial powerhouse for the UK. The industry has achieved record-breaking cost reductions and is pouring over £11.5 billion over the next four years into our seaside towns and businesses across the UK. Monday's auction results could be a watershed moment for the UK offshore wind sector. The offshore wind sites that win on Monday will be a catalyst for our future economy and will

provide cheap, clean electricity for UK consumers. In addition, a new report out today shows that the UK offshore wind supply chain is continuing to grow, ensuring that it's British-based companies which reap multi-million-pound benefits as the industry expands”.

While such developments are hugely welcome, NFLA would also want to see government support to other sectors of the renewable energy industry, and in particular solar, tidal and onshore wind. Offshore wind is a component part of the UK Government's current highly centralised energy policy which connects it with new nuclear. NFLA would want to see much more support given to the decentralised energy sector with the return of financial support to such areas of energy generation.

UK Government grants for decentralised energy -

The UK Government is expected to announce £3 million to support local government to develop decentralised energy schemes. The funding for the low-carbon initiatives will form part of the Government's forthcoming blueprint on how to meet the UK's binding carbon targets in its 'Clean Growth Plan'. The Clean Growth Plan is also expected to support developments in 'smart' energy solutions, battery storage and energy efficiency. NFLA will monitor this announcement when it is made and comment accordingly.

Irish Government Climate Mitigation Plan -

In early August the Irish Government launched its First Climate Mitigation Plan, which seeks to bring in measures to reduce carbon emissions and promote renewable and other 'clean' energy measures. The Plan follows on from previous Green and White Papers on low carbon measures, and contains language the NFLA welcomes, even though the amount of specific and detailed policy implementation continues to remain a little vague. The issue was considered at the NFLA All Ireland Forum seminar as noted in Section 2 above.

Developments in fracking

Developments in proposed fracking sites in Lancashire (near Preston) and North Yorkshire (near Pickering) are coming close to being realised, despite considerable pressure from anti-fracking groups. Cuadrilla and Third Energy respectively are preparing the final elements of making each sites ready for initial fracking to take place.

Other parts of the British and Irish Isles – Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland has clear moratoriums on fracking, with little prospect of these policies changing over the next couple of years.

NFLA remains concerned with fracking from the perspective of radiation dangers and risks from the fracking and wastewater removal processes. Dr Ian Fairlie and John Busby are giving their perspectives on both areas at a short seminar following the NFLA Steering Committee meeting.

Agreed: To note the report and encourage the dissemination of NFLA Policy Briefings to relevant council officers and councillors.

7. Mayors for Peace update

The NFLA Secretary outlined progress in NFLA's co-operation with the Mayors for Peace and its campaigns on the nuclear weapons issue.

International Mayors for Peace development and 9th General Conference

As of September 1st 2017, 7,439 towns and cities were members of Mayors for Peace in 162 countries. 45 new members have joined in the past two months. It is hoped to pass the 7,500 mark in the next few months, representing effectively over 1.1 billion people.

The Lord Mayor of Manchester and the NFLA Secretary (in his role as Manchester's Mayors for Peace officer) attended the 9th General Mayors for Peace Conference in Nagasaki, along with associated events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki between 5th – 10th August. A full report of the Conference and associated events is available on the NFLA website.

It was felt by all those who attended that the 9th General Conference was a real success. A 2017 - 2020 Action Plan was agreed developing a distinct two-pronged approach of continuing to work for global multilateral nuclear disarmament and also work at the national chapter level on issues which affect and harm peaceful communities, such as terrorism, the refugee crisis, climate change and increased lower-level violence.

Moves to look at developing a European Mayors for Peace structure was also considered and agreed upon. The Vice President City of Granollers will develop this process with other European members and the Hiroshima Secretariat.

It was agreed that there would be an Executive Board meeting in Geneva in May 2018 and an Executive Conference is likely to take place in Hanover in Germany in mid-2019.

UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace progress -

Towns and cities across the UK and Ireland, along with many others across the world, held Hiroshima-Nagasaki commemorative events between August 6th and 9th 2017. The Secretariat thanks all those NFLA members who took part in them. Significant events were held in Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, London, Birmingham, Liverpool and Oxford in England; Glasgow, Edinburgh, Paisley, Dundee, Aberdeen in Scotland; in Cardiff and at the National Eisteddfod in Wales; and in Dublin and Galway in Ireland.

It is planned to hold the next UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace meeting as a joint seminar with the NFLA on the afternoon of the 1st December in Manchester. The seminar will seek to promote the action points from the General Conference, focus on nuclear weapons issues and on future plans for developing Mayors for Peace. NFLA members will find it of interest and are encouraged to attend. A summer recruitment and invoicing programme is also underway.

Agreed: To note the report.

8. Nuclear Weapons, defence nuclear safety and defence diversification update

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

Ratifying the UN Nuclear Weapon Prohibition Treaty -

On the 7th July 2017 122 states, around two thirds of UN membership, agreed to pass the International Nuclear Weapon Prohibition Treaty. In a historic vote only one state voted against, though 40 states, including all the existing nuclear weapon states, NATO members and states under the 'nuclear umbrella' like Australia and Japan, boycotted the conference and the vote.

At the UN General Assembly in late September the process will begin to ratify the Treaty. To ratify into international law at least 50 states need to pass it into their own national law. The Mayors for Peace Nagasaki Special Resolution calls on UN states to ratify the law as soon as possible, and this has been sent to all UN members who passed the Treaty in July. The resolution has also been sent to nuclear weapon states encouraging them to reconsider their position.

The UK Government joined with the US and French Governments in issuing a strident joint statement that they would never sign up to the Prohibition Treaty, and see it as an unnecessary diversion from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Ministers in Westminster were quite clear in Parliamentary answers that they would not engage at all in the new process.

N Korean nuclear crisis and endorsing Abolition 2000 appeal to the diplomatic crisis -

Over the summer, the growing tension between North Korea, the United States and its allies over North Korea's nuclear weapons programme has rapidly intensified. In August North Korea formally claimed it had an extensive nuclear weapons programme and it has held a number of missile tests which suggest the distance these missiles can travel can now hit American and European targets. The most alarming of these missile tests to date came on the 29th August when it passed over Japanese territory. This led to the US President to suggest 'the time for

talking is over', but other members of the Trump administration still advance diplomatic solutions. Some academics have suggested the test which went over Japanese territory could have been a malfunctioning missile, as its trajectory was much narrower than previous tests.

Whilst the Chinese, the newly elected South Korean government and the UN General Assembly have called for diplomatic talks over North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, the war of words with the United States is alarming many amidst concerns it may get out of hand and lead to an alarming escalation of the crisis. NFLA was therefore pleased to endorse Abolition 2000's urgent appeal for a diplomatic solution to the North East Asia nuclear weapons issue. The NFLA Chairs and National Forum Chairs formally endorsed the appeal.

CND event to support Early Day Motion 243 on nuclear weapons -

NFLA has supported a CND UK initiative to support diplomatic efforts for a peaceful solution to the North Korean nuclear crisis. The initiative originates with support for an Early Day Motion (EDM) from the Parliamentary CND Chair and Green Party Co-Leader Caroline Lucas MP. A rally outside Downing Street is planned for the 28th September.

Medact / IPPNW Conference and Congress, York, 4th – 6th September 2017 -

The NFLA Secretary and Manchester's NFLA representative Councillor Fletcher-Hackwood were speakers at the joint Medact / IPPNW (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War) Conference and Congress. The conference brought together health professionals and other groups calling for nuclear disarmament. It also held the global congress of IPPNW's national groups, of which Medact is its UK affiliate.

The 'Health through Peace' conference sought to consider ways to educate, debate and advocate for social justice and demilitarisation. Both nuclear weapons abolition and nuclear power came up within the conference. Keynote speakers included Dr Yoshitake Yokohura, President-elect of the World Medical Association; Professor John Middleton, President of the Faculty of Public Health; Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York; Kate Hudson, General Secretary of CND and Beatrice Fihn, General Secretary of ICAN.

The NFLA Secretary was a speaker at two workshops – one considering the global nuclear legacy of radioactive waste and decommissioning nuclear sites, and the other considered how renewable energy could replace nuclear power and fossil fuels around the world. The NFLA Secretary gave an overview of UK and devolved government policies on radioactive waste and nuclear decommissioning in the first workshop, and in the second workshop the links between civil and defence nuclear programmes.

Councillor Fletcher-Hackwood spoke at a workshop on the ways to encourage local government and Parliamentarians to be more active in lobbying for nuclear weapons abolition.

Report highlights £235 million overspend on UK nuclear defence projects -

An annual UK Government report has highlighted serious problems in several large projects related to the UK's Trident nuclear weapons programme. The Core Production Capability (CPC) project, which involves building new facilities to produce the reactor cores for new Trident submarines, is predicted to cost £235m more than planned and has been given a 'Red' rating, meaning that successful delivery "appears to be unachievable".

The programme to deliver seven nuclear powered 'Astute' class submarines and the wider programme to build four 'Dreadnought' class submarines to replace the Trident fleet, are both given an 'Amber/Red' rating. This is the second most unfavourable rating and indicates that "successful delivery of the project is in doubt, with major risks or issues apparent in a number of key areas".

The Nuclear Warhead Capability Sustainment Project (NWCSP), which includes major building programmes at AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield, is listed in the report by the Ministry of Defence but most of the information is redacted in the copy given to the Nuclear Information Service under the Freedom of Information Act. However, the report does show that spending on the NWCSP in 2016/17 was predicted to be £33 million higher than planned, and that budget for

the whole lifetime of the NWCSF now sits at £20.31 billion, a sharp increase from the £12.14 billion envisaged in 2013. Such larger cost over-runs come due to the sheer complexity of the project and the amount of staff required to realise it. The NFLA Secretariat will monitor this matter and publicise concerns in cooperation with other groups.

Defence diversification progress -

A meeting of the Defence Diversification Steering Group will take place in Manchester Town Hall on October 3rd, hosted by the NFLA Secretariat. It will focus on ways to lobby the trade unions and political parties and on a future conference.

Members of the Group had a presence at the TUC Conference. A resolution was passed by the Conference on defence diversification and on climate change and energy democracy. This is a welcome development and is being taken positively forward. .

Agreed: To note the report.

9. Nuclear health and safety issues

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on progress with civil nuclear safety and health issues.

COMARE report on Sellafield and Dounreay and attempts at constructive engagement -

As noted at previous Steering Committee meetings, NFLA and other groups have raised some detailed concerns on report of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) assessing local cancer risks in close proximity to the Sellafield and Dounreay nuclear sites.

COMARE concluded that children living near Sellafield and Dounreay showed no increase in a risk of leukaemia or non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in a new analysis of cancer rates from 1991 to 2006. The NFLA has noted detailed concerns outlined by Dr Ian Fairlie, the Low Level Radiation Campaign and the Cumbrian group CORE questioning many of the findings of COMARE's report.

A proposal was agreed at the July meeting of the BEIS NGO Nuclear Policy Forum for a set-piece discussion within the Forum's 12th September meeting between COMARE and its NGO critics. The meeting had a presentation from COMARE on their role. Dr Chris Busby, representing the NGO community, provided a report of concerns in the area of health and radiation and called for a joint fact-finding discussion to go through these concerns. However, the COMARE Secretariat said they did not have the resources to undertake such detailed discussions, and had to take into account scientific consensus as much as it did independent research. It is not clear yet how this impasse can now be overcome, which was disappointing to all NGO representatives and the NFLA Secretary attending the meeting.

Concerns over lifetime extensions to aging nuclear power plants -

Over the past year NFLA has been concerned that the nuclear regulators have supported extensions in the lifetime operating capacity of EDF sites such as Hinkley Point and Hunterston, without any independent discussion or challenge. The NFLA has developed a detailed analysis of these issues, which was welcomed at the meeting. It will be issued shortly.

Fukushima / Japan nuclear update -

Concerns over what happened to the nuclear fuel from the stricken Fukushima reactors, and what will happen to the huge volumes of radioactive waste on site, have dominated news articles in the past few weeks 6.5 years after the disaster. An underwater robot has been devised which has managed to record images of what appear large deposits of melted nuclear fuel covering the floor of Reactor Number 3 on the site.

The robot found large amounts of solidified rocks and lumps in layers as thick as 1 metre inside a main structure called the pedestal that sits underneath the core of the primary containment vessel in the reactor. This is the first time pictures have shown melted nuclear fuel in the reactors, as previous attempts have all ended in failure due to the heat and levels of radioactivity in the stricken reactors. Locating this fuel is essential in the long-term decommissioning of the plant.

Attempts to do the same in the other two reactors continue to fail because of the extremely high radiation levels. The probe in Reactor No.3 showed extensive damage caused by the core meltdown, with fuel debris mixed with broken reactor parts. This will make decommissioning very difficult and the data is being analysed by TEPCO and the nuclear regulators to determine the next course of action.

Meanwhile, TEPCO is awaiting a final decision from the Japanese Government on a request to dump huge amounts of radioactively contaminated water into the Pacific Ocean. The water contains significantly quantities of tritium, a radioactive form of hydrogen, and there are currently around 50 barrels of it on the site, as part of the cooling down of the plant's damaged reactors after the disaster and over the past few years.

TEPCO argue that a tritium release into the Pacific Ocean will not create any ill-effects on fish or seafood or public health. NFLA have previously invited independent experts like Dr Ian Fairlie and Tim Deere-Jones who have cogently argued there is a real health risk to tritium, which has been dumped into the Irish Sea for many decades from the likes of Sellafield at low levels. At present, there is a huge 777,000 tons of contaminated tritiated water on the Fukushima site. Local and national NGOs have raised considerable concern over such an action, as have local fisherman groups. However, the Chair of the Japanese Nuclear Regulation Authority has publicly supported such a move in the past. He claims tritium is "so weak in its radioactivity it won't penetrate plastic wrapping" and is only a risk to humans if they are exposed to high quantities of tritium. Green Action Japan has said dumping such large amounts of tritiated water would send a precedent that can be copied all around the world, when the environmental risks are not totally understood.

Agreed: To note the report.

11. Nuclear emergency planning, nuclear security and nuclear materials transportation

The NFLA Secretary provided a report of work on progress with issues around nuclear security, nuclear emergency planning and nuclear transportation.

Nuclear emergency planning and security progress -

The NFLA Secretary has been appointed as a member of the respected European NGO Nuclear Transparency Watch (NTW). He has also been nominated as the UK representative on nuclear emergency planning issues with the group. This group has been raising recent concerns with the viability of the Belgian and the Irish national nuclear emergency plans. They also engage in detail on these matters with the European Commission. Access to this group will allow for the sharing of useful information and the potential for NTW to focus some of its concern on UK nuclear emergency planning arrangements.

The NFLA Secretary believes now is an appropriate time for a review of nuclear emergency planning and nuclear security as the UK implements the European Basic Safety Standard into UK law. It is anticipated this may require changes in the REPPiR regulations which govern offsite nuclear emergency planning and provides a focal role to local authorities. A Policy Briefing considering progress on these matters will be developed as time allows.

Concerns over local authority emergency planning advice in respect to nuclear weapon convoy transports -

The pressure group Nukewatch's Scottish branch has published a report on the lack of public information over what to do in the event of an accident or incident involving a nuclear weapon convoy road transport. The report also includes a detailed questionnaire of emergency planning units in Scottish local authorities.

The report argues that local authorities have a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act to 'warn and inform' the public to all perceived risks in the district, but is not providing any information on the potential risks of nuclear weapon convoys. NFLA has argued a major reason for this is that Councils, Fire Services and Ambulance Services are not made aware of when road convoys come through their district, only the Police. Councils receive generic guidance from the Ministry of Defence on such convoys through 'Local Authority Emergency Service Information (LAESI)'

guidelines for such road transports. There are also some limited involvement for some Councils in MOD exercises, which in the past have shown considerable problems could occur from a catastrophic incident.

The report authors Jane Tallents and David MacKenzie are speaking about the report at the upcoming NFLA Scotland seminar in Glasgow. The NFLA will also look to focus on similar issues in England as well.

Nuclear transportation concerns by road, rail, sea and air -

The NFLA Secretary has invited Tor Justad of the group 'Highland Against Nuclear Transports' to speak at the next NFLA Scotland seminar providing an update on local concerns and progress with the transports. This comes after increased concerns over the safety of air transports of Higher Enriched Uranium (HEU) from Dounreay to the United States. The material arose from the former Soviet nuclear weapons programme based in Georgia, and was stored at Dounreay. It has been agreed between the UK and US Governments that the material be sent for long-term storage at the Savannah River site in South Carolina.

There has been real concern whether the runway at Wick Airport is suitable for such a transport, which has led to longer road transports to RAF Lossiemouth. Additional concern remains over the consequences of an accident involving one of the huge planes carrying the HEU, where a crash would see highly radioactive materials potentially spread over a wide area. More transports of other 'exotic' radioactive materials from Dounreay to Sellafield by rail and by sea are also expected. NFLA and member authorities like the Shetland Island Council and the Western Isles Council remain concerned over such transports and representations continue to be made to the NDA.

Agreed: To note the report.

11. Next NFLA Steering Committee meeting

The next NFLA Steering Committee meeting will take place in ***Meeting Room 2, Leaf Centre, 113 – 115 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 6DW, on Friday 1st December 2017.*** This will be part of the 2017 NFLA Annual General Meeting and will also include a joint afternoon seminar with Mayors for Peace considering the Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty, concerns over nuclear security and promoting local peace and community cohesion strategies.

12. Special seminar on the radiation risks and dangers of fracking

Dr Ian Fairlie and John Busby spoke about the radiation risks and dangers of the fracking process and waste water from the process. Their presentations are on the NFLA website homepage. A very useful discussion took place with representatives from a number of groups challenging the need for fracking.