

# *Nuclear Free Local Authorities* **briefing**



**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011

**No.91**

**Subject:** Summary of the key points from the NFLA Steering Committee and 2011 Annual General Meeting, Newry & Mourne Council Offices, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011

a) **NFLA Steering Committee**

1. **Welcome**

Councillor Michael Carr, NFLA All Ireland Forum Co-Chair and a Newry and Mourne District Councillor, welcomed all to the meeting in Newry.

The NFLA Secretary explained that the NFLA Chair, Bailie George Regan, was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. The NFLA Steering Committee agreed to send, via the Secretary, a message of best wishes to Bailie Regan now that he would also be officially standing down as Chair at the following Annual General Meeting.

It was also noted that Councillor Iris Hawkins had resigned for personal reasons from Shetland Islands Council in late September 2011. Glasgow City Council had also decided to replace Councillor Euan McLeod as its NFLA representative in October 2011. The NFLA Steering Committee agreed to send, via the Secretary, a message of thanks to former Councillor Hawkins and Councillor McLeod for their service to the NFLA.

2. **National NFLA Forum meetings**

The NFLA Secretary reported on progress with all four NFLA national Forums -

**NFLA Welsh Forum** – the Forum held a seminar in Gwynedd County Council offices in Caernarfon on the 14<sup>th</sup> October. The meeting allowed for the promotion of the NFLA Policy Briefing on Welsh energy policy and the NFLA submission to the Welsh Assembly energy inquiry. Carl Clowes and Neil Crumpton also spoke on the potential for new nuclear build at Wylfa and on the Friends of the Earth Wales report on Welsh energy needs. The NFLA Welsh Forum Chair also spoke at a very well attended Welsh nuclear concerned group's conference in Caernarfon on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

The NFLA Secretary, Councillor Ray Davies and Neil Crumpton from Friends of the Earth Wales met the new Welsh Environment Minister John Griffiths and his officials in Cardiff on the 17<sup>th</sup> October. The short meeting allowed for the NFLA to put forward several issues around new nuclear build and wider energy policy in Wales.

It is planned to hold the next NFLA Welsh Forum meeting in Cardiff County Hall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October (date to be confirmed) to follow on with some of the above themes.

## **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**

**NFLA English Forum** – the Forum held a seminar in Rotherham Town Hall on the 18<sup>th</sup> November. The meeting considered how Councils could fund major renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in a time of austerity. Speakers included Colin Hines from the Green New Deal Group and Kirklees Councillor Andrew Cooper on how the Council had developed innovative financing packages for energy projects. Case studies were also provided on Manchester City Council's energy demand management policies and on the Dearne Valley Eco-vision project.

The next meeting is planned to be in Leeds Civic Hall on the 17<sup>th</sup> February and will consider Mayors for Peace / Trident issues and nuclear emergency planning (date to be confirmed).

**NFLA All Ireland Forum** – the Forum held a seminar in Wexford County Hall on the 11<sup>th</sup> November. The meeting considered the potential development of renewable energy in Ireland with John McCann of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and Frank Gethings of the renewable energy company Eco Evolution providing a case study in Omagh. The NFLA Secretary provided an overview of relevant nuclear policy issues and the independent marine pollution specialist Tim Deere-Jones gave a presentation on the potential impact on the Irish Sea of radioactive discharges from a nuclear new build programme in England and Wales.

Following the NFLA Steering Committee and the NFLA AGM was a relevant seminar related to the Wexford meeting with speakers including the Northern Ireland Environment Minister Alex Attwood, Grattan Healy from the National Offshore Wind Association of Ireland, James Orr from Friends of the Earth and Rick Nickerson from KIMO International.

The next meeting will be in March 2012 and the NFLA Secretary will liaise with the NFLA All Ireland Forum Co-Chairs on the date and location.

**NFLA Scotland Forum** – the Forum held a business meeting in Manchester on the 16<sup>th</sup> September. The business meeting discussed in detail the draft NFLA Scottish energy progress briefing, which was approved subject to adding in some examples of the ways Scottish NFLA members were promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency and microgeneration. The report has been sent to the Scottish Energy Minister Fergus Ewing. The meeting also discussed a detail policy report from its Policy Advisor Pete Roche. From this and further discussion between its members, two detailed letters were agreed to go to the Environment Minister Richard Lochhead on Dounreay and radioactive waste issues; and to Energy Minister Fergus Ewing on fuel poverty.

The next meeting of the Forum will be its Annual General Meeting, which will be in Paisley on the 10<sup>th</sup> February (date to be confirmed).

**Agreed: To encourage Forum members to attend relevant meetings.**

### 3. **Nuclear Safety – Fukushima and the ONR Final Report**

The NFLA Secretary provided an overview of the Office for Nuclear Regulation's (ONR) final report on the potential impacts of the Fukushima nuclear disaster on the UK nuclear industry. An overview of the current issues facing the Japanese authorities at Fukushima was also provided.

The report noted the disappointment of the NFLA with the narrowness of the ONR report and its overall conclusions – that the UK nuclear industry was essentially 'safe' and largely unaffected by the Fukushima incident. The report also noted that the detail of the ONR report does contain a number of detailed concerns around nuclear emergency planning, flooding and the state of some of Sellafield's oldest facilities.

The Steering Committee welcomed the development of the ONR NGO dialogue meeting as a forum to allow the NFLA and other groups to raise their concerns over nuclear safety matters directly with the Chief Nuclear Inspector and other ONR staff.

The Committee also welcomed the potential development of a 'Fukushima – One Year On' conference in 2012.

It was also noted by the Committee a number of issues around the Fukushima incident:

- There was concern that the incident would not be under full control by the end of 2011, with recent information about potential nuclear fission at one of the stricken reactors, which can lead to another hydrogen explosion.
- The publication of Tepco's procedure manuals for the Fukushima Dai-ichi reactors number 2 and 3. The documents reconfirm that Tepco failed to make adequate preparations to protect the plant, specifically, to protect against an extended loss of power. In addition, although Tepco staff adhered to procedures after the earthquake, they failed to do so after the tsunami.
- The Japanese Government has now given \$7.3 billion to Tepco to assist them in paying compensation to the victims of the disaster. This will eventually rise to \$11.8 billion by March 2012 on the condition that Tepco produces a new and effective business plan.
- There still remains 200 – 500 tons of groundwater seeping from cracks in the reactor building walls every day, which mixes with water being pumped in to keep the reactors cool. According to Greenpeace International, Tepco are estimating that the buildings contain over 77,000 tons of radioactively contaminated water. Efforts to process the contaminated water is creating large volumes of radioactive sludge which is proving very difficult to manage.
- Rice from the nearby Onami district has found to exceed Japanese Government limits for caesium, which have now been banned for consumption. The rice measured 630 bequerels per kilogram, with the Government level 500 bequerels per kilogram.
- A study in the United States Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (PNAS) has found that radiation levels in north eastern Japan are high enough to make farming dangerous. Radiation levels downstream of Fukushima on rivers are also being found to have dangerous levels of radioactivity in studies by the Japanese Environment Ministry.
- A large international meteorological study has also reported the radiation that was released from Fukushima is much higher and has spread over a much larger area than originally suggested, with particles found as far as Canada and the United States. Whilst in Fukushima prefecture health officials have confirmed that the response rate for children's thyroid examinations is 77%, well over double the national rate. It has been confirmed that children in the area will have regular check-ups every two years until they reach the age of 20, and then every 5 years after that.
- At present over 5,500 tons of radioactive ash and sludge from Fukushima has been taken to a waste treatment centre in Yokohama, but there are still no firm strategy as to how to manage such waste. A temporary facility is being built at the Fukushima facility. The Japanese Army is expected to begin decontamination of the 20 kilometres exclusion zone from December onwards.

The Steering Committee also agreed that the NFLA Secretariat should seek to develop a response to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee inquiry into the public perception of nuclear risk.

***Agreed: To note the report. To support the development of a Fukushima conference. To seek to develop a submission to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee inquiry into the public perception of nuclear risk.***

#### **4. New Nuclear Build Developments**

The NFLA Secretary provided a detailed report outlining the continuing actions to develop a programme of new nuclear power stations in England and Wales.

The report noted that the IPC had agreed to accept the 30,000 page planning application for developing a new nuclear reactor at Hinkley Point. It was also noted that the Environment Agency had opened a consultation on the potential radioactive discharges from a new reactor at Hinkley Point. The NFLA Secretariat is developing a detailed submission to the Environment

Agency response in conjunction with Stop Hinkley, Friends of the Earth Cymru and CND Cymru. It will also register to take part in the IPC deliberation of the planning application.

The report noted that Interim Approvals of the EPR and the AP-1000 designs were likely to be approved by the ONR / Environment Agency by the end of 2012. Investment issues mean it is unlikely at present for the AP-1000 to be adopted by any of the prospective new nuclear construction alliances. The EPR design is also being tarnished by major cost and time overruns at new reactors being developed in France, Finland and China. Financial issues with the funding of a new nuclear programme remain the major obstacle to its development. The UK Government is developing legislation on reforming the electricity market to facilitate supporting a carbon price to assist new nuclear build.

The report also noted legal challenges to the justification decisions on new nuclear reactors and on the new build process are still ongoing.

The Steering Committee welcomed the news that Belgium and Taiwan had joined the list of international governments that had decided to phase out their nuclear power programmes. It also agreed to continue to support NCG seminars on new nuclear build taking place in Bristol, Ipswich, Lancaster and London.

***Agreed: To note with concern new nuclear developments and continue to highlight key issues around waste, health, safety and financial costs. To respond to the IPC and Environment Agency consultations in reference to the proposed new reactor at Hinkley Point.***

## 5. Alternatives to nuclear energy

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on the issuing of four NFLA Policy Briefings on the potential for developing non-nuclear energy policies in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales through a combination of renewable energy, microgeneration and energy efficiency. The reports have been well received and NFLA members have been encouraged to disseminate it widely through their Councils.

The Steering Committee supported recent NFLA meetings in Ireland and in England promoting these reports and providing further details on financing energy projects. The seminar following the NFLA AGM would continue developing these themes. The Steering Committee agreed that these reports should be regularly updated.

The Steering Committee noted its dismay over recent decisions by the UK Government to cut feed-in tariffs for solar energy, and of the devolved assemblies to cut funding for energy efficiency projects.

***Agreed: To continue to develop and promote research on non-nuclear alternatives to energy policy in the UK and Ireland.***

## 6. Radioactive waste management

The NFLA Secretary provided a detailed report outlining developments with radioactive waste management policy. The Committee welcomed involvement in the NDA's National Stakeholder meeting and noted its concern that there was not active encouragement of other nuclear concerned groups to take part in the meeting.

Members welcomed the closure of the Sellafield MOX reprocessing plant and noted its real concern that the UK Government is proposing development of a new plutonium reprocessing plant. It also noted concern over radioactive contamination found at the conclusion of a transport of vitrified high level radioactive waste from Sellafield to Japan.

The Committee supported ongoing correspondence and concerns being raised over the transport of radioactive materials from Dounreay to Sellafield and contamination found on the beach at Dalgety Bay in Fife.

The Committee agreed to seek to develop a NFLA response to the consultation in West Cumbria over whether the 3 Cumbrian Councils should register its formal interest to develop a deep-underground radioactive waste facility in the area.

The Committee also agreed to continue close liaison with CORWM, NuLEAF and SCCORS.

***Agreed: To note the report. To respond to the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely consultation.***

## **7. Radiation safety standards**

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on various issues around radiation safety. Discussion took place over the written response of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) over criticism of its annual report, suggesting no specific link with increased childhood cancers and proximity to nuclear sites.

The Committee agreed that the NFLA co-operate with KIMO International and other groups to develop reports for the next OSPAR Radiation Substances Committee meeting, which is being held at the end of January 2012.

It was noted that the NFLA's joint complaint to the BBC over a perceived lack of balance of recent nuclear documentaries was now being considered by the BBC Trust, an independent body which oversees the work of BBC.

***Agreed: To note the report and approve further co-operation between the NFLA and KIMO in submitting reports to the OSPAR RSC.***

## **8. Nuclear materials transportation and nuclear emergency planning**

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on the proposed transport of a large number of radioactively contaminated steam generators from Canada to Sweden, passing through UK territorial waters. Despite being given approval from the Canadian nuclear safety regulator the shipments have still not begun, perhaps due to the international pressure around these proposed shipments.

The NFLA have assisted KIMO International in developing letters of concern to go to all the relevant governments for which the shipments are proposed to be transported through.

The NFLA Secretary also reported that he would shortly be collating all responses from emergency planning units that had responded to a NFLA questionnaire on nuclear emergency planning. This would be converted into a NFLA policy briefing and letters to the UK Government and the Office for Nuclear Regulation when it is completed.

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

## **9. Mayors for Peace**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on the continued expansion of the Mayors for Peace organisation to over 5000 members worldwide. This made it the largest local government organisation in the world representing around a billion people worldwide.

The report included an overview of the recent Mayors for Peace Executive Conference in Granollers, which was attended by the NFLA Secretary and Councillor Mark Hackett. The Conference included board and general meetings of the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign and its Executive Board.

The meeting had substantial discussion on how to ensure effective organisational capacity of the Mayors for Peace given its rapid, recent expansion. A sub-committee meeting in Hanover was agreed to be organised. It will go into some detail on ways to improve the financial and organisational structure of the Mayors for Peace.

The Conference agreed that it would hold a seminar to consider its view on nuclear power following the Fukushima disaster at its next meeting, which will be around the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference in Vienna in May 2012. It was also agreed that the next Mayors for Peace General Conference would take place in Hiroshima in 2013.

At the Conference the Mayors for Peace received a major peace award from the Spanish United Nations Association.

In the UK, the Steering Committee agreed to support the NFLA Secretary in the processing of voluntary invoices for funding Mayors for Peace. Recruitment letters to encourage membership will also be sent out in December 2011.

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

#### 10. **Nuclear weapons update**

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on the potential development of a new Trident nuclear weapons programme.

The Steering Committee agreed that the NFLA Secretariat should make a submission to the cross-party Trident Commission, which is considering the necessity of a Trident replacement programme and the alternatives to it.

The report also provided detail on the present and future costs of a Trident programme and the stresses this may put on the wider MOD budget. An overview of the MOD's Nuclear Liability Management Strategy was also provided.

***Agreed: To note the report and to support a NFLA submission to the Trident Commission.***

#### 11. **Submarine Decommissioning Project**

The NFLA Secretary reported that the MOD's national consultation on the dismantling of redundant nuclear submarines was published in October, and would be open until mid February.

The consultation would consider whether the submarines should be dismantled in either the Rosyth or Plymouth Devonport naval bases or in a combination of the two. It also outlines the environmental considerations involved in this process. It does not though determine where the radioactive materials from the dismantled submarines will be eventually stored, which is being determined in a separate process, in conjunction with the NDA.

The Steering Committee agreed that the NFLA should make a detailed response to the consultation and attend national stakeholder events in Birmingham and Glasgow. It was also agreed to consult with officers in NFLA member Fife Council to assist development of their own response.

***Agreed: To note the report and respond to the consultation.***

#### 11. **Date and venue of next NFLA Steering Committee meeting**

Room 3.04 (Harpurhey), One First Street complex, Manchester, Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January from 11am – 1pm (with an optional Finance and Administration meeting 10am – 11am).

**b) NFLA 2011 Annual General Meeting**

**1. NFLA Secretary's Annual Report**

The NFLA Secretary provided a detailed report of all the Steering Committee, national Forum and Secretariat business throughout 2011. The report outlined a large volume of work, attendance at meetings and production of original research by the NFLA Secretariat. It also noted staffing changes in 2011 and the close liaison between the Secretariat and individual members.

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

**2. Financial report and affiliation rates for 2011/12**

The NFLA Secretary provided a summary report of the NFLA budget for 2011/12 and projections for 2012/13. It noted a balanced budget for the financial year. The major economies taking place across local government across the UK and Ireland were discussed in detail and all members were encouraged to be closely involved in the discussions within their own councils over NFLA affiliation.

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

***Agreed: To freeze membership affiliation fees at current rates for the 2012/13 financial year.***

**3. Composition of the NFLA Steering Committee**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report of the composition of the NFLA Steering Committee and changes to its membership in 2011. Members noted that they were pleased with continued good levels of attendance at meetings from all four national NFLA Forums.

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

**4. NFLA Terms of Reference**

The NFLA Secretary presented the existing NFLA Steering Committee Terms of Reference, and a draft Steering Committee constitution using the model of the Scottish and Irish NFLA Forum constitutions.

The Committee agreed to accept the draft constitution with some minor amendments and publish it on the NFLA website.

***Agreed: To approve the draft NFLA Steering Committee Constitution.***

**5. Election of NFLA Steering Committee Chair**

The NFLA Secretary reported that the 2011 NFLA Chair, Bailie George Regan, Dundee City Council, was standing down after a three year term. The NFLA AGM recorded its warm and unanimous thanks to Bailie Regan for its service as NFLA Chair.

The Secretary reported that Councillor Brian Goodall of Fife Council had been nominated for the position of NFLA Chair by Councillor Audrey Doig of Renfrewshire Council, and been seconded by Councillor Ralph Pryke of Leeds City Council. There were no other nominations and Councillor Goodall was elected unanimously by the AGM.

Councillor Goodall thanked all those who had agreed to elect him and recorded his best wishes for Bailie Regan. He noted he was honoured to become the new NFLA Chair and would work hard to ensure it remains the principal local government organisation on nuclear policy issues in England, Scotland, Wales and across Ireland.

***Agreed: To elect Councillor Brian Goodall as the new NFLA Chair.***

#### **6. Election of NFLA Steering Committee Vice Chairs**

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

All Ireland, North – Councillor Michael Carr (Newry and Mourne District Council)

All Ireland, Republic – Councillor Ollan Herr (Dundalk Town Council)

England – Councillor Ralph Pryke (Leeds City Council)

Scotland – this would be determined at its AGM in February 2012 and Councillor Audrey Doing (Renfrewshire Council) will remain Acting Chair until the AGM.

Wales – Councillor Stephen Churchman (Gwynedd County Council).

***Agreed: To reappoint NFLA Steering Committee Vice Chairs as per the list above.***

#### **7. NFLA 2011 Annual Policy Briefing Seminar**

The NFLA Secretary noted that a seminar would be following the AGM with the keynote speaker the Northern Ireland Environment Minister Alex Attwood. Other speakers included Grattan Healy from the National Offshore Wind Association, James Orr from Friends of the Earth and Rick Nickerson from KIMO International.

The seminar had been widened to non members and a good attendance was expected.

***Agreed: That NFLA members remain for the following Annual Policy Briefing seminar.***

#### **8. NFLA Service Plan 2011**

The NFLA Secretary presented the draft 2012 Annual Service Plan, which outlined the policy work of the organisation and its key objectives for 2012.

Members welcomed the Service Plan as an excellent summary of the work of the organisation.

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

#### **9. Date and location of NFLA AGM 2012**

The NFLA Secretary explained that it was NFLA practice that the AGM is hosted by each national Forum on a rotational basis. On this basis the 2012 NFLA AGM should be hosted by the NFLA English Forum and it was likely to therefore be in Manchester.

***Agreed: The NFLA 2012 AGM to be held in England in late November / early December 2012.***