

NFLA Policy Briefing No.176



Date: 12th July 2018

Subject: Summary of key points and actions from the NFLA Steering Committee meeting, Edinburgh City Chambers, 21st June 2018

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

The NFLA Steering Committee Vice-Chair, Scotland, Councillor Bill Butler, welcomed members to the meeting in Edinburgh City Chambers. The Vice Chair thanked Councillor David Key and Edinburgh City Council for hosting the meeting, and the accompanying seminar. A minutes silence was held in memory of Alderman Peter Morrison, a former Manchester City Councillor, Steering Committee and passionate advocate of the NFLA.

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 English Forum –

The NFLA English Forum held a well-attended joint seminar with the UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter in Leeds Civic Hall on the 23rd March. The seminar focused on the work of ICAN and Mayors for Peace to promote the Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons and some local best practice examples to promote peace education.

The Forum also held a seminar in Oxford Town Hall on the 15th June which considered nuclear transport concerns and the NFLA's latest report on decentralised energy. Its next meeting will be held in Hull Guildhall in late October.

NFLA Welsh Forum -

The NFLA Welsh Forum held a joint conference with WANA, PAWB, CADNO, Stop Hinkley and CND Cymru on April 14th in the Owain Glyndwr Centre, Machynlleth. The packed meeting looked at new nuclear issues at Wylfa, concerns over sediment from the Hinkley Point site being dumped at a site close to Cardiff Bay and the effective renewable alternatives to nuclear power. There was also workshops looking at campaigning and at the impact of the UK leaving the Euratom Treaty. The Conference provided an excellent opportunity to develop Welsh campaigns. The Forum's next meeting will be to host the Steering Committee with a seminar in Cardiff County Hall on the 28th September.

NFLA Scotland Forum -

The NFLA Scotland Forum held a business meeting, AGM and seminar in Glasgow City Chambers on the 19th April in the same location. The seminar focused on the prospects for hydrogen energy and geothermal energy in Scotland with speakers from the Scottish Government, Scottish Gas Networks and Glasgow University. The Forum held a short business meeting prior to the NFLA Steering Committee on the 21st June and an afternoon seminar noted below. Its next meeting will be in Clydebank Town Hall on the 20th September, which will include a joint seminar with the Mayors for Peace Chapter and ICAN UK.

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES:
AN ICAN COALITION PARTNER, THE 2017 NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE**

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NFLA All Ireland Forum -

The NFLA All Ireland Forum last met at The Grange, Omagh on the 9th March. Its next meeting will be held in Dundalk Town Hall on the 12th October, with the Forum also hosting the UK and Ireland NFLA AGM and meetings in Newry on the 7th December. In the meantime, the NFLA Secretariat cooperated with a number of Irish Councils over consultations and meetings they organised to provide local public comment on a UK Government consultation around the transboundary impacts of Hinkley Point C. Notable public meetings took place in Dundalk, Fingal, Kildare, Wicklow and Kilkenny. The NFLA Secretariat also assisted the Irish Environmental Network to deliver a presentation to the Irish Parliament Joint Planning, Housing and Local Government Committee considering the same matter.

Co-operation with CNFE and KIMO International -

The Cities for a Nuclear Free Europe (CNFE) Secretariat welcomed the decision of the Belgian Government to close the country's seven nuclear reactors at Doel and Tihange by 2025. Both reactors have been criticized over safety concerns by German, Belgian and Dutch local authorities. Vienna City Council also hosted a conference to commemorate the 32nd anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. This conference noted the continuing issues to deal with radioactive contamination, the continued push for new nuclear reactors in Europe and the connections between nuclear energy and nuclear weapons.

The NFLA Secretariat joined with KIMO International to submit a report on concerns of the proposed UK new nuclear programme on atmospheric and marine radiation releases to the OSPAR Radiation Substances Committee. The report was considered and it was asked for the UK Government to respond. This response was disappointing, and NFLA is cooperating with KIMO and the Irish Environmental Network, and through the Irish EPA, to increase pressure in this area on the Irish Government.

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 -

The first phase of EU withdrawal negotiations around Euratom is now complete and there is a preliminary agreement on the draft legal text for the withdrawal agreement and extension of the current rules until December 2020 through an implementation/transition period. The Nuclear Safeguards Bill, which will bring the arrangements on nuclear safety and cooperation to a national level overseen by the nuclear regulator, was passed by Parliament on the 7th June. Outline agreement on nuclear safeguards have also been agreed with the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA), who will become the external inspector of UK arrangements.

However, the future relationship between the UK and the EU and Euratom remains uncertain. The UK Government is seeking to mitigate the most acute risks through a policy response addressing the major issues of nuclear safeguards and nuclear co-operation agreements with key international partners involved with nuclear fuel movements (i.e. US, Japan, Canada and Australia).

According to the Government's implementation plan the new safeguards regime and all the necessary nuclear co-operation agreements are supposed to be in place by April 2019. However, the EU's Energy and Environment Sub-Committee wrote to the Minister for Business and Industry, Richard Harrington MP, on the 18th May asking for his response to media reports that the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) is falling behind in its efforts to prepare for Brexit. At the ONR NGO Forum, the lead officer on this matter said they were recruiting staff ready for this major change, but they had concerns over the implementation of a new IT that will have to monitor a domestic nuclear safeguards system.

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 offers £5 billion subsidy for Wylfa B -

In a major change to UK Government energy policy, it announced that it may offer Hitachi up to £5 billion in taxpayer financial support for building the Wylfa B nuclear power reactor. The Chairman of Hitachi met with the Prime Minister in early May to discuss this matter. Hitachi believe there is too much risk for it to proceed with Wylfa B on its own. It is also seeking the same type of financial support from the Japanese Government and Japanese investment banks. At a board meeting, Hitachi agreed to progress with the project, despite misgivings from a number of board members (according to media reports), though it will not make a final investment decision until 2019.

Despite earlier media reports suggesting the investment would be higher, at £6.5 billion, the Parliamentary statement by Business and Energy Minister Greg Clark remains more conditional and tentative than expected. Mr Clark said they had only reached an initial agreement with Hitachi to back the Wylfa plant but emphasised that no final decision had yet been made and negotiations were just beginning. He continued: "For this project the government will be considering direct investment alongside Hitachi and Japanese government agencies."

A key factor in this deal will be the final 'strike price' for the energy from a Wylfa site, which needs to be significantly less than the £92.50 per MWh agreed for Hinkley Point C. Greg Clark did not confirm in his statement what they would be, but it is expected to be around £75 - £77 per MWh. This is still considerably higher than the £62.14 recently agreed for offshore wind projects, with solar and onshore wind cheaper still.

One of the real concerns for NFLA is that Hitachi may be looking to escape financial liability in the event of an accident or serious incident on the site, seeking the Government to underwrite it. It also puts the taxpayer at financial risk of huge losses if the project fails. This is at the heart of the NFLA's public comment on the proposed deal, which is on the NFLA website. On the same day of Clark's announcement, the Hitachi-owned Horizon Partnership submitted a 900 page application to the Planning Inspectorate seeking Development Consent. The Inspectorate now has 90 days to analyse it to determine whether it is acceptable to move forward through the national planning process. The Steering Committee asked the Secretariat to continue to engage with this issue, and it will play a core part of the Welsh Forum / Steering Committee joint seminar being planned for Cardiff County Hall at the end of September.

Hinkley Point C update -

While work continues to clear the site ready for developing new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point, the problems with the developing of similar reactors in other countries, particularly at Flamanville in France, could signal further delays for the UK project. After 3 - 4 years delay, the EPR reactor design is finally coming close to be developed at Taishan in China, but it is still around a year away in Finland (now 8 years late) and serious safety issues have come to light in Flamanville.

At Flamanville, EDF has detected quality deviations on a number of welds on the new reactor it is building. As a result, it has had to inform the French nuclear safety regulator ASN. This may incur further adjustments to the start-up timetable and budget, which can only be determined after further checks and the licensing process by the ASN. Flamanville-3 was currently expected to reach full power in Q4 2019 with fuel loading and first hot tests scheduled at the end of 2018. The quality deviations concern the welding of pipes on the main secondary system and are in addition to a deviation with respect to the correct application of "high-quality" requirements of the main secondary system that EDF flagged on February 22 to the ASN.

EDF has decided to carry out additional controls on the 150 welds in question and has ordered a full report into the causes and nature of the deviations. The additional controls and report will be completed by the end of May. The construction cost is currently estimated at €9.2bn. These welding revelations come just a short time after the UK nuclear regulator raised concerns about substandard quality control checks on EDF's supply chain for Hinkley Point. Flamanville was originally due to cost €3.3 billion, but is likely now to cost around €10.5 billion and possibly more.

The Steering Committee welcomed the Secretariat cooperating with the Irish Environment Network (IEN) to organise a meeting with an Oireachtas Joint Select Committee considering the potential impacts of an accident at Hinkley Point C on Ireland. At the meeting, Professor John Sweeney was critical of the models used by the nuclear industry and the UK Government in risk, safety and waste assessments – some older models were used in calculations, for example, despite the fact that more modern ones exist. Professor Steve Thomas added that the reputation of both Flamanville and Hinkley's supplier "*is in tatters*" after it emerged in 2015 that parts of the safety-critical reactor vessel supplied to Flamanville did not meet specification. Attracta Uí Bhroin from IEN also noted there was an "extraordinary level of frustration, anger and disappointment" among environmental groups at the Irish Government's reaction to these plans. NFLA plan to cooperate with IEN to bring some of these issues to a wider local government audience at its next meeting in Dundalk.

Update with other proposed new nuclear sites -

The Government's announcement on Wylfa will be of interest to South Korean nuclear utility KEPCO as it considers buying Toshiba's stake in NuGen to develop Sellafeld Moorside. KEPCO has appeared to be losing enthusiasm for the project in the absence of direct support from the UK government - especially with prospects of a new reactor deal in Saudi Arabia. KEPCO is now saying that it will finalise its purchase of NuGen by September 2018 after analysing its potential profits and viability.

EDF Energy told *The Times* at the start of April that it would reconsider plans for Sizewell C if it is unable to agree a viable financing model with the UK government. In the article, EDF appeared to threaten to abandon work unless it receives assurances from the government this year that a viable funding model exists. Simone Rossi, EDF Energy's UK chief executive, said that rapid progress was needed because promised cost savings would not materialise if there was a significant delay between work on Hinkley and work on Sizewell. Mr Rossi has promised that Sizewell should be a fifth cheaper to build than Hinkley Point because EDF will be able to replicate much of the design work and will have a fully qualified workforce and supply chain ready to transfer across. However, he warned that a delay could jeopardise this. A lull of six months could be surmountable, but two years or more would be a problem. However, EDF later denied it had threatened to abandon work on Sizewell C and distanced itself from a report that it may pull the plug on the project unless it receives financial assurances from the Government. Emily Gosden, Energy Editor of the Times, tweeted "*apparently EDF has 'distanced itself' from my story this morning... which reported what its chief executive told me on the record.*"

The Chinese company CGN, which is aiming to build its own modified reactor design at Bradwell, has said it will not require any subsidy from the UK to develop its plans for the site. Its position could be embarrassing for the UK Government if it has to provide state support elsewhere. Other sites at Oldbury, Heysham and Hartlepool still seem to be years away from development and highly contingent on the success, or not, of other sites.

Developments with Small Modular Nuclear (SMR) Reactors -

In the United States, NuScale, which has the most advanced of any new design to build a small modular reactor, received phase 1 design approval from the US nuclear regulator NRC in May. This gives it a realistic chance of being developed in the next decade. Bloomberg reports that NuScale is aiming for commercial operations by 2026. However, despite these positive moves, the troubled state of the nuclear industry in the United States, where both gas and renewables are cheaper and expanding rapidly, could have an impact on whether such developments can become financially viable, even with governmental support and backing.

Despite much lobbying and confident statements from the UK Government, it has still not announced a shortlist of developers, potential sites or siting criteria for SMR deployment. This announcement is now 18 months later than originally planned, suggesting the Government remains cautious on its development. NFLA will continue to monitor this issue.

Agreed: To 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 has submitted its views on 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 (NPS) 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 three briefings can be found on the NFLA website.

There were around 400 responses to the National Policy Statement (NPS) consultation. Key themes of the responses were that:

- A deep waste repository was not necessarily guaranteed i.e. there remains doubt that it will happen.
- The issue of retrievability is important to many – this is one of the NFLA's key concerns.
- There is a need to look at serious alternatives to 'geological disposal' – again a key NFLA theme from our consultation.

There were 155 responses to the Working with Communities (WWC) consultation, including a small number from Northern Ireland. Key questions or issues raised included:

- How to generate local support for a consent-based process.
- How a local process would work in practice.
- The need to clarify whether there is a local authority veto, and which Councils would be involved in deciding that veto.

The Welsh Government consultation received 57 online responses and 24 hard copy responses. Issues highlighted included:

- The implication of a recent Swedish court case for geological disposal in the UK.
- Long-term storage of waste as an alternative to disposal.
- The need for a clearer definition of what constitutes a relevant 'community'.

There was a lively discussion on the consultations at the NuLEAF meeting at which the NFLA Secretary (in his role as a Manchester officer) and Councillor Chaytor from Hull attended. The discussion reiterated concerns over core definitions and the issues around retrievability and long-term storage. The NFLA Secretary and NGO representatives were able to reiterate their deeper concerns on this process at a recent meeting of the BEIS NGO Forum.

The Steering Committee asked the NFLA Secretariat to keep a close watching brief as this process develops later this year.

NDA Stakeholder Summit and related matters -

The 2018 NDA Stakeholder Summit will be held at the Berkeley Green Campus of South Gloucestershire & Stroud College on 10th and 11th July 2018. The NFLA Secretary and Cllr Doig from Renfrewshire Council will represent the organisation at it. Following the critical National Audit Office report on the NDA's failed Magnox contract process, the NDA Stakeholder Summit will focus on what will happen next, amongst other issues. The final inquiry into the issue from Steve Holliday is expected shortly. The summit will also consider research and development, Sellafield progress and site stakeholder groups amongst other issues.

The NFLA Secretary has been in touch with the NDA and RWM around the potential to establish an annual NDA NGO Forum, following an initial offer from the NDA. A number of NGO representatives have indicated they would be interested in taking part in a meeting to critically engage with the NDA on decommissioning and waste management matters. This will be followed up after the NDA Stakeholder Summit.

Sellafield and Dounreay progress –

The Sellafield site is to be prosecuted by the nuclear regulator after an employee was exposed to dangerous levels of radiation. The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) said it was taking action over an incident in February 2017 in which a worker at the facility was contaminated. This is the first prosecution of Sellafield since the ONR was formed in 2014.

At Dounreay, approval has been sought from Highland Council for projects that would eventually open up the site of a nuclear power complex to other uses in around 300 years. The Council has been asked to approve phase three of this work. This includes dealing with some of the most challenging features of the site, including dismantling reactors and dealing with radioactive waste sites. The planning application also includes the construction of temporary buildings for housing robotic tools for retrieving waste from difficult to reach areas within the shaft and the silo.

Hinkley Point C ‘radioactive mud’ and Wylfa B radioactive waste consultation -

As noted previously, 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 taken up by independent AM Neil McEvoy. Two separate petitions have attracted over 60,000 signatures and have been submitted to the Welsh Assembly.

In late May a full debate took place in the Senedd, and the Welsh Environment Minister claimed the sediment that would be dumped at the site would be well under safe radioactive levels. A robust debate took place in the Senedd. The Petitions Committee Chair, UKIP's David Rowlands AM, said the report presented the evidence received "with limited commentary" and "without producing substantive conclusions or recommendations". Labour AM Mike Hedges said the mud samples and data should be made available to "external" experts. He added there should be a "peer review" of the data. Conservative AM David Melding said he was "satisfied that they do meet the standards as set by international law". Plaid Cymru's Simon Thomas AM said the issue illustrated that "we have so little control of our natural resources; that we have to accept the spoil of a nuclear power station in Hinkley Point". He also said that as a matter of principle it is the Welsh parliament that should decide what happens in Welsh waters. Independent AM Neil McEvoy, who had raised the issue on behalf of NGOs, dismissed the suggestion the mud had been tested properly and described the situation as a "dereliction of duty". He said: "We have a Welsh Government allowing Wales to be dumped on and the mud hasn't been tested... The top soil was tested - [but] you've got five samples only under five centimetres for 300,000 tonnes of mud."

The NFLA Secretary is in contact with Tim Deere-Jones and the Welsh Anti-Nuclear Alliance over further action. The Steering Committee welcomed the campaigning work of groups on this matter and requested that the Secretariat raise further concerns with Natural Resources Wales.

Update on NuLEAF and SCCORS -

The LGA's NuLEAF (Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum for England and Wales) group held a business meeting and AGM in London on the 8th June. Much of the meeting was taken up discussing the process on developing a deep-underground repository as noted above. At the AGM, Manchester's new NFLA and NuLEAF representative, Cllr Newman, was elected as one of the two Vice Chairs of NuLEAF, to represent NFLA's views at the meetings. The next meeting will be on the 12th September in Manchester.

COSLA's SCCORS (Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances) group met last in Glasgow on the 12th March. The two new Co-Chairs from Renfrewshire (Councillor Michelle Campbell) and Inverclyde Council (Councillor Jim McEleny) have also met with the NuLEAF Secretary. They are in the process of securing a Secretariat and determining a work programme. The NFLA Secretary hopes to meet them at the upcoming NFLA Stakeholder Summit.

Agreed: To note the report.

6. **Alternatives to nuclear energy**

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

NFLA report on the state of decentralised energy in the UK and Ireland

To ensure the NFLA stays at the forefront of research supporting its policy to promote and support the development of local, decentralised energy as a core part of energy policy across the UK and Ireland, the NFLA Secretariat, with the approval of the Chair and National Chairs commissioned the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor to provide a further update on best practice in this area. It is on the NFLA website and will be covered in presentations by the NFLA Secretary to upcoming NFLA Forum meetings in Oxford and Edinburgh.

The report outlines the challenges of climate change and the huge drive required to drastically reduce carbon emissions between 2018 and 2050. The report then provides 50 examples of best practice in a number of important areas:

- Developing Local Authority low carbon strategies and plans.
- Building low carbon homes and buildings.
- Developing new revenue streams for low carbon projects.
- Modernising the Local Authority estate with low carbon schemes.
- Building local smart energy neighbourhoods.
- Cooperating with the support of community energy schemes.
- Developing district heating networks.
- Developing renewable transport schemes.

The Steering Committee warmly welcomed this excellent and well researched report and asked the Secretariat to disseminate it widely. The report shows, that despite cuts to subsidies, a whole range of innovative and cutting edge schemes are being developed across local government. The report aims to be ambitious and visionary, encouraging Councils to find out more and become part of NFLA, the core group supporting and embracing such activity.

Scottish renewables policy and Scottish Energy Company -

In the NFLA Scotland Forum that took place before the Steering Committee, the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor provided a wide range of renewable energy initiatives that are continuing to take place in Scotland, which continues to lead the way on renewable generation across the British and Irish Isles. The most interesting of these is a Scottish national energy company. The Policy Advisor's report highlights that the Scottish Government are currently mulling over whether such an entity can add value in producing low carbon energy and alleviate fuel poverty. This has to be balanced with the intense competition in the energy market and the risks that, at least in the short term, the energy company could make a financial loss as it builds up a customer base.

The Steering Committee agreed that the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor should respond to a Scottish Government consultation on this issue.

The UK Government has announced it is offering to support the potential for onshore wind to be a key part of an island energy strategy in the Western Isles, Orkney Isles and Shetland Islands, accessing a £60 million fund to develop low carbon infrastructure and prospects for renewable heating. The announcement comes as a welcome change in policy, and perhaps a softening of the government's view towards onshore wind for Scotland and Wales, though not in England.

The potential of hydrogen green gas -

A NFLA Scotland seminar and a meeting with Leeds City Council officers has shown significant interest from gas utility companies looking at developing green hydrogen gas as part of a low carbon future, particularly in the area of renewable heating. The informative seminar in Glasgow showed that considerable investment was taking place by Scottish Gas Networks, whilst Northern Gas Networks are also focusing on such matters as well. The NFLA Steering Committee asked the Secretariat to look at developing a short Policy Briefing on such matters over the summer to summarise the benefits, risks and challenges to developing such schemes.

Developments in fracking

While moratoriums on fracking remain in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, in England the Government has been trying to support the industry. In May the UK Government announced measures that would relax planning laws to assist fracking companies to test drilling sites. A new regulator is also being considered as well as a planning brokerage service. While moves are still continuing, despite much discontent, in Lancashire (where the first fracking test well has now been drilled) and North Yorkshire, a major new focus is in Nottinghamshire, where Ineos has won a legal challenge to drill in a site close to Sherwood Forest and the South Yorkshire border with Rotherham.

Ineos has also gone to court challenging the validity of the Scottish Government long-term moratorium on fracking. In the court case lawyers for the Scottish Government said they have not created a permanent ban, but rather a long-term moratorium. Ineos is continuing its legal challenge, seeking to lift the moratorium.

Agreed: To note the report and for the Secretariat to produce a new report on hydrogen gas.

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 –

Representatives from 10 Vice Presidents / Lead Cities of Mayors for Peace met in Geneva from April 22nd to 26th to attend the UN Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference, along with a number of internal meetings. Manchester was represented by the Lord Mayor of Manchester and the NFLA Secretary (in his Mayors for Peace role).

During the meetings in Geneva, time was given for European Lead Cities to meet as part of a process to develop a continental structure of cooperation. Part of this meeting was held with the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Secretary General of Mayors for Peace. The meeting came to a consensus as to the benefits of a European structure, that it should concentrate on pursuing the new second of the development of safe, peaceful and resilient cities, and that a Working Group of officers, including the NFLA / Mayors for Peace Chapter Secretary, should develop these talks further.

The Steering Committee warmly welcomed these developments.

Mayors for Peace Executive meeting -

The primary reason for participating in the events in Geneva was also to attend the Mayors for Peace Executive Conference. Attending the meeting were representatives from Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Manchester, Montreal, Frogn, Malakoff, Biograd na Moru, Granollers and Ypres.

The meeting considered progress with the Mayors for Peace Action Plan 2017 – 2019 and agreed that its mid-term Executive Conference would be held in Hannover, Germany in November 2019. The Action Plan is progressing well, and the Executive meeting particularly looked at ways its new second strand of developing safe, peaceful and resilient cities could be progressed. Presentations were given by Granollers on its work on tackling violence and terrorism, which is a core part of the UCLG World Congress in Madrid in November. The Philippine city of Mantiñlupa and the city of Montreal explained projects and policy around tackling poverty in their cities. The NFLA Secretary outlined the work in Manchester around tackling climate change. The Executive Conference welcomed these presentations and pledged to work further on them in 2018 and 2019.

UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace progress –

A joint Mayors for Peace / NFLA seminar was held on the 23rd March in Leeds Civic Hall. Chaired by the Lord Mayor of Leeds, it included Mayors or senior councillors from a number of Yorkshire members, along with NFLA representatives and a large number of local / regional NGOs. The seminar had useful and informative presentations from Fabian Hamilton MP, Shadow Minister for Peace and Development; Rebecca Johnson of ICAN's International Steering Group; the NFLA /

Mayors for Peace Chapter Secretary; Graham Golding from Peace Jam UK and Carolyn Leary, CRESST Sheffield who support various children and adult peace education programmes.

The next joint seminar is planned for September 20th in Clydebank, West Dunbartonshire to coincide with International Peace Day (which is the following day). During this week a number of events are being planned by CND / ICAN Scotland that culminates with a peace rally close to the Faslane Trident nuclear base.

South Ayrshire Council have become the seventh UK Mayors for Peace member to receive gingko tree peace seeds from Hiroshima. These will be grown in the Botanical Gardens in Ayr. It is also an opportunity for increasing cooperation with the Council on peace issues. Any member that would like to receive seeds needs to liaise with the NFLA Secretary. They are an excellent form of activity in showing solidarity with Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Bike for Peace tour Manchester to Warrington to Liverpool, May 2018 –

The Norwegian group Bike for Peace held a special bike ride supporting the values of Mayors for Peace between Manchester and Liverpool in May 2018. The delegation of 6 cyclists included a Mayor, two councillors and formal supporters of Mayors for Peace. It was led by Tore Naerland, Coordinator of Mayors for Peace. Civic receptions were held with the Lord Mayors of Manchester and Liverpool, along with a visit to the Warrington Peace Centre.

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.

US – North Korea nuclear weapons summit in Singapore -

President Trump met North Korean Leader Kim Jong-Un to discuss a process to see the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. Given the unpredictability of both politicians, it remains to be seen if real and tangible progress can be achieved in dismantling North Korea's nuclear weapon programme. Much of the credit for the summit should be given to quieter diplomacy of the South Korean Government. It is disappointing that the summit is not being held under the auspices of the United Nations.

NFLA supported ICAN's roadmap for the development of a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. ICAN's detailed five point plan allows for a more considered and sensible series of measures that cannot just bring about disarmament in North Korea, but de-escalate tensions in the wider region.

Disagreements over curtailing Iran's nuclear weapons programme –

The positive, if confused, approach being taken with North Korea is contrary to Trump's American policy of confrontation with Iran, after deciding in May to pull out of the multilateral agreement which has controlled Iran's nuclear weapon programme. As part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the US, China, Russia and the European Union, each participating party has to continue to endorse its support for the agreement each year. President Trump announced that, in his government's view the Treaty is not fit for purpose and has many holes allowing Iran to maintain an aggressive posture in the world. As well as reneging on the Treaty, arguing it was 'deeply flawed', President Trump announced the US will recommence economic sanctions on Iran and put pressure on European states to support the American stance or find a way for an 'acceptable' renegotiation of the agreement.

Under the 2015 agreement, Iran has reduced its uranium stockpile was reduced by 98% to 300kg (660lbs), a figure that must not be exceeded until 2031. Iran has also drastically reduced the number of centrifuges installed at its nuclear facilities in Natanz and Fordo, and shipped tonnes of low-enriched uranium to Russia. Such activity is carefully monitored by the IAEA, who continue to confirm that Iran is complying with the JCPOA. The Steering Committee share the concern of many EU states in President Trump's unilateral action and wishes to see the issue monitored.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference and other initiatives -

The NFLA Secretary and Councillor Newman attended the NGO session of the UN Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference held in Geneva. As part of the NGO session, a meeting was organised by German NGOs and the German members of Mayors for Peace on promoting the 'Mutlangen Manifesto'. Mutlangen in Bavaria was host to an American base where nuclear weapons were stationed during the Cold War. These were removed after the signing of the INF Treaty between the US and the Soviet Union in 1987, but recent concerns have been noted that one or both sides may renege from this treaty. The meeting in Geneva allowed for discussion on the importance of this treaty and the local support for ensuring such nuclear weapons do not return to Germany. A photo session allowed supporting cities to the manifesto, like Hannover, Ypres and Manchester, to show such support.

The Conference continued the recent trend of frustrating stalemate and limited progress. The lines between those states who support and are ratifying the separate Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and those opposed to it widened with limited areas of consensus. At the NGO session both the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki urged member states to find ways to break this impasse.

A major UN High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament was due to take place in early May to discuss ways forward to build consensus in this area. However, at the NPT Conference, the members of the Non-Aligned Movement announced the conference would be postponed. Though reasons for the postponement were not expressly given, it appears to be due to divisions amongst the states who were organising it, as well as pressure put on some states not to attend. It is not clear when the conference will take place.

The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres announced a new disarmament initiative in late May. This new 'Agenda' focuses on three priorities – weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, and new battlefield technologies. The Steering Committee welcomed this progressive initiative.

'CND at 60' anniversary events -

A national tour of CND's iconic logo in its 60th anniversary year has commenced. The giant three-dimensional logo installation will visit more than twenty dramatic locations across Britain, including the White Cliffs of Dover, the Angel of the North in Gateshead, near the BAE dockyard at Barrow and outside the Faslane naval base in Helensburgh, at the Manchester Histories Festival, and the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol. It will also visit the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston, the target of anti-nuclear campaigners in every decade since the founding of CND in the 1950s. A major event was held on Easter Sunday, the 1st April 2018, with a rally and celebrations outside Aldermaston. NFLA members are encouraged to support this initiative when it is in their area.

The financial cost of Trident -

While Parliamentary approval of Trident may have been approved a few years ago, there remains considerable concern of its financial cost and the burden it may put on the wider defence budget. A recent National Audit Office report highlighted these concerns and suggested there is a financial 'black hole' in the project of £4.9 billion, which could rise to over £20.5 billion if the risks and complexities of the project grow. The Steering Committee welcomed a NFLA media release on the matter.

AWE Aldermaston seeks to increase its radioactive discharge by over 2000% -

The Environment Agency (EA) have announced that they are planning to approve the Atomic Weapons Establishment's (AWE) application to increase the quantity of volatile beta emitters that AWE Aldermaston is permitted to release into the environment. The EA is running a consultation on the draft decision, which closed on the 6th June. NFLA supported a detailed response issued by the Nuclear Information Service (NIS).

Defence diversification progress and meetings -

The latest meeting of the Arms Conversion / Defence Diversification Steering Group took place on the 11th April in Manchester. The meeting agreed upon the detail of what a Defence Diversification

Agency should consider. The group also offered support for a number of events taking place in this area, including:

- On the 9th June, the national Trades Union Councils Conference in Manchester held a workshop on updating the Lucas Plan and called for the TUC and Labour Party to establish a Shadow Defence Diversification Agency.
- On the 26th June, the Nuclear Education Trust will launch in Parliament their report on defence diversification and new opportunities in industrial strategy.
- On the 8th July, Yorkshire CND are holding a defence diversification conference with keynote speakers from academics and relevant politicians.

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.

Temporary closure of Hunterston B –

EDF confirmed that, following discussion with the ONR, the Hunterston B reactor would be closed until November which cracks in the graphite bricks surrounding the reactor are investigated. It would only restart operation after permission is granted from the ONR. As such, this means electricity output from Hunterston B could fall by 40% this year. The BBC has reported that dozens of cracks have now been discovered in reactor 3. There were just 3 cracks in 2015, and now there are 39. EDF admitted that the cracks have been developing at a slightly faster rate than anticipated. But they claim the reactor would come back on-line and operate until 2023. This matter was considered in more detail in the afternoon NFLA seminar. This unplanned outage is likely to cost EDF as much as £120 million in lost revenue.

Irish Government consultation on transboundary issues with Hinkley Point C –

NFLA also responded to the Irish Government's consultation, through Irish Councils, to the transboundary impacts on Ireland of the Hinkley Point C development. This consultation had come out after pressure from the Espoo Convention Committee and lobbying from An Taisce (Irish National Trust) and the Friends of the Irish Environment (FIE), with NFLA support. The NFLA's model response which was sent to Irish Councils is on the NFLA website. With some NFLA support, a number of Councils also held public meetings to encourage local people to also respond, such as in Louth, Fingal, Kilkenny, Wicklow and Kildare.

Belarusian delegation meeting on health and social care / Chernobyl issues –

The NFLA Secretary facilitated two meetings as part of a week of events for a senior Belarusian delegation that looked at health and social care best practice for vulnerable children and adults around Manchester and Stockport. The delegation was led by the Deputy Governor of the Gomel region, one of the most radioactively contaminated parts of the country after the Chernobyl disaster. The whole series of meetings was organised by Chernobyl Children's Project UK, who work closely with the regional government.

In Northern Ukraine new studies of radioactivity levels in milk show that they are still contaminated with levels over 'safe' international guidelines some 32 years after the disaster. A health study by Exeter University for Greenpeace found milk to be over five times above the safe level and suggested this could continue till at least 2040 if measures to decontaminate the area are not undertaken. These include relatively simple and cheap counter-protective measures. As such ingesting such milk will continue to put local communities at risk of cancers or immune system deficiencies.

In early June, a major forest fire in the area around Chernobyl raged for three days before being put out by local fire authorities. The local authorities claim that detectable radiation levels had not risen in the area outside the exclusion zone, but it is a reminder of ongoing concern, particularly as Ukraine and Belarus get hot, dry summers.

Fukushima update –

The biggest challenge for the Japanese Government and TEPCO at present with Fukushima is what to do with the huge levels of radioactively contaminated water on the site. Even 7 years on, around 160 tons of water treatment a day is required to cool the stricken reactors, and this water is then put into large water tanks. While it is treated, it still contains harmful radiation isotopes such as tritium. As a result, water contaminated with tritium is building up and space to store it at the disaster site is running out. All of the storage space will run out by 2021 according to the Japanese Government. Whilst the regulatory agencies have recommended slow dumping of the water into the ocean, the local fishing community, environmental groups and neighbouring countries have raised understandable concerns over the effects such an action would have on the marine environment. The decision has been deferred a number of times.

The pro-nuclear Japanese Government is still working hard to restart reactors closed by the disaster – at present 8 of the over 50 sites have reopened – as well as working hard to decontaminate the areas around Fukushima to encourage re-entry and ‘normalisation’ of the area. The Government’s recently published energy strategy still calls for nuclear to provide 20% of its energy mix. This remains highly unlikely in the medium term given the long-term legal challenges in achieving reactor restarts and the lack of public support for new nuclear facilities. The NFLA will continue to monitor these issues.

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.

Irish nuclear emergency planning safety issues –

Paul Dorfman, NFLA’s representative on the Irish Environment Protection Agency’s Radiation Issues Committee, attended its latest meeting on April 11th. The NFLA Secretariat asked him to raise specific concerns over emergency preparedness of Irish authorities in the event of a UK or French nuclear accident affecting the island. At the meeting the EPA stuck to the view that a significant accident would have catastrophic economic effects for Ireland. But they also stuck to the view that, even if there was a big accident in Sellafield, the majority of the radiation would fallout before it reached Ireland, that the key problem would be caesium and, by issuing iodine tablets this would prevent cancers. Dr Dorfman challenged this view at the meeting, and NFLA will look to provide further information to support an alternative view.

Nuclear weapon convoys discussed in the Scottish Parliament –

In a debate in the Parliament, Scottish Greens warned that local councils and the Scottish Government are failing in their duties to protect the public from the risk of accidents from a nuclear weapons convoy. The Minister for Community Safety Annabelle Ewing said she had written to police and fire inspectorates asking them to consider a review.

Meanwhile, safety problems affecting the nuclear weapon convoys have risen to a record high, according to new figures from the Ministry of Defence (MoD). The number of convoy incidents logged by officials in 2017 was 44, by far the most since 2008. It brings the total number of recorded incidents in the last ten years to 179. The MoD insists that the mishaps were mostly minor and posed no risk to the public.

The Steering Committee requested that the NFLA Secretariat develop a new and comprehensive report on nuclear transport concerns in their totality.

Agreed: To note the report.

11. NFLA Steering Committee meetings in 2018

The next NFLA Steering Committee meeting will take place in ***Cardiff County Hall on Friday 28th September 2018.***