

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



**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013

**No.118**

**Subject:** Summary of NFLA Steering Committee, AGM & Annual Policy Seminar, Cardiff, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013

**1. Introduction**

The Steering Committee was opened by the NFLA Chair, Councillor Hackett, who welcomed all to Cardiff County Hall. He thanked Councillor Lent and Councillor Bridges from Cardiff City Council for hosting the meeting.

Councillor Hackett also welcomed those members who had come from long distances after such inclement weather on the 5<sup>th</sup> December. Attendance at the meeting had been affected by the inclement weather.

**2. National NFLA Forum meetings**

The NFLA Secretary Sean Morris provided an overview of the work of the NFLA Forums:

**NFLA All Ireland Forum –**

The NFLA All Ireland Forum held a useful and informative seminar in Galway City Hall on the 11<sup>th</sup> October. The seminar focused particularly on two issues – the grid capacity, planning and political issues in stepping up renewable energy in Ireland; and the level of radiation discharge on the west coast of Ireland. Former Councillor, TD and Senator Dan Boyle outlined a report he authored saying that Irish authorities were not engaging enough with local communities on new renewable energy projects which was creating levels of local opposition, particularly to the larger developments. Independent marine pollution consultant Tim Deere-Jones provided statistics showing that a wide level of radioactive discharges deriving from Sellafield had reached monitoring sites on the west coast of Ireland. The NFLA Secretary also provided an overview of the new build debate and Ireland's potential role in the European Commission future decision on it.

It is hoped the next meeting of the Forum will be held in Dublin City Hall as an interested Dublin councillor attended the Galway seminar. This is likely to be in March 2014.

**NFLA English Forum –**

The NFLA English Forum held an informative autumn seminar in Rotherham Town Hall on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November. This seminar considered issues around contaminated scrap metal and transportation of such materials.

Speakers included Steve Chandler of the Environment Agency, who considered its national project of reducing radiation risks from a variety of sources.

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**

c/o Town Hall, Manchester, M60 3NY

Tel: 0161 234 3244 Fax: 0161 274 7397 E-Mail: [s.morris4@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:s.morris4@manchester.gov.uk) Website: <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info>

Craig Ashton of the NDA's Low Level Waste Repository and Kevin Dodd of Studsvik UK outlined NDA's changing policy for waste concentration and consolidation. Tim Deere-Jones outlined research he had undertaken for the NFLA on the public health and environmental risks for transporting steam metal generators from decommissioned civil nuclear reactors to Sweden for decontamination and recycling of large parts of the generators. A healthy discussion took place and the presentations will be placed on the NFLA website.

The NFLA Secretary is discussing with Green Cross International and other groups for the next English Forum meeting to be part of a joint Westminster seminar held on the third anniversary of the Fukushima disaster.

#### **NFLA Welsh Forum –**

The NFLA Secretary had developed an annual policy seminar, hosted by the NFLA Welsh Forum in Cardiff County Hall, on 6<sup>th</sup> December. The seminar is made up of three engaging speakers considering issues around nuclear security, nuclear proliferation, nuclear weapons disarmament and developing a Parliamentary coalition supportive of NFLA policies. Confirmed speakers included Dr David Lowry, formerly of the European Proliferation Information Centre, Dr Rebecca Johnson, Vice Chair of ICAN-UK and Paul Flynn, MP for Newport West.

In the new year the NFLA Secretary will seek to progress the development of a public meeting with groups like PAWB, Friends of the Earth Cymru and CND Cymru at a venue in either Anglesey or Gwynedd. This public meeting will focus on proposed nuclear new build at Wylfa.

#### **NFLA Scotland Forum –**

Following Scottish meetings in 2013 in Glasgow (twice), in Edinburgh and Stornoway there has not been the need for a NFLA Scotland meeting since the last NFLA Steering Committee. Dates and locations for 2014 meetings are being considered by the NFLA Scotland Convener and Secretary and will be communicated to NFLA Scotland members shortly. The next meeting though is planned to be held in February in Glasgow.

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

### **3. Nuclear new build**

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on a wide range of issues around the proposed development of new nuclear power stations.

#### ***Proposed new build at Hinkley Point -***

On the 21<sup>st</sup> October the UK Government announced that they had agreed a deal for a long-term 'strike price' and other financial guarantees with EDF to allow for construction of new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point in Somerset. The Government has offered a 'strike price' of £92.50 per megawatt hour of electricity generated for 35 years. The strike price would go down slightly to £89.50 if EDF also goes ahead to additionally build two new nuclear reactors at Sizewell. As the Daily Telegraph pointed out, the price of the two reactors proposed for Hinkley Point has jumped again, to £16 billion each.

A key factor in the deal being achieved was agreements made by Chancellor George Osborne with the Chinese Government, which has meant the Chinese state nuclear utility China General Nuclear Power Group will take a 49% share of funding the reactors, with 51% control for French state utility EDF. This could equate to around £45 - £50 billion in financial support for new nuclear build from the Government over the next 40 years. EDF's International Board has still not made their final investment decision on the project, but obviously warmly welcomes the deal with the Government. Their final investment decision is expected now later in 2014.

It should be noted that in 2006 EDF was claiming that its electricity would cost £28.80 MWh in 2013 values. The strike price is almost double what is being paid for nuclear at present and can hardly be seen as being value for money to the consumer. It should also be noted that, as well as giving a premium rate to EDF in the strike price, the Government has also agreed to guarantee some of the loans for each £16 billion reactor. Without such guarantees, French nuclear expert Bernard Chabot has calculated the strike price would have been around £100

MWh. This comes at a time when the costs of most renewable energy sources are coming down. Renewable energy is also getting much shorter-scale and less generous contracts being offered by the UK Government than nuclear.

The most pointed and important comments have come from investment specialists. Liberum Capital calculates that EDF could make a return on equity well in excess of 20% and possibly as much as 35%. That equates to shareholder dividends of between £65 - £80 billion during the life of the Contract for Difference / guaranteed price. They note: "We are frankly staggered that the UK government thinks it is appropriate to take such a bet and under-write the economics of any power station that costs £5m per MW and takes 9 years to build ... we are flabbergasted that the UK government has committed future generations of consumers to the costs that will flow from this deal."

### ***European Commission discussion on Hinkley deal***

Though a 'strike price' deal has been agreed, it now has to be approved by the European Commission. EU regulations bar direct state aid; and an attempt to relax these rules for nuclear power prior to the deal being agreed were rejected, after significant pressure from the German Government. The UK deal is likely to be seen as a precedent in the EU given that other member states, particularly Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia would like to do something similar. A study by energy consultants Mycle Schneider Consulting published earlier this year suggested the EU is likely to deem the 'Contracts for Difference' (CfD) scheme as state aid, meaning that the government's plans could yet face another legal hurdle. Any decision from the Commission on whether to allow the UK to subsidise new reactors is likely to take until the middle of 2014 at least.

NFLA is closely liaising with Vienna's Cities for a Nuclear Free Europe (CNFE) Network to lobby governments at the European Commission level and to particularly target those governments – like Germany and Austria – who are opposed to the UK strike price deal. CNFE have informed NFLA that they are developing convincing and factual arguments to this discussion. A new study on the real costs of nuclear power will be issued by CNFE shortly. The Steering Committee welcomed the co-operation between NFLA and CNFE.

NFLA has also liaised with the European wide group 'Energy Fair' on this issue. NFLA has previously supported an official complaint on illegal subsidies to the European Commission. Energy Fair has provided the NFLA Secretariat with a new model letter of complaint to the Commission. The NFLA Chair and NFLA All Ireland Forum Chair have agreed to sign the letter, and the Steering Committee agreed to endorse this initiative.

The NFLA Secretary is currently developing a 'New Nuclear Monitor' which will focus on the European deal and wider concerns over the 'strike price' deal, along with other concerns around new build at Hinkley Point. The Steering Committee welcomed the publication of such a report.

### ***New consortium for new build at Sellafield Moorside?***

Media reports are continuing to suggest that Westinghouse, which is owned by the Japanese utility Toshiba, will buy Iberdrola's 50% share in the 'NuGen' consortium looking to develop a new nuclear reactor close to the Sellafield site. This is mainly due to the decision by Hitachi to buy the proposed sites for new build at Wylfa and Oldbury, leaving Westinghouse/Toshiba with no proposed new site to take up its AP-1000 design in the UK. However, this is by no means a done deal as there is deep discussion within Toshiba on whether its future lies with nuclear power. It designed the Fukushima reactors which were so badly damaged in 2011, and it is reviewing the future of its Westinghouse division that it had bought some years ago off BNFL. It is also thought there is a dispute within the Government, as DECC wishes to encourage Toshiba, but the Treasury would like to consider a re-sale of the site in 2014 in order to maximise income. If such a sale happened it is possible that Chinese and Russian utilities would be interested in the site.

### ***Developments at Wylfa and Oldbury –***

Hitachi has decided to build a smaller plant at Wylfa and Oldbury than originally anticipated. It has announced that it will construct two Advanced Boiling Water Reactors on each site, rather

than three. Consultation at both sites will begin in 2014 with initial site work in 2015. If it receives ONR approval under the Generic Design Assessment process it hopes to start construction in 2018/2019. The Horizon Partnership has named the Anglesey project 'Wylfa Newydd' or 'New Wylfa'. Horizon claim the project will create 6000 new jobs on the island and around North Wales.

***Agreed: To note the report. NFLA Secretariat to produce a 'New Nuclear Monitor' on Hinkley Point and the EU Commission subsidies decision. To co-operate with CNFE to challenge the Hinkley Point deal. To endorse Energy Fair letter to the EU Commission.***

#### **4. Radioactive waste management**

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

##### ***Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS): DECC consultation –***

In early September, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) announced a fresh public consultation on taking forward its Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) policy of finding a suitable site for a deep underground radioactive waste repository. The new consultation again reiterates that development of a 'geological disposal facility' remains the core of this policy.

Following publication of an advice note to NFLA member authorities in October, the NFLA Secretariat had developed a detailed final response for consideration by the NFLA Steering Committee. This had been developed following attendance at DECC workshops and discussion with a number of like-minded groups. The response raised concerns around the overly centralising nature of the DECC consultation, the democratic deficit in reducing the role of County Councils and the lack of providing robust alternatives to deep geological disposal. It also called for a national geological screening of the UK before local authorities are asked to consider 'volunteering' to site a deep underground repository. It also argued that the UK Government reconsider the Scottish Government's 'near site, near service' alternative policy to radioactive waste management.

The Steering Committee warmly welcomed and approved the final NFLA Secretariat response to the consultation and agreed that a media release should be issued to accompany it.

##### ***NDA Stakeholder Dialogue and consultation on FED / ILW in England and Wales –***

The NFLA Chair and the NFLA Secretary attended the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) annual Stakeholder Dialogue meeting in Essex on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October. The meeting included a site visit to the Bradwell site, which is one of the first NDA sites to be fully decommissioned. The Stakeholder Dialogue discussed the process for the 'care and maintenance' of decommissioned nuclear reactors, research and development, the MRWS process and the process for selecting new Parent Body Organisations (PBOs) to run the NDA's Magnox estate. Mention was also made of the consideration being made to reprocessing plutonium at Sellafield. There were vocal concerns raised in the meeting about the NDA's inadequate consultation process over FED and Intermediate Level Waste solutions for England and Wales. Significant criticism of the Sellafield contract and the process for renewing it was also made.

The NDA has responded to the comments made in its initial consultation on solutions for consolidating intermediate level waste in England and Wales. The consultation recommended concentrating such waste at fewer sites, particularly Hinkley Point and Dungeness. It is clear from its response to this consultation, and in its new consultation, that the NDA has not taken up the concerns raised by the NFLA and many other groups. The NFLA will reiterate concerns over 'diluting and dispersing waste' rather than concentrating it at each site in a full response to the consultation, which continues until January 31<sup>st</sup>.

##### ***Developments at Sellafield –***

Just prior to the NDA Stakeholder Dialogue, the NDA confirmed that it would renew the contract for running the Sellafield site to the NMP consortium for a further five years. This

decision surprised many observers, given the mounting level of criticism of the Sellafield site by the likes of the National Audit Office and the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee.

Further damning evidence of the lack of progress in dealing with nuclear decommissioning at Sellafield also came with a follow-up meeting of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in early November. Evidence submitted by 'Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment' (CORE) was raised by the Committee. This showed the inability of Sellafield NMP to meet annual performance targets, and a chronic failure by the NDA and site licence company Sellafield Ltd to set realistic targets for the facilities. CORE's evidence, relating specifically to the performance of the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant (THORP), the Magnox Reprocessing Plant and the Waste Vitrification Plant, showed that since 2000/01, 72% of the targets set for the three facilities had been missed and that, since 2005/06, when the NDA took ownership of the facilities, the failure rate had spiralled upwards to 92%.

According to a report produced by the accountant KPMG for the NDA, the £70bn project to decommission Sellafield is more than a decade behind schedule and is managed in the interests of shareholders rather than taxpayers. The report noted that nine of the eleven biggest projects to make Sellafield safe, including building a storage facility for radioactive sludge, are £2bn over budget. Seven will complete later than was originally planned, with a combined delay of eleven and a half years.

#### ***Sellafield's plutonium stockpile –***

The Public Accounts Committee also considered what the future plans of the UK Government for dealing with the stockpile of over 100 tonnes of weapons-usable plutonium at Sellafield. Mark Higson, Chief Executive of DECC's Office for Nuclear Development, confirmed that the Government's plan remains to reprocess it in a new MOX plant. This is despite the fact that the value of the fuel it produces will be less than the cost of running and building the plant.

A media story in 'The Independent' has suggested that a radical plan to 'dispose' of civil plutonium by "burning" it in a new type of fast reactor is now officially one of three "credible options" being considered by the Government. The original "preferred option" was to convert the plutonium into a form of nuclear fuel called mixed oxide (Mox) and then to burn it in conventional nuclear reactors. However, the lack of a market for such fuel is reducing the utility of this option. The two other options include a Canadian nuclear power plant called a Candu reactor which will burn a simpler form of Mox fuel. The other more radical proposal is to burn the plutonium directly in a 'fast reactor' built by GE-Hitachi. 'The Independent' claims that the NDA has been impressed by proposals from GE-Hitachi to build a pair of its Prism fast reactors on the Sellafield site.

#### ***Dalgety Bay contamination –***

At the last NFLA Steering Committee meeting, members received a copy of a detailed Policy Briefing which outlined concerns over the ongoing radioactive contamination of the Dalgety Bay site. The report also raised concerns around Ministry of Defence (MOD) intransigence over accepting liability for full clean-up of the site. It highlighted a long list of other MOD owned or former owned sites in Scotland, England and Wales that could also be contaminated.

The NFLA Secretary sent a copy of the report to the local MP, former Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Mr Brown responded by warmly welcoming the report. The report was also sent to Fife Council officers and councillors, relevant officers at the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and at the Scottish Government. It has also been sent to the responsible MOD officer, which took some time to find. The report was also used by independent marine pollution consultant to pose the question if any Welsh sites were similarly contaminated.

#### ***Update on NuLEAF and SCCORS –***

NuLEAF (Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum) held its AGM and a business meeting in London on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Councillor Richard Smith of Suffolk County Council was elected as its Chair and Councillor Brendan Sweeney of Barrow District Council as its Vice Chair. The business meeting considered its response to the MRWS process, submarine dismantling and community benefits packages. The NFLA Chair also attended a major European Commission Conference

on radioactive waste issues in Lithuania, as part of a NDA funded NuLEAF delegation. The next meeting of NuLEAF is in Manchester Town Hall on the 21<sup>st</sup> January.

The SCCORS (Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances) Secretariat has stalled somewhat due to illness of the current Chair, a North Ayrshire councillor. It is not clear at present when it will next meet. As a result, the NFLA Secretary has been in touch with the Scottish Government to request participation in its Project Board taking forward Scottish Higher Activity Waste Policy. This matter is being discussed shortly by the Scottish Government.

#### ***MOD Submarine Decommissioning Project (SDP) –***

The NFLA Secretariat developed a Policy Briefing providing an update on the Submarine Decommissioning Programme and informing member authorities to be aware of the next round of public consultation – sites for storage of intermediate level waste (ILW). The NFLA Secretary attended the most recent meeting of the SDP sub-group in Bristol in mid November. The MOD have now shortlisted five sites for ILW and will be inviting all potentially affected local authorities to ‘pre-engagement’ workshops in late January / early February to discuss the issues around develop such stores. A full public consultation on two final shortlisted ILW sites is likely to take place in autumn 2014.

***Agreed: To note the report. To approve the NFLA’s response to the UK Government consultation, on siting for a deep underground radioactive waste repository. To authorise the NFLA Secretary to write to the NDA Chief Executive raising concerns over the ongoing issues at the Sellafield site.***

#### **5. Mayors for Peace and Nuclear Weapons update**

The NFLA Secretary outlined progress in NFLA’s co-operation with the Mayors for Peace and provided a report on the wider nuclear weapons issue.

#### ***Mayors for Peace International Development -***

As of December 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, 5,831 towns and cities were members of Mayors for Peace in 157 countries. The NFLA Secretary has held a Skype chat with the Mayors for Peace’s 2020 Vision Campaign Secretary on progress since the Hiroshima Executive and General Conferences and the 2020 Vision board meetings. In terms of the Hiroshima Secretariat, it is now meeting with board members and cities it is seeking to recruit to become board members – such as Fremantle in Australia and Auckland or Wellington in New Zealand – to discuss the development of national chapters. The NFLA Secretary has informed the Secretariat that it needs to consider the logistics, resources and financial issues in developing national chapters. This is being taken on board by the Hiroshima Secretariat.

The Ypres 2020 Vision Secretariat has had recent capacity issues to deal with which has delayed implementation of some of the requests made of it in Hiroshima. It is planning a Board phone conference / Skype meeting in February 2014 to discuss progress with improvements to the Secretariat and with projects it has been tasked to develop.

The Hiroshima Secretariat has sent a questionnaire to the NFLA / Manchester Mayors for Peace Secretariat requesting whether it would be interested in receiving seeds from A-bomb damaged trees (from the Hiroshima Peace Park and which have been successfully grown) and a peace flame lantern lit from the eternal peace flame in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. These will be provided to any Mayors for Peace member that requests it. The Hiroshima Secretariat is discussing the logistics and costs incurred in this, along with significant issues in transport.

In 2014 there are currently two major events where an international Mayors for Peace presence is being organised for. In the first week of May there will be the final Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference of the 2010 – 2014 review cycle, which will be held at UN headquarters in New York. In the second week of June, Mayors for Peace is also looking at being involved in a major NGO conference in Sarajevo, Bosnia commemorating the centenary of the commencement of the First World War. The Steering Committee agreed to defer involvement in both meetings until the scope of them is determined by Mayors for Peace.

### ***Mayors for Peace UK and Ireland development -***

The NFLA Secretary is in the process of developing a strategy paper for how to take forward the launch of an effective UK & Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter that can complement the NFLA, but is separate from it. The Steering Committee agreed that the two key issues for a chapter will be to encourage UK & Irish members to nominate representatives (like with NFLA) delegated by the Mayor to attend chapter meetings, and to bring in more formalised, though still voluntary, annual contribution fees. This will be a core part of the NFLA Secretary's strategy paper, which should be ready for the January NFLA Steering Committee.

### ***NET independent inquiry on the UK's national defence needs and its international nuclear disarmament responsibilities –***

The NFLA Secretary has fully responded to the questions asked by the Nuclear Education Trust (NET) on the UK's national defence needs and its international nuclear disarmament responsibilities. A wider NFLA Policy Briefing on the nuclear weapons debate has also been developed and was welcomed by the Steering Committee.

### ***UN follow-up Conference on humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, Mexico –***

Following the good attendance and useful discussions that were held in Oslo in March 2013 considering the humanitarian consequences of even a limited nuclear weapon attack, it was agreed that Mexico would keep the positive momentum from this conference going. A follow-up conference is therefore being held in Mexico in February 2014. None of the 'P5' nuclear weapon states – UK, USA, Russia, France or China – attended the Oslo Conference. In a joint statement they argued the conference was a diversion from the NPT arrangements. In a Parliamentary answer in early November, the UK Government has said a decision has not yet been finalised on whether it will attend the Mexico Conference.

### ***International Red Cross resolution on nuclear weapons –***

At its Annual Conference in Australia, the International Red Cross & Red Crescent agreed to a four year action plan to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons from the world. Mayors for Peace Hiroshima staff were in attendance to hear this important announcement. Now that it is ICRC policy ICAN-UK and other like-minded groups will seek to develop communication with the UK branch headquarters to ascertain if future co-operation can take place. This could be useful in the development of a UK & Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter.

### ***Negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme -***

On the weekend of November 23<sup>rd</sup> an interim agreement was reached between Iran and the P5+1 (USA, UK, Russia, France, China and Germany) group to limit Iran's nuclear programme so that it cannot develop a weapons capability. This is an initial 6 month agreement, but it is hoped it will be fully developed into a complete agreement early in 2014. In return for not enriching uranium to levels that would allow for a nuclear weapon programme, Iran has received a reduction in the sanctions regime on them. In a media release, the NFLA warmly welcomed this positive development.

### ***Operation Able Archer 1983: how close the world came to nuclear war –***

The nuclear disarmament research and campaign group Nuclear Information Service (NIS) has published documents provided by the UK Government under the Freedom of Information Act that show how close a military exercise brought the world to a nuclear weapons conflagration. Operation Able Archer was a 'war games' exercise to test NATO defences for a Soviet Union land attack across Europe. The exercise raised alarm bells in the Soviet Union, at a time when its current President was close to death and a power vacuum existed, that suggested the USSR had put its own forces on high alert in anticipation that the exercise was a pretext for a full NATO attack. According to the heavily redacted documents, Western intelligence sources detected that Warsaw Pact forces had been put on full nuclear attack alert. The full report can be found at the web-link: <http://nuclearinfo.org/blog/peter-burt/2013/11/thirty-years-ago-nuclear-crisis-which-frightened-thatcher-and-reagan-ending>.

### ***Developments at Aldermaston and Devonport -***

AWE Aldermaston has been served with a formal warning letter and enforcement notice by the Environment Agency after increased levels of radioactive tritium was found in the North Ponds

drainage system and into Aldermaston stream. This flows into the River Kennet and eventually the River Thames. The tritium increase had been due to a ventilation fan being switched off during a modification and not switched back on, allowing the tritium to be released in greater quantities. The Environment Agency concluded that AWE's environmental safety practices had failed and served an improvement notice on the site operator. The company has until the end of February to comply with the actions of the enforcement notice. A similar incident in 1999 led to the site operator being fined.

A further highly alarming incident at the Devonport nuclear submarine dockyard has also been uncovered following publication by the Independent on Sunday of documents released under the Freedom of Information Act. The files document an incident which left an electrical ring main at the base without power for over 90 minutes. This had "potential nuclear implications" according to an official report of the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator, leading to a risk that reactors on board nuclear powered submarines berthed in the dockyard could have overheated. The report also revealed that 50 events, which affected or had the potential to affect nuclear or radiological safety, had taken place at Devonport during 2012, of which the electrical failure was the "most significant", rated as a category B event, with category A being the most severe.

***Agreed: To note the report. To fully endorse the NFLA submission response to NET.***

## **6. Fukushima and nuclear safety**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on progress with nuclear safety and the safe control and decommissioning of the Fukushima damaged reactor site.

### ***European nuclear safety matters -***

In late November, the European Parliament approved a £600 million programme to support nuclear safety outside the EU. This fund will be provided to prospective EU members and those countries eligible for 'European neighbourhood instrument' spending. The money will support projects that "support the promotion of a high level of nuclear safety, radiation protection and the application of efficient and effective safeguards of nuclear material in third countries..." The European Parliament also added a commitment that this work should ensure "that nuclear material is used only for the civilian purposes for which it is intended." The money will provide knowledge transfer and assist in national nuclear regulators to develop a greater level of independence. The proposal will now go to the European Council of Ministers for final approval and implementation.

### ***Fukushima and UK nuclear safety –***

In mid November 'The Guardian' interviewed the current President of Tokyo Electric Power Company (Tepco), Naomi Hirose about the ongoing problems created by the Fukushima disaster and how the company was trying to deal with it. Mr Hirose claimed the disaster was 'a warning to the world' to improve all aspects of nuclear safety. He said the UK's nuclear regulators and the wider nuclear industry "should be prepared for the worst" in order to avoid Japan's nuclear disaster occurring in a similar manner in the UK. The interview and the Guardian's editorial led to a useful debate in its letters page. The ONR's Chief Nuclear Inspector Andy Hall noted that it was right to recognise the need to learn the lessons in the UK from the Fukushima disaster. He argued that the UK nuclear industry had taken on these issues over 20 years ago and put into place robust measures to seek to prevent such incidents taking place.

### ***Fukushima update –***

In late November Tepco began delicate and difficult work to remove nuclear fuel rods from the storage pool of the damaged Fukushima Number 4 reactor to a new more secure storage facility. Twenty-two assemblies were placed inside a watertight cask in the pool by a remote controlled crane. The 91-ton cask was then lifted from the pool, placed on a trailer, and then driven to the new facility 100 metres away. There are over 1,500 fuel assemblies in the Reactor 4 building, containing plutonium and uranium fuels rods. Tepco is now reviewing this process to see how well it has worked.

TEPCO has also announced that it will permanently close the undamaged Reactors 5 and 6 at the Fukushima Daiichi plant after a request to do so from Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in September. The reactors were closed for maintenance when the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami hit the plant. TEPCO will not decommission and dismantle the reactors. Instead they will become "test platforms" and used as research facilities to help plan for the removal of fuel from the other damaged reactors.

***Agreed: To note the report. NFLA Secretariat to develop Policy Briefing with a Fukushima update and its relationship to nuclear emergency planning.***

## **7. Alternatives to nuclear energy**

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

### ***NFLA Policy Briefings on renewable energy -***

Over 2012 and 2013 the NFLA Secretariat has developed a whole suite of documents for member authorities on various aspects of energy policy highlighting the benefits of renewable energy, microgeneration and energy efficiency. The next area the NFLA Secretariat will consider is the potential development of 'Energy Service Companies' and 'Energy Trusts' that a number of local authorities are considering in become local energy generators. This report will also consider the wider benefits of microgeneration.

### ***Update on the Green Deal and national debate over 'green' liabilities -***

In late November the UK Government announced that it had reached its first major milestone with the scheme, with over 1,000 householders now using its grants for energy efficiency improvements. However, this is much less than the 10,000 householders target the Government had expected to have taken up the scheme by the end of 2013.

This comes at a time when the debate over energy has perhaps never been so prominent for years. A fierce debate is taking place over the up to 10% increase in electricity and gas prices by the 'big six' utility companies. The Prime Minister has announced a review of the Energy Company Obligation and other measures aimed at promoting energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty contained within utility bills, which make up around 10% of an average bill. It is expected that the Chancellor George Osborne will announce a transfer of some of these 'green' duties into general taxation. The 'big six' companies have become increasingly unpopular with significant price increases in recent years, with many calls for a thorough reform of the electricity market. A joint letter signed by 140 Councils, social landlords and academics has urged the Government not to scrap such measures.

The Association for the Conservation of Energy has calculated that the Energy Companies Obligation is likely to provide 46,000 jobs within the next two years, in an analysis using the government's own estimates of employment. If the scheme were abandoned, as some have called for, at least 30,000 of these jobs would be at risk. Scaling back the scheme, rather than abandoning it, would also result in significant job losses: halving the main requirements would cut employment by 10,000 people in the next year and an additional potential 7,500 future jobs would be foregone. Removing one of the main components of the scheme, which is aimed at people on low incomes, would see 28,000 jobs lost.

### ***Update on geothermal energy –***

A Scottish Government study has now concluded that as much as a third of the heat needed to keep Scotland warm could be provided by tapping geothermal energy from old coal mines across the central belt. Warm water piped up from abandoned mine shafts between Glasgow and Edinburgh and in Ayrshire and Fife could help heat many thousands of homes and other buildings for decades, the report authors said. The report urges Ministers to embark on an ambitious attempt to make geothermal energy a major new source of clean, renewable power within a few years.

***Agreed: To note the report. To welcome a NFLA Policy Briefing on the development of Local Authority Energy Trusts / Energy Service Companies.***

**8. Low level radiation and health issues**

The NFLA Secretary provided a short report on progress with issues relating to low level radiation and health.

***RPII report on potential effects of UK new nuclear programme on Ireland -***

In mid November, the Radiological Institute of Ireland (RPII) presented their report on the potential effects of a UK new nuclear programme on Ireland to the Dail / Oireachtas Environment Committee. This report has been outlined in previous NFLA Steering Committee reports and at the NFLA All Ireland Forum seminar in Swords, Fingal in June 2013. The RPII again reiterated at the meeting that the health risk to Ireland was very low. The NFLA Secretariat spoke to low level radiation experts Ian Fairlie and Tim Deere-Jones and published a media release challenging the report and urging the Environment Committee to invite them over. The media release also advocated that the Northern Ireland Assembly Environment Committee do likewise. The NFLA Secretary is writing to the Committee Administrators of both Parliaments to encourage them to take up the offer made in the media release.

***Cancer rates from Fukushima –***

A number of early health studies are beginning to suggest that there may be links with radiation exposure from the Fukushima disaster and the potential for increased childhood cancer rates. The NFLA Secretary plans to discuss this matter with a number of independent radiation specialists to determine how accurate these studies may be.

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

**9. Nuclear emergency planning**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report of activity it was undertaking in the area of nuclear emergency planning.

***DECC NGO Forum sub-group on nuclear emergency planning: progress and update –***

As noted at the last Steering Committee, the NFLA Secretary is one of three NGO representatives who now meet every six months with DECC nuclear emergency staff and officials from the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and the Environment Agency. The meeting now allows full and frank discussion on NGO concerns over nuclear emergency planning and the post Fukushima nuclear emergency planning review. The next meeting of this Forum is due in March 2014.

***Involvement in European Economic and Social Committee inquiry into crisis communications around nuclear sites -***

The NFLA Secretary was contacted by the Section of Transport, Energy, Infrastructure, which is part of the European Commission's Economic and Social Committee. The Section are developing a joint conference considering post Fukushima crisis communications around European nuclear sites and wanted to contact an interested NGO involved in critiquing nuclear emergency planning. Following a response to answer questions on the matter, the NFLA Secretary has been invited to speak at this conference in February in Brussels.

***Agreed: To note the report and authorise the NFLA Secretary to attend the EESC Conference.***

**10. Date of next NFLA Steering Committee meeting**

The next Steering Committee meeting is planned for ***Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January in Manchester Town Hall from 11am – 1pm***, followed by an afternoon ***NFLA Organisation and Administration Committee*** meeting from ***1.30pm – 3pm***.

**2013 NFLA Annual General Meeting, 6<sup>th</sup> December, Cardiff County Hall**

**1. Welcome by the Chair**

The NFLA Chair welcomed all to the Annual General Meeting of the organisation. The NFLA Chair thanked Cardiff City Council for agreeing to host the NFLA AGM.

**2. NFLA Secretary's and NFLA Forums Annual Report**

The NFLA Secretary provided a detailed annual report which outlined all the work streams and activities of the NFLA Steering Committee, NFLA National Forums and NFLA Secretariat in 2013. The report noted a further slight increase in membership affiliations in the year, wide engagement across all aspects of nuclear policy and meetings with Ministers or officials of the UK, Republic of Ireland and devolved Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Governments. Close partnerships with Mayors for Peace, KIMO International and CNFE were also welcomed.

***Agreed: To approve the report and to thank the NFLA Secretary, NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor and NFLA Scotland and NFLA All Ireland Forum Secretaries for their dedicated support of the organisation in 2013.***

**3. NFLA Financial report and affiliation fees for 2013/14 financial year**

The NFLA Secretary provided an annual financial report for 2012 and a projection to the end of the 2012/13 financial year. Due to a slight increase in membership there was a much smaller and limited overspend for the year which could be covered by existing reserves. The NFLA Secretary also presented a recommendation of a 2% increase in affiliation rates for 2014/15 to take account of inflation.

***Agreed: To approve the report and 2% increase in affiliation fees for 2014/15.***

**4. Composition of NFLA Steering Committee**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report giving the current composition of the NFLA Steering Committee.

***Agreed: To approve the report and place the composition of the Steering Committee on the NFLA website.***

**5. NFLA Constitution and Terms of Reference**

The NFLA Secretary provided the NFLA Steering Committee's Constitution setting out the structure of the Steering Committee and National Forums.

***Agreed: To approve the NFLA SC Constitution and place it on the NFLA Website.***

**6. Election of NFLA Chair**

The NFLA Secretary reported that the current NFLA Chair Councillor Hackett of Manchester City Council had been nominated by Councillor Butler on behalf of the NFLA Scotland Forum, and seconded by Councillor Davies on behalf of the NFLA Welsh Forum to serve a further year as NFLA Chair. There had been no other nominations.

***Agreed: That Councillor Hackett is elected as Chair of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities for 2014.***

Councillor Hackett thanked the NFLA AGM for re-electing him as Chair.

The NFLA AGM also confirmed all the NFLA Steering Committee Vice-Chairs and Forum Chairs for 2014 as follows:

***NFLA SC Vice Chair Scotland – Councillor Macdonald, Western Isles Council***

***NFLA Scotland Forum Chair – Councillor Butler, Glasgow City Council***

***NFLA All Ireland Forum Co Chair (North) – Councillor Carr, Newry & Mourne Council***

***NFLA All Ireland Forum Co Chair (Republic) – Councillor Dearey, Dundalk Town Council***

***NFLA English Forum Chair – Councillor Blackburn, Leeds City Council***

***NFLA Welsh Forum Co-Chairs – Councillor Davies, Caerphilly County Council and Councillor Bridges, Cardiff City Council.***

The next meetings of each National NFLA Forum would confirm these appointments.

**7. NFLA individual membership**

The NFLA Secretary provided an overview of councillors who had taken up the invitation to take up individual membership to disseminate NFLA information and attend relevant meetings in an observer capacity. Over 20 councillors had taken up this offer to date.

***Agreed: To note the report and expand individual membership in 2014.***

**8. NFLA Service Plan 2013 and NFLA Annual Newsletter 2012**

The NFLA Secretary placed before the AGM a draft Service Plan to outline key objectives for 2014. A draft Annual Newsletter for 2013, which summarises the key activities of the NFLA in the year in a more user-friendly fashion, was also considered. The Steering Committee welcomed both publications and suggested that the excellent professional value-for-money advice that the NFLA Secretariat provides its member authorities should be particularly emphasised.

***Agreed: To approve the NFLA Service Plan and Annual Newsletter and place them on the NFLA website.***

**9. NFLA IT developments**

The NFLA Secretary provided a brief report on a number of potential improvements to the NFLA's presence on the internet. These included a potential redevelopment of the NFLA website, the creation of a website blog and developing a series of pages for a presence on Facebook, Linked-in and Twitter.

***Agreed: To approve the development of a NFLA presence on Facebook and Linked-in and, at a later date, consider a presence on Twitter. To consider these issues at a special NFLA Organisation and Administration Meeting in Manchester Town Hall, following the 31<sup>st</sup> January Steering Committee meeting.***

**10. Date of next Annual General Meeting**

The AGM agreed that the next annual meeting should be held on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Under the rotation system for AGMs, this should be hosted by a NFLA Scotland member.

**NFLA Annual Policy Briefing 2013**

Following the NFLA AGM an afternoon seminar was held considering nuclear security, nuclear weapons proliferation and Parliamentary scrutiny of nuclear policy issues.

Speakers included David Lowry, former Director of the European Proliferation Information Centre; Rebecca Johnson from ICAN-UK and Paul Flynn MP. The seminar was highly informative and useful. The NFLA Secretary will endeavour to place the presentations from this very interesting seminar onto the NFLA website as soon as is possible.

**NFLA Secretariat, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013.**