

NFLA Policy Briefing No.174



Date: 30th April 2018

Subject: Summary of key points and actions from the NFLA Steering Committee meeting, Leeds Civic Hall, 23rd March 2018

1. Introduction by NFLA Steering Committee (SC) Vice-Chair, England

The NFLA Steering Committee Vice-Chair, England, Councillor David Blackburn, welcomed members to the meeting in Leeds Civic Hall. The Vice Chair welcomed the very good attendance that was anticipated for the joint NFLA / Mayors for Peace Chapter seminar that was taking place in the afternoon, which he encouraged members to stay on for.

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 met at The Grange, Omagh on the 9th March. The seminar focused on climate change and Irish renewables, the funding of renewables and a progress report from the NFLA Secretariat on Sellafield and the impacts of UK new nuclear. Professor Barry McMullin provided a keynote presentation on the huge urgency to tackle climate change over the next 2 decades or serious implications would follow. Other speakers noted the slowness of progress in the take up of renewables in Ireland, which was being compounded by the lack of a devolved government in Northern Ireland. Councils in the Republic of Ireland were urged to take part in the Hinkley Point transboundary consultation. The next meeting of the Forum will be held in Dundalk in September, with the Forum hosting the UK and Ireland NFLA AGM and meetings in Newry in early December.

NFLA English Forum –

The NFLA English Forum is holding a joint seminar with the UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter in Leeds Civic Hall directly following this NFLA Steering Committee on the 23rd March. The seminar will focus on the work of ICAN, PNND, Mayors for Peace and peace education. A brief note of the meeting is attached at the end of this report. The Forum plans to meet again in Oxford to talk about nuclear transport issues and in Hull in October to discuss decentralised energy issues.

NFLA Scotland Forum -

The NFLA Scotland Forum's meeting planned to be held in Glasgow City Chambers on the 1st March had to be postponed due to inclement weather affecting much of Scotland. It has been rearranged for the 19th April in the same location. As well as a business meeting and AGM, there will be a seminar on the prospects for hydrogen energy and geothermal energy in Scotland with speakers from the Scottish Government, Scottish Gas Networks and Glasgow University. Dates for future meetings in 2018 will also be agreed at the meeting, though the Scottish Forum is hosting the next NFLA Steering Committee in Edinburgh on the 21st June.

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES-
A MEMBER OF ICAN, THE 2017 NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE**

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NFLA Welsh Forum -

The NFLA Welsh Forum Secretary is holding a joint conference with WANA, PAWB, CADNO, Stop Hinkley and CND Cymru on April 14th in the Owain Glyndwr Centre, Machnylleth, Powys. The meeting will seek to develop a joint 'Welsh green, anti-nuclear front' and will include three sessions – one of new nuclear issues in Wales, the second on renewable alternatives and the waste debate, and a third series of workshops looking at campaigning and Brexit. Following this conference, the Welsh Forum will host the NFLA Steering Committee and a seminar on the 28th September in Cardiff County Hall.

Co-operation with CNFE and KIMO International -

The NFLA joined with the Cities for a Nuclear Free Europe network to send a joint letter of concern around transboundary nuclear issues to the European Commission, which is discussed in Item 10. NFLA has also submitted a joint piece of research over the marine and aerial emissions from a proposed UK new nuclear programme to the OSPAR Radiation Substances Committee meeting in late March in Sweden.

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.

Progress with the Nuclear Safeguards Bill for replacing the Euratom arrangements -

As part of leaving the European Union, the UK Government is going ahead with also leaving the Euratom Treaty, which governs European nuclear safety and nuclear fuel movements. The Nuclear Safeguards Bill is currently going through Parliament to transpose the core parts of the Euratom regime into UK law. A useful 52 page briefing on its progress and background to it has been published by the House of Commons Library and, a summary of it was shared with Steering Committee members. BEIS officials have also set up a telephone conference call to discuss issues with the Bill and wider issues with 'Brexit' and energy policy for the NFLA Secretary and other NGO representatives taking place on the 17th April.

The issues over how the Office for Nuclear Regulator will seek to construct a domestic nuclear safeguards regime was discussed at the ONR NGO Forum on the 21st March. The ONR reported that they were confident they would be able to recruit enough safety inspectors by the time the new regime was required. A new IT system would have to be developed as part of these changes, which is a real challenge to test and implement in the short time. ONR are in close contact with the UK Government on these matters. The House of Lords voted that the existing Euratom arrangements should not be changed, but it is expected the Government will seek to overturn this when the Bill returns to the House of Commons shortly.

Brexit, energy security and Ireland -

The UK Parliamentary European Union Committee has published a detailed report considering the impact of Brexit on energy security in general and in reference to Irish single integrated energy policy. A summary of key conclusions and recommendations was shared with Steering Committee members. The conclusions of the report show how broad and difficult Brexit will be for wider energy policy and in links with the Republic of Ireland.

The Steering Committee agreed that the NFLA Secretariat develop a more detailed report on such matters for its next meeting in June.

Agreed: To note the report and for the NFLA Secretariat to develop a Policy Briefing.

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.

UK Government updated National Policy Statement for new nuclear -

In mid-December 2017, the UK Government issued a public consultation on an updated National Policy Statement for new nuclear programmes. The original 2011 statements had intimated that most of the sites would be in the process of being completed or developed by 2025. As it stands, **no** new nuclear power station will be delivered by then, with an outside chance that Hinkley Point C could be on track by the end of that year. The NPS process allows such developments to go through the National Infrastructure Planning system, which NFLA has consistently argued does not allow for adequate local considerations to be taken into account.

The new NPS seeks to designate new nuclear reactors that will be developed between 2026 and 2035. It keeps the same sites for potential deployment as the original NPS – Wylfa, Oldbury, Sizewell, Bradwell, Heysham, Hartlepool and Sellafield Moorside. Hinkley Point is not included in the list as the new nuclear site planned there has outline development consent.

The NFLA responded to the consultation and it concluded:

- The electricity system has changed radically in the years since the project to build new third generation nuclear in Britain was initiated.
- Renewable energy costs have drastically reduced at a time when new nuclear costs have ballooned.
- Clearly EN-1 (an analysis of the entire UK energy needs over the next 3 decades), upon which EN-6 depends (the need for new nuclear), should be completely re-written. There is no “need” for new nuclear power stations. This current consultation should be scrapped and the Government should go back to the drawing board and re-write EN-1 to take account of major changes in energy generation.

It is anticipated that, following a formal response to the consultation, the NPS will go for Parliamentary discussion later this year. The UK Government wants it in place in early 2019.

NFLA / KIMO submission to the OSPAR RSC on UK new nuclear -

As agreed at the last Steering Committee meeting, the NFLA developed a detailed report considering the airborne and liquid discharges from a proposed UK new nuclear programme, and how it impacts on the UK's OSPAR Treaty commitments of ‘close to zero’ marine radioactive discharges into the Irish Sea and North Sea. The submission was jointly funded with KIMO International, who are an accredited NGO to the OSPAR Commission. The response is being considered at the OSPAR RSC meeting in Gothenburg in late March, and KIMO will be informed of actions from it in April. The final submission is on the NFLA website.

Update with proposed new nuclear sites in the UK -

Since the last Steering Committee meeting, there remains continuing slow progress in the development of new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point, Wylfa and Sellafield Moorside whilst financial concerns continue to mount. Meanwhile, some of the difficulties in developing the Hinkley Point C site are becoming public.

Hinkley Point C -

For example, fears are growing among Hinkley Point contractors about their ability to recruit enough workers. These worries come despite industry-leading pay rates on the project which could see skilled civil engineering operatives earn £70,000 a year. Much of the initial groundwork has been completed on the site by a Kier BAM joint venture. Main civils contractor Bouygues and Laing O'Rourke (BYLOR) will be looking to employ around 3,500 people when the site is in full swing.

In addition, rents in the Bridgwater area of Somerset have risen by 8% in the last year, putting local people at risk of homelessness due to their inability to compete with Hinkley Point C (HPC) construction workers, whose wages are 30% above the local norms. There could be a 4,000 accommodation shortfall if the site gets fully developed, with local Councils struggling to find even temporary solutions to this issue. Local councillors and community groups have become increasingly frustrated as well with the impact on transport routes due to large volumes of lorry traffic clearing the Hinkley site.

EDF is having continuing problems in developing its EPR reactor design in Finland, France and China. In Finland, the EPR being built at Olkiluoto should have been operating in 2005, but its

opening has been put back yet again to March 2019. The Finnish courts are also finalising a compensation dispute between the Finnish state nuclear operator and Areva. In France, commercial commissioning of its EPR at Flamanville has also been put back to 2019, making it seven years behind schedule. In China, two EPR reactors at Taishan have now been delayed for the third time to later in 2018 and 2019 respectively. These delays may impact on the Hinkley site, as EDF, with the French Government, tries to put together the finance for the new Hinkley reactors.

Wylfa B -

At Wylfa B, despite persistent media reports early in the year that the Japanese Government and the UK Government have agreed to look at options to find public finance, loans and financial guarantees with Hitachi to deliver the £14 billion project, nothing has yet been made public. The Horizon Partnership at Wylfa have indicated that they will submit an outline planning application to clear the land ready for the site at the end of March. NFLA is discussing with other Welsh anti-nuclear groups at its meeting in mid-April on submitting a joint objection to the application. The Stop Hinkley group are also putting together a dossier of key issues that came out of the planning inquiry for this site to assist at Wylfa.

Sellafield Moorside -

Talks are still ongoing between the UK and South Korean Governments over Kepco taking on Toshiba's stake for the Sellafield Moorside site. It is expected these will be concluded in the next few months, but little again has been publicly said on the issue this year. Late last year, Kepco announced it was the preferred bidder for the site.

Sizewell and Bradwell -

At Sizewell and Bradwell the respective developers are continuing to make positive public pronouncements about the sites and further public consultations are expected later this year.

Agreed: To support the NPS submission and note the report.

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 and Welsh Government consultations on managing radioactive waste -

The NFLA Secretariat has put together a detailed Policy Briefing in order to respond to three consultations – UK Government consultations on the process of engaging with communities that may express an interest to host a deep underground waste repository; and a proposed National Policy Statement for such a development; as well as a Welsh Government consultation on how it would support any Welsh Council / community that expresses an interest to host a repository. The consultation is open until **the 19th / 20th April 2018**.

In terms of the Communities consultation the key conclusions for the NFLA are:

- Local Authorities will need more certainty about how the exact level of so-called “community investment funding” is to be decided.
- No details are given of additional investment that will be provided to local authorities, and no idea of the amount which might be available.
- Local authorities may also be concerned about the idea that anyone can express an interest in initiating a search for a suitable site for a GDF.
- NFLA share the concerns of the local NGO Cumbria Trust that there are serious concerns about the right of withdrawal in the new consultation. It appears that areas which volunteer are potentially trapped within the process for up to 20 years. For all the talk of volunteers having a continuous right of withdrawal, the document paints a much darker picture of coercion and a supposed partnership where the real power rests with one party.
- The UK Government says it “*will ensure that communities will be able to access third party expert views on contested and unresolved technical and/or scientific issues once communities are constructively engaged*”. This is unclear. Obviously communities need to be able to access the views of third party experts of their own choosing, and not be restricted to Learned Societies.

- The process provides a right of withdrawal for District Councils, but not necessarily for County Councils. This risks real issues around democratic legitimacy and acceptability, particularly as County Councils are responsible for waste management in their engagement with District Councils.

In terms of the NPS consultation, NFLA reiterate there is no 'need' for new nuclear. Developing such reactors would have a significant additional impact on dealing with the additional and large levels of new radioactive waste that such a programme could generate. No solution has also been found to managing the existing waste legacy. NFLA question the way the Government claim that CORWM endorse 'geological disposal' while ignoring the important caveats of that organisation in reference to new nuclear. NFLA argue that it would be better to leave future generations with a choice about what to do with nuclear waste rather than bequeathing a 'fait accompli' which could turn out to be a leaking repository. NFLA note that the Nuclear Waste Advisory Associates (NWAA) has produced a list of 100 issues which will need to be resolved before a safety case can begin to be demonstrated. NFLA conclude that the search for a GDF site diverts attention from the real problem for the immediate future, which is to ensure the safe and secure management of the unavoidable legacy wastes that the civil and military nuclear industry has already created.

In terms of the Welsh Government's consultation, NFLA note:

- NFLA welcomes the clear statement that, regardless of the approach to planning, the GDF development can only go ahead within a willing host community where there has been agreement through a Test of Support.
- The Welsh Government supports the policy of building new nuclear reactors and to develop a deep underground waste repository. NFLA point that volume is not the correct measure to use to assess the likely impact of wastes and spent fuel from a new reactor programme, in terms of its management and disposal. The 'high burn-up fuel' which Wylfa Newydd is expected to use will be much more radioactive than the spent fuel produced by existing reactors.
- The Welsh Government is proposing to use Community Council areas, rather than ward boundaries to define Potential Host Communities. This may lead to a Host Community being established that is too small, both geographically and in terms of the local population.

The Steering Committee welcomed the detailed draft response of the submission and approved it to go forward as its response to the consultations.

Swedish court rejects canister design for Forsmark deep underground repository -

As noted at the last Steering Committee meeting, the Swedish Environment and Land Court has rejected the application to move forward with the Swedish radioactive waste policy over concerns with the copper canisters proposed for an underground repository. The submissions to the UK and Welsh Government noted above include considerable detail on the reasoning behind the Court's decision and the impact this has on their policy.

Public Accounts Committee report on the NDA procurement process for the clean-up of Magnox sites in England, Scotland and Wales / meeting with the NDA -

The UK Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) published an analysis of the NDA's procurement process for the contract to clean up Magnox sites. Following a court case against the NDA by one of the unsuccessful bidders, the NDA has been forced to pay over £120 million out in compensation. The PAC report concluded:

- The NDA completely failed in both the procurement and management of the contract to clean up the Magnox nuclear reactor sites—one of the highest value and most important contracts let by Government. Not only did this disrupt an important component of vital nuclear decommissioning work, but it also cost the taxpayer upwards of £122 million.
- The NDA ran an overly complex procurement process, resulting in it awarding the contract to the wrong bidder.
- The NDA also drastically underestimated the scale of the work needed to decommission the sites at the time it let the contract. The NDA will now have to spend even more effort and

use more public money to find a suitable way of managing these sites after the contract comes to an official end in September 2019.

- These failures have caused untold reputational damage to the NDA and they raise serious questions about its credibility as a strategic contracting authority. Central government must also share the blame. Not only did HM Treasury and the Business, Energy and Infrastructure Strategy (BEIS) Department approve the NDA's approaches to procurement and contract management, but there are clear failings in BEIS's subsequent challenge and oversight of the NDA, through UK Government Investments.

The NFLA published a media release on the issues which was welcomed by the Steering Committee. The NFLA Secretary and Councillor Fletcher-Hackwood of Manchester City Council also recently met with Bill Hamilton, the NDA's Stakeholder Relations Manager, and discussed the report. Mr Hamilton argued that the NDA had taken stock of its shortcomings with the contract and major changes at the top of the organisation had led to acknowledging the need for improving processes. It is likely that the NDA will take 'in house' the Magnox clean-up contract when Cavendish Flour's contract concludes next year – an announcement is expected on this in the next few weeks. The independent Holliday Review of the failings in this process is expected to be published by Government in the next few weeks as well.

Mr Hamilton also noted that the NDA Stakeholder Summit 2018 will take place on the 10th and 11th July at the Berkeley decommissioned site in Gloucestershire. NFLA will be provided with at least two places to the summit. Amongst the likely detail of the summit will be discussion on changes to the NDA, its work with communities and in research and development, case studies and interaction with local government and NGOs.

Mr Hamilton also offered an annual meeting for engagement between NGOs and the NDA on waste matters and decommissioning. The NFLA Secretary has agreed to speak to NGOs at the upcoming ONR NGO Forum to discuss their views on such an offer. There was also discussion on the development of Site Stakeholder Groups and some welcome moves to provide consistency in order to improve their democratic legitimacy and accountability are being put in place. The NFLA Secretary plans to contact the NGO representatives to discuss this matter further. The ONR are also raising improvements to stakeholder engagement to the next meeting of the Nuclear Industry Safety Directors Forum.

Sellafield and Dounreay progress -

The NFLA Secretariat provided a detailed briefing to a delegation from Newry, Mourne and Down Council who were planning to visit the Sellafield site on the 2nd March. The visit was raised due to cross-party concerns on the Council about Sellafield following a BBC Panorama documentary. Due to the inclement weather only two of the delegation of six was able to get to the site. The NFLA All Ireland Forum Co-Chair has confirmed the visit will be rescheduled shortly.

The NFLA Scotland Forum will also be receiving an update on alarming concerns with the safety of the Dounreay site at its April meeting. Concerns from the Scottish Government and local MSPs over the environmental and safety record of the site will be noted as well as delays to its decommissioning programme. The nuclear regulator is also concerned with environmental compliance at a number of parts of the Dounreay facility.

Hinkley Point C 'radioactive mud' and Wylfa B radioactive waste consultation -

In late 2017, NFLA published a report by the independent marine radioactivity consultant Tim Deere-Jones over concerns that approvals had been granted to allow EDF to dump dredged materials from the proposed Hinkley Point C reactor containing low levels of radiation into a site close to Cardiff Bay, known as the Cardiff Deep Grounds. This issue has been actively taking at the Senedd by independent AM Neil McEvoy. Two separate petitions have attracted over 60,000 signatures and have been submitted to the Welsh Assembly. The Petitions Committee has held two hearings seeking clarification with Natural Resources Wales, and they have been given a deadline to provide further information. The report has created a lot of concern amongst local authorities in south Wales. The NFLA Secretary has spoken to Tim Deere-Jones, who has agreed to provide an updated briefing with progress and response to the nuclear regulators and EDF.

Update on NuLEAF and SCCORS -

The LGA's NuLEAF (Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum for England and Wales) group held a business meeting and workshop in Manchester on the 21st March. The meeting and the workshop concentrated on the deep underground repository consultations, as well as engagement with Magnox and international liaison.

COSLA's SCCORS (Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances) group met in Glasgow on the 12th March. The new Co-Chairs from Renfrewshire (Councillor Michelle Campbell) and Inverclyde Council (Councillor Jim McEleny) are seeking to consolidate a budget from the NDA and determine staffing and a future work programme. The meeting will be discussed in more detail at the upcoming NFLA Scotland meeting. Bill Hamilton has confirmed to the NFLA Secretary that the NDA are looking to provide SCCORS with an adequate budget to assist it in scrutinising its work in Scotland.

Agreed: To note the report and respond to the consultations.

6. Alternatives to nuclear energy

The NFLA Secretary gave an overview of activity in promoting local, decentralised and renewable forms of energy.

UK Clean Growth Plan Strategy / Helm Energy Costs Review –

Over the past few months, the NFLA has responded in detail to the UK Government's consultation on its Clean Growth Plan and Professor Dieter Helm's report reviewing the costs of developing low carbon energy policy. Both of these responses are on the NFLA website. In both cases NFLA has emphasised that too much focus of UK energy policy remains on expensive forms of new nuclear in comparison to the ever decreasing costs of renewables. A response from the Government on both consultations is expected shortly.

Scottish renewables policy and energy company –

In the upcoming NFLA Scotland Forum meeting, the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor will provide a wide range of renewable energy initiatives that are continuing to take place in Scotland. The most interesting of these is a Scottish national energy company. A report by electrical design engineer Craig Berry suggests Scotland could become a 'European giant' in renewables if it is progressed effectively. The detail of the energy company is still being drafted by Berry suggests it should prioritise reductions in fuel poverty, provided 75% of energy demand through renewables, decentralise Scottish energy supply, expand research and development and maximise social value.

A full report of such developments is being planned in a new NFLA Policy Briefing which will be developed shortly.

Manchester City Council report on energy policy / GM Green Energy Summit –

The NFLA Secretary, in his role as a Principal Policy Officer for Manchester City Council, and due to the high quality work the NFLA provides on decentralised, renewable energy, was asked to develop a report on Manchester City Council's energy policy, its interaction at the county level and the real challenge for the future in an increasingly difficult policy environment. The report was considered by the Council's Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee and can be found on the Council's website.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority is organising a Green Energy Summit on the 21st March in Manchester Central Conference Centre. The summit will consider how the 10 GM Councils with the Combined Authority can move forward in the development of low carbon, decentralised, renewable energy policy. This comes at a time when the Tyndall Centre in Manchester University has argued the problems of climate change could become so acute that published plans to aim for a 'zero carbon' Greater Manchester by 2050 will need to be speeded up to 2038. This could require substantial resources and a much greater level of cooperation at a time when public sector resources have been significantly trimmed.

The NFLA Secretariat will be publishing a new update on the 'state of play' in decentralised energy around the UK and Ireland, including more 'best practice' examples.

Ireland and renewable energy –

At the recent NFLA All Ireland Forum meeting in Omagh, consideration was made on how the island of Ireland needs to move urgently forward on developing low carbon renewable energy solutions over the next decade. Professor Barry McMullin emphasised how urgent the climate change issues was for Ireland, suggesting it did not just have to look at low carbon solutions, but also negative carbon solutions. Meabh Cormacín from the Northern Ireland Renewable Industry Group and Declan Allison from Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland highlighted the policy vacuum in the north on moving renewable energy support forward without a functioning devolved government. NFLA representative for Fingal County Council, Councillor David Healy, is also representing the organisation at a day conference seeking to move forward with Irish renewables organised by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland.

The potential of hydrogen green gas –

An upcoming NFLA Scotland seminar will be considering the potential of green hydrogen gas as part of a low carbon future, particularly in the area of renewable heating. A speaker from the Scottish Government and Scottish Gas Networks has been invited. The prospects for geothermal energy will also be looked at. The NFLA Secretary is also hosting a meeting in Manchester to look at similar prospects in England, particularly with interest from Northern Gas Networks.

Agreed: To note the report and for the Secretariat to produce a new report on progress with decentralised energy.

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 and wider peace issues.

International Mayors for Peace development –

As of March 1st 2018, 7,553 towns and cities were members of Mayors for Peace. 45 new members have joined in the past three months, including the first member from Laos, meaning that Mayors for Peace have members now in 163 countries.

In late January the Executive Director of ICAN, Beatrice Fihn, visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki and met with the Mayors of both cities, as well as the Secretary General of Mayors for Peace. The event including a number of high profile speaking engagements, visits to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Peace Museums and speaking to hibakusha and other NGOs. The Japanese Government declined to meet her. The visit generated a considerable amount of publicity.

The Mayors for Peace Secretariat are planning involvement in two prominent international nuclear weapons conferences in April and May. The Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will be in Geneva between April 23rd – 27th for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference, leading an international delegation which will include the Lord Mayor of Manchester and the NFLA Secretary (in his Mayors for Peace role). This will include speaking at the NGO session to the conference, holding a youth forum and an Executive meeting of the Mayors for Peace. Following this, in early May the UN in New York will host a High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament. Mayors for Peace Executive Advisors in the US will represent the organisation at the meeting.

Development of Mayors for Peace in Europe –

Further discussion has taken place between European Lead Cities around the proposed development of a loose European Mayors for Peace structure. It has been agreed that a special European Lead Cities meeting with Hiroshima will take place during the time they are in Geneva on April 26th. The Lord Mayor of Manchester and the NFLA Secretary, representing Manchester, will attend this meeting.

UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace progress –

Sheffield City Council held a special event to celebrate its renewal of interest in the Mayors for Peace. This was held on 31st January at Sheffield Town Hall and was chaired by the Lord Mayor

of Sheffield. The event included speeches from the NFLA Secretary (on behalf of the Lord Mayor of Manchester), Rebecca Johnson from ICAN UK and Bruce Kent of CND UK. The event also included speeches from schoolchildren, faith leaders and the lighting of peace candles.

A joint Mayors for Peace / NFLA seminar has been organised for the 23rd March in Leeds Civic Hall. The seminar will inform members of progress in the nuclear weapons debate and in local peace education, and it includes the following speakers:

- Fabian Hamilton MP, Shadow Minister for Peace and Development
- Rebecca Johnson of ICAN's International Steering Group
- Sean Morris, NFLA / Mayors for Peace Chapter Secretary
- Graham Golding from Peace Jam UK
- Carolyn Leary, CRESST Sheffield, who support various children and adult peace education programmes.

Bike for Peace tour Manchester to Liverpool, May 2018 –

Discussions have taken place with the Norwegian group Bike for Peace to hold a bike ride between Manchester and Liverpool in May 2018. A delegation of 6 cyclists will include a number of Norwegian Mayors and other supporters of Mayors for Peace. Civic receptions with the Lord Mayors of Manchester and Liverpool are being pursued and a visit to Warrington Peace Centre is planned.

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.

CND 60th anniversary events –

A small NFLA delegation attended a special event held in Portcullis House, Westminster to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). The event included short speeches from Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn, Green Leader Caroline Lucas, CND Vice President Bruce Kent, CND General Secretary Kate Hudson and CND National Chair Dave Webb, who noted the welcome cooperation with NFLA in his speech. There was also a photographic exhibition charting CND's history. There were a number of other prominent MPs, members of the House of Lords, faith and peace groups in attendance.

The importance of CND's iconic logo - which has become an internationally recognised peace symbol - will be marked with a symbol tour of Britain. A giant three-dimensional logo installation will visit more than twenty dramatic locations across Britain. NFLA members are encouraged to support local events that take place near them.

ICAN Executive Director holds meetings and events in England and Scotland –

ICAN's Executive Director Beatrice Fihn held a short visit to England and Scotland on the 12th – 14th March. In London, this involved a meeting with ICAN UK groups to discuss strategy in challenging the UK and the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales. An evening invitation to speak to Chatham House and to supportive MPs was also taken up.

In Scotland a meeting and media briefing in the Scottish Parliament took place to meet ICAN groups and members of the Parliament's Cross Party Group on Nuclear Weapons. There was also a visit to the weekly vigil outside the gates of the Faslane Trident submarine base and Peace Camp, followed by an informal dinner to meet with ICAN affiliated groups in Scotland.

National Audit Office report on Trident costs and UK defence policy –

An analysis of the Ministry of Defence's budget by the National Audit Office (NAO), outlined the department's spending plans could be "unrealistic". It warns that that the Ministry of Defence's 10-year equipment plan has a funding black hole of £4.9bn. It also notes this could rise to as much as £20.8bn if forecast price rises occur and what the NAO labelled "ambitious" cost savings are not achieved. If the MOD is not able to afford equipment purchases and support it could also have a serious impact on companies such as BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce.

The MOD plans to spend £179.7bn over the next decade on equipment and support. However, the examination by the NAO revealed a series of huge holes, such as costs not factored in to the plans. These include £9.6bn in higher costs from the increasingly expensive replacement Trident submarine programme, as well as the £1.3bn price of buying five Type 31e navy frigates. If a £6bn contingency fund the MOD has is used, the funding gap still remain at £4.9bn. The NAO also noted other senior risks, including what it described as a £3.2bn “potential understatement of costs” by the MOD and a £4.6bn price increase because of the weaker pound, which pushes up prices when buying foreign equipment, an increasing core part of defence expenditure. The NAO is sceptical whether the MOD can actually make the £8.1bn of savings it plans to over the coming decade.

North Korea and Iran nuclear weapons debate –

Following recent discussions between the North and South Korean Governments, the North Korean Government has announced it is willing to talk to the United States about curtailing its nuclear weapons programme. It has also agreed to refrain from conducting nuclear weapon tests while its talks with South Korea continued. The success of these talks comes from the quiet diplomacy of the new South Korean Government.

Concerns though remain that the United States may withdraw from the deal on Iran’s nuclear weapon programme. The European Union have been given until May 11th to offer amendments to the current deal with Iran, which they continue to strongly support whilst the United States Government currently opposes. It is looking increasingly likely that the Iran deal is under serious threat.

AWE Aldermaston seeks to increase its radioactive discharge by over 2200% -

Nuclear Information Service (NIS) reported in early February that the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) applied to the Environment Agency to increase the quantity of volatile beta emitters at Aldermaston is allowed to release into the environment. AWE are currently allowed to release 4.4 megabecquerels (MBq) of volatile beta emitters into the air as gas every year and they have applied to increase that limit to 100 MBq a year. This would be an increase of 22 times, or 2200%. The request to increase the limits are likely to link in to the Trident replacement programme. NFLA welcome and support NIS’s detailed response to the Environment Agency’s consultation.

Defence diversification progress -

The NFLA are involved in an Arms Conversion / Defence Diversification Steering Group looking at ways to engage with trade unions, political parties and interested groups in developing new and imaginative defence diversification strategies. On the 8th February, the NFLA Secretary and two other members of the group met with Rebecca Long-Bailey, Labour’s Shadow Business Secretary to discuss these matters. Rebecca Long-Bailey was broadly supportive of moves to develop this, and encouraged the group to also meet with Shadow Defence Secretary Nia Griffith. Labour’s Shadow Peace and Disarmament Secretary Fabian Hamilton is also speaking at the NFLA / Mayors for Peace joint seminar in Leeds, which will provide opportunity to seek his views on these matters. The Steering Group is meeting again on the 11th April in Manchester.

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, which included a brief update of its report of concern on nuclear plant life extensions.

NFLA / CNFE letter to the European Commission on transboundary nuclear health & safety -

The NFLA had cooperated with the CNFE Secretariat in Vienna and the Dutch Council of Bergen op Zoom to send a joint letter to the European on concerns over transboundary issues with aging nuclear reactors. A response to the letter has been received. CNFE welcome that the Commissioner has understood the relevance of joint concerns, but is disappointed that there are no improvements planned or announced regarding public participation and transparency in relation to Euratom Article 8. Although Article 8 and point 12 of the preamble to the Directive make it fundamentally clear that it is essential that the public has access to adequate information; the actual availability of that information depends almost entirely on national legislation. A citizen in the Netherlands just 15 kms of a Belgian nuclear plant (like Bergen op Zoom), has less information and less rights than a Belgian

citizen who lives also at 15 km distance. This issue is not answered by the Commissioner. NFLA is discussing with CNFE how to respond to the letter, and is also discussing ways to bring the matter to the attention of MEPs in the European Parliament.

NFLA / KIMO submission to the OSPAR Radiation Substances Committee and Irish Government consultation on transboundary issues with Hinkley Point C –

A joint response by NFLA and KIMO International was sent to the OSPAR Radiation Substances Committee meeting in March. It considered the potential impacts on gaseous and liquid radioactive discharges from the proposed new nuclear programme in England and Wales.

The submission concluded:

- Gaseous and liquid emissions from the UK's proposed new reactor programme could mean up to 23 theoretical deaths somewhere in the world for every year all of the reactors operate. Since they are each expected to operate for 60 years the total number of theoretical deaths could be as high as 1380.
- The new reactors would produce extremely high levels of radioactive spent fuel. In the year 2200 spent fuel arisings would amount to almost five times the radioactivity contained in all existing legacy wastes from the UK's nuclear power industry.
- The requirement for 'Best Available Techniques' (and clean technology) for producing electricity should rule out building new electricity generating stations which produce such highly dangerous wastes. Especially as less expensive, quicker and safer alternatives are available which don't produce such wastes.

Relating to this, in autumn 2017 the NFLA responded to the UK Government's consultation on transboundary impacts of the Hinkley Point C development. This had come out after pressure from the Espoo Convention Committee that environmental impact assessments that have a potential transboundary context should be undertaken. This submission can be found on the NFLA website.

Irish environmental groups, with NFLA support have successfully lobbied the Irish Government to sponsor a consultation seeking local views on the potential impacts to Ireland of the Hinkley Point C development. A model response is being developed by the NFLA for Councils and individuals to use.

7th anniversary of the Fukushima disaster and progress with ameliorating the site -

The 7th anniversary of the Fukushima disaster took place on 11th March 2018. There were a number of events in London, Japan and around the world to commemorate it. A special 'Remember Fukushima' meeting in Portcullis House, Westminster formed the heart of UK campaigning. There was significant media coverage of the anniversary across the world. The Guardian focused on the ongoing issues for those 160,000 people who were evacuated and the pressure being placed on them by the Japanese Government to return to 'clean' areas. Other media highlighted the huge radioactive waste problem on and around the site and the failure of the 'ice wall' to stop the flow of contaminated water from the site into the Pacific Ocean.

In early February, TEPCO, who owned the Fukushima facility, admitted new highly radioactive levels had been found on the site, seven years after the disaster. TEPCO made the discovery in a reactor containment vessel in January, finding eight sieverts per hour of radiation. TEPCO also admitted contaminated water around the plant's three damaged reactors was still seeping into the ground, causing major difficulties in the decommissioning process. The company has admitted that it could be until 2020 until the contamination issue is resolved. There is now over 1 million tonnes of contaminated radioactive water on the site now, contained in over 1,000 steel tanks. This rises by 400 tonnes every day. The Japanese Government has still not decided what to do with the water, amidst calls from some 'experts' that it could be slowly released into the sea.

A new international study has found new evidence that uranium and other radioactive materials, such as caesium and technetium, have been found in tiny particles released from the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactors. This could mean the environmental impact from the fallout may last much longer than previously expected. The researchers discovered uranium from nuclear fuel embedded in or associated with caesium-rich micro particles that were emitted from the plant's reactors during the meltdowns. The size of the particles is enough for humans to inhale them. The

reactor debris fragments were found inside the nuclear exclusion zone, in paddy soils and at an abandoned aquaculture centre, located several kilometres from the nuclear plant. This new study is now showing that small, solid particles were also emitted, and that some of these particles contain very long-lived radionuclides. At present, chemical data on the fuel debris located within the damaged nuclear reactors is impossible to get due to the high levels of radiation. The micro-particles found by the international team of researchers will provide vital clues on the decommissioning challenges that lie ahead, which it appears will remain complex and long-running.

Agreed: To note the report.

10. 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.

NFLA submission to proposed changes to nuclear emergency planning regulations –

In late 2017, the NFLA Secretariat submitted a detailed response to the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments on proposed and significant changes to nuclear emergency planning. The changes arise from the need to transpose parts of the Euratom Basic Safety Standards Directive (BSSD) into UK law. In the consultation the Government argued this would require major changes to the REPPiR regulations (Radiation Emergency Planning and Public Information), which relate to offsite emergency plans at nuclear sites, and some minor changes to regulations on the transportation of radioactive materials. The NFLA Secretariat has been in touch with the Government and understands it will respond to the consultation in the summer. The NFLA Secretary is continuing to input issues of concern to the government on these matters. A briefing on the complexity around evacuation areas after a nuclear emergency developed by Dr Ian Fairlie has been reproduced on the NFLA website and in a media release.

One issue around nuclear emergency planning that remains of concern to the NFLA is around the pre-distribution of potassium iodine tablets, which would provide protection to the thyroid gland. The issue has re-emerged after the Belgian Government announced it will pre-distribute such tablets across the country. In the UK, tablets are only provided to a very small number of households in closest proximity to nuclear sites. There are stockpiles of tablets kept in regional centres for quick deployment by the emergency services. NFLA have consistently suggested it would be better to pre-distribute to an area of at least 30kms around a nuclear site, linking in to the type of evacuation shown at Fukushima.

Nuclear transportation issues -

As noted previously, a report by Nukewatch Scotland argued that Scottish local authorities have a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act to ‘warn and inform’ the public to all perceived risks in the district, but they are 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.

The Scottish Parliament is discussing this report in May. The NFLA is planning a follow-up seminar to consider English matters in this area with an English Forum seminar in Oxford in June.

Agreed: To note the report.

11. NFLA Steering Committee meetings in 2018

The next NFLA Steering Committee meeting will take place in ***East Room, Leeds Civic Hall on Friday 23rd March 2018.***

12. NFLA / Mayors for Peace joint seminar

A joint seminar was held with the Mayors for Peace Chapter to discuss nuclear weapons and peace education issues. This has been developed into a Mayors for Peace Policy Briefing Number 15, which can be found on the NFLA and Mayors for Peace websites.