

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



**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014

**No.128**

**Subject:** Summary of NFLA Steering Committee, AGM and Annual Policy Seminar, Edinburgh City Chambers, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2014

**1. Introduction**

The NFLA Steering Committee meeting was opened by the NFLA Chair. The NFLA Chair thanked Councillor Gardner & Edinburgh City Council for hosting the meeting.

**2. National NFLA Forum meetings**

The NFLA Secretary provided an overview of the work of the four National NFLA Forums:

***NFLA English Forum –***

The NFLA English Forum held its autumn seminar in Oxford Town Hall on 24<sup>th</sup> October. The seminar focused on defence nuclear policy issues and was well attended. It heard from Peter Burt on the large profusion of serious nuclear safety incidents at a number of UK sites. It also heard from Nigel Day of Nukewatch about an equally alarming number of incidents affecting the regular nuclear weapons convoys between Berkshire and the west coast of Scotland. The NFLA Secretary outlined the upcoming consultation on storing intermediate level radioactive waste from dismantled nuclear submarines. Rebecca Sharkey of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN-UK) noted its current campaigns and the upcoming International Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons. The presentations are on the NFLA website. The next Forum meeting will be in Manchester in March.

***NFLA Scotland Forum –***

The NFLA Scotland Forum held a business meeting and its autumn seminar in Perth City Chambers on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. In the business meeting there was considerable discussion about the recent fire on the MS Parida, which was transporting radioactive materials from Dounreay to Belgium. It was agreed that a letter from the Forum should go to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament Infra-structure Committee, along with its UK Government counterparts.

The seminar considered a number of issues of interest to Scottish members. Eann Sinclair of the Caithness & Sutherland Regeneration Partnership talked about the strategies that were in place to regenerate the area as employment in the nuclear industry declined. The NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor provided an overview of radioactive contamination issues affecting a number of Scottish sites. The NFLA Secretary profiled the NFLA report on local authority energy policy. Tor Justad & John Boocock outlined the campaigning work of the group Highland Against Nuclear Transport. The presentations are on the NFLA website. The next Forum meeting will be in Glasgow on the 5<sup>th</sup> February.

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### ***NFLA Welsh Forum –***

The NFLA Welsh Forum held its autumn seminar in Cardiff City Hall on 7<sup>th</sup> November. The seminar focused on Fukushima and its implications for new nuclear build at Hinkley Point and Wylfa, the NFLA's consultation submissions on Welsh nuclear policy and marine pollution concerns in south Wales around a new dissolution facility at Hinkley Point. The seminar was well attended and the presentations are on the NFLA website.

Brian Jones's presentation on Fukushima provided a sharp focus on the huge issues of dealing with contaminated water and soil, and the human cost of the disaster. Tim Deere-Jones's presentation on marine pollution concerns is being developed into a more detailed joint NFLA policy briefing with the groups Stop Hinkley, Bradwell Against New Nuclear Group and the Stop Sizewell Campaign. The NFLA Secretary's report on submissions it has on Welsh nuclear policy matters is discussed in reports noted below. The next Forum meeting will be in March in North Wales.

### ***NFLA All Ireland Forum –***

The NFLA All Ireland Forum will be holding its winter seminar in Dublin City Hall on 12<sup>th</sup> December. The seminar will include presentations by Tim Deere-Jones on his detailed analysis on the Irish Sea marine pollution impacts of a proposed UK new nuclear programme as considered by the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland; NFLA Policy Advisor Pete Roche will profile the NFLA's submission to the Irish Government's green discussion paper on the future Irish energy mix; Donal Traynor of UC Investment Ltd will outline the potential of community energy across Ireland, and the NFLA Secretary will compare the development of energy service companies in Britain, and consider if they could be replicated in Ireland. Registration is open for the seminar, and a short business meeting will also take place.

### ***CNFE meeting with NFLA -***

The NFLA Chair and NFLA Secretary will be meeting the Chair and officers from Vienna City Council who run the Cities for a Nuclear Free Europe (CNFE) network. This will be held on 5<sup>th</sup> December in Vienna City Hall. It will allow for discussion on the Hinkley new nuclear decision by the European Commission and the ongoing development of the Network.

### ***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 and European Commission inquiry -***

The European Commission has formally approved the first part of the UK Government's strike price deal with EDF for the construction of new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point. For the NFLA and many other groups this is extremely disappointing news, particularly given the Commission's strong scepticism about the deal earlier in the year. The European Commission's decision is one of the last major barriers to development of new nuclear build in the UK.

In justifying its decision, the Commission said it had renegotiated parts of the proposed deal with the UK Government to limit distortions in competition of the Single Market. The final details of the Commission's decision are awaited. It has also been confirmed by DECC that the Commission is looking separately at the part of the deal relating to the funded decommissioning programme and how radioactive waste management will be dealt with on the new build sites.

The decision could have a major effect on the UK and the wider European energy market. This could involve a potentially negative effect on investment in renewable energy in the UK, given the huge level of public financial support involved with this deal. The Austrian Government – whose Commissioner was one of 5 to oppose the decision – has publicly said it will legally challenge the Commission's decision. A number of other EU states, and leading European

renewable companies and environmental groups have also indicated they would support such a challenge. NFLA is discussing this matter with the CNFE shortly.

### ***Saudi Arabian finance may replace Chinese investment in UK new nuclear build?***

Even though a major hurdle has been passed by the European Commission, EDF still has to make a final investment decision to go ahead with the Hinkley deal. A report in 'The Financial Times' suggests it is still looking for alternative investors to fund the project - particularly Saudi Arabia's state electric utility.

In its consideration of the Hinkley deal, the European Commission estimate that it will cost £24.5bn, significantly more than EDF's estimate cost of £16bn, of which £14bn was expected for construction and £2bn for development. It is understood the £24.5bn relates to the overall financing pay-back cost. In recently related documents the Commission also noted that in a "worst case" scenario, the total cost of the project could hit as much as £34 billion, if the project suffered major cost overruns and delays similar to those experienced in the construction of the Flamanville reactor. It should be noted that the Flamanville EPR reactor is already two years late, and EDF have just announced a further one-year delay in the project, meaning it will not be completed until 2017 at the earliest – a decade after construction began. The EPR design being built in Finland is also now 8 years late.

The Financial Times article suggests that EDF are balking at the demands being made by the Chinese state utilities (who had been expected to be a 40% shareholder in the project), and particularly its desire to move into the UK nuclear market, perhaps with the Bradwell site in Essex. The article also notes that Middle East sovereign wealth funds have been mooted to get involved in the financing of new nuclear previously, and these overtures have come to naught. Transferring from Chinese to Saudi investment could have potentially serious issues for EDF in its projects in China. Meanwhile, Areva – who would construct the Hinkley reactors for EDF – has issued a new profits warning amidst suggestions its debt may be labeled as 'junk' bonds by rating agencies. EDF had originally said they would make their investment decision before the end of the year, but these new developments suggests it may be delayed to the spring.

### ***Wylfa new nuclear build pre-application consultation -***

As a part of the process to develop new nuclear reactors, Horizon Nuclear at Wylfa has initiated a public consultation of its Advanced Water Boiling Reactor (ABWR) reactor design. The pre-consultation is seeking initial views on the impact of the development. Horizon Nuclear argue the National Policy Statement on Nuclear Energy precludes discussion on whether such reactors should be built. The NFLA Steering Committee approved a tabled response, which will be submitted to Horizon Nuclear and placed on the NFLA website.

The ONR is continuing to discuss with the Japanese Nuclear Regulatory Authority and the US Nuclear Safety Commission its high level assessment of the Hitachi-GE ABWR design in considering issues such as probabilistic risk assessment. Such talks will continue as the more detailed phase of Generic Design Assessment (GDA) commences. GDA is likely to continue until 2016-17. Ongoing discussions with Horizon Nuclear are continuing.

***Agreed: To note the report. To continue to monitor these developments and co-operate with CNFE in raising legitimate concerns over new nuclear build in England and Wales.***

## **4. Radioactive waste management**

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

### ***UK radioactive waste policy progress -***

Radioactive Waste Management Ltd (RWM) has been tasked with the progress of a large part of the UK Government's new strategy to develop a deep-underground waste repository. In October it published a comprehensive Science and Technology Plan. This brings together for the first time all of the generic Research and Development activities to enhance the scientific underpinning of the safety case for a Geological Disposal Facility are set out in one publication.

RWM has also been asked to undertake a national geological screening exercise to support the implementation of its policy for geological disposal of higher activity radioactive waste. At an explanatory meeting in London, RWM set out that the national exercise will “*help communities better understand their area’s geology and how results will help identify a potential site for a geological disposal facility (GDF)*”. RWM plan to develop guidance and apply it to existing information about the geology of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and draw all this information together in one place. RWM are also considering the experience of geological screening from other countries, particularly France, Sweden and Finland.

RWM plan to develop a more detailed explanation about the potential scope of the geological screening exercise at a series of public stakeholder meetings, one of which will be in Manchester on the 4<sup>th</sup> February, to which the NFLA Secretary will attend. These meetings will also explain the process and timing of the screening exercise, and how the scientific and academic communities, industry, and wider public can participate in the process.

### ***NDA Stakeholder Dialogue and media article on Sellafield fuel ponds -***

The NFLA Chair attended the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority’s (NDA) National Stakeholder meeting near Birmingham. This will be tabled at the Steering Committee meeting.

Prior to the NDA meeting, ‘The Ecologist’ magazine published photos from an unnamed Sellafield employee of the fuel ponds B29 and B30 on the site. The photographs showed parts of the site to be dilapidated and in a sorry state. ‘The Ecologist’ had also asked independent nuclear engineering consultant John Large to comment on the photographs. A number of national newspapers picked up this story, and an expert in radiological risk, Gordon Thompson, (USA) told ‘The Guardian’: “The site’s overall radiological risk has never been properly assessed by the responsible authorities. [The] photos, showing disgracefully degraded open-air ponds at Sellafield, indicate that a thorough assessment of risk is overdue.”

The NFLA Secretariat issued a media release on this matter, supporting the comments made by John Large, that the ponds were a ‘significant risk’ to worker and public safety. John Large asked the NFLA to raise a number of questions with the NDA, which the Chair did so at its Stakeholder Dialogue. These have also been adapted into a letter to the NDA. They are:

- What is your best estimate of the mass of fission products and Plutonium in Ponds B30 and B29 and other ‘problem’ storage facilities being dealt with or yet to be dealt with?
- What percentage of these fission products and Plutonium comes from the Windscale Pile and what from the Magnox Reactors?
- What is the approximate mass of metallic Uranium fuels in storage?
- From the cores taken so far and any ultra sound or other non-intrusive investigations, what is the estimated strength of the Pond reinforced concrete and supporting structures?
- Is there any leakage of water from the Ponds directly or detected in the sub soil, and if so, what is its make-up?
- If there is leakage or other loss how are the Ponds levels maintained and what volume of water is needed on a daily basis or otherwise to do this?
- For on site Emergency Planning purposes what counter measures are available to provide make-up water and sprays in the event of radionuclide contaminated pond failure?
- Is sufficient water available to keep fuels - both standard and exotics - immersed and inhibit explosions, heating and the release of radionuclide aerosols?

In a formal response to the NGO Cumbria Trust, the NDA accept the ponds are an ‘intolerable risk’ and are its greatest priority in its work programme to deal with. At the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) NGO Forum, the ONR also confirmed that the reduction of the risks of the legacy fuel ponds remains its largest nuclear regulatory issue.

### ***Welsh radioactive waste management policy -***

Earlier in the year the NFLA had submitted its views to a ‘call for evidence’ by the Welsh Government to assist it in determining whether it needed to formulate a specific policy on the management of higher activity waste residing in Wales. Up to the ‘call for evidence’ consultation the Government has reserved its policy on this matter. The main reason for

updating its policy was due to its support for new nuclear build at Wylfa and the need for dealing with legacy waste.

The Welsh Government has now considered these responses and launched a formal consultation on adopting a more definitive policy. In this consultation, the Government gives its provisional view that it supports the UK policy of developing a 'geological disposal facility' and aligns much of its policy with UK Government policy in this area. It rejects the Scottish Government's policy of 'near site, near surface'. The Welsh Government disagrees with the NFLA that it does not need to determine such a policy as this present time.

The NFLA Secretary is discussing the points made by the Welsh Government in its updated consultation with the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor and members of the Nuclear Waste Advisory Associates. An updated NFLA submission will be developed before the consultation closing date of the 22<sup>nd</sup> January, being approved by delegated authority of the NFLA Welsh Forum Co-Chairs and the NFLA Secretary. It will be sent to all NFLA Welsh Forum members to allow production of a local response.

#### ***Dalgety Bay and Dounreay matters -***

After agreeing in July that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) would pay an estimated £10 million for the clean-up of radiation from the beach at Dalgety Bay in Fife, it has confirmed in a letter to the local community council in October that finance and an action-plan are being developed for a swift remediation of the site. Local MP Gordon Brown has written to the MOD asking for clarification on the timescale for the clean up plan. He said: "I welcome and will monitor the reassurance from the MOD that there will be no delay in starting the clean-up of radiation particles. The extremely patient residents of Dalgety Bay will wish action as soon as possible."

The NFLA Secretary continues to liaise with Fife Council to monitor progress with remediation of the site. The Secretariat also issued a media release following publication of an article in the 'Sunday Post' around the historic dumping of military nuclear waste into the sea in previous decades. This allowed the NFLA to highlight its previous report of a long list of other sites which may possess similar levels of radioactive contamination as Dalgety Bay.

In reference to Dounreay, the NFLA Secretary has been liaising with Shetland Island Council and Western Isles Council over concerns that the NDA want to send a large amount of the radioactive material bound for Sellafield by sea. The material is currently being transported by rail, but the NDA want to send the less hazardous materials now by ship.

#### ***Update on NuLEAF and SCCORS -***

NuLEAF (Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum) held its AGM and business meeting in London on the 15<sup>th</sup> October. The meeting discussed its policy stance towards the UK Government White Paper. The NFLA Secretary and NFLA Chair attended this meeting.

The SCCORS (Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances) Secretariat is still seeking another Council to take over from North Ayrshire. The NFLA Secretariat is aware that Edinburgh City Council is in the final parts of the process in taking over the Secretariat.

#### ***MOD Submarine Decommissioning Project (SDP) / Rosyth site decommissioning -***

The Ministry of Defence has launched a consultation on its shortlist of five sites that could host intermediate level radioactive waste from dismantled submarines. The sites are Chapelcross, Sellafield, Capenhurst, Aldermaston and Burghfield. NFLA staff will attend national workshops in Glasgow and Birmingham and have a draft submission ready for the approval of the January Steering Committee meeting.

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

### **5. Mayors for Peace update**

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

### ***International Mayors for Peace development and plans for 2014/15 -***

As of November 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, 6,374 towns and cities were members of Mayors for Peace in 160 countries. New members again came largely from Iran and Japan due to the work of a Mayors for Peace campaigner at the Tehran Peace Museum, and the ongoing work of the Hiroshima Secretariat in Japan.

The Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign will meet prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2014. The NFLA Chair and NFLA Secretary will represent Manchester City Council at this meeting, and the wider interests of NFLA members. The meeting will consider plans for the Vienna Conference, for the Ypres Conference in April 2015 and for the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference in New York in May 2015. It will also reflect on development of national chapters and the plans for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings.

In Vienna, Hiroshima Secretariat and 2020 Vision Campaign staff will also stay on to lobby international governments at the nuclear weapons conference as preparations also start to develop for the NPT Review Conference. The International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons is also holding a Civil Society Forum on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> December, to which Mayors for Peace will have a focal role in.

Mayors for Peace were awarded the 7<sup>th</sup> No Gun Ri Peace Prize on September 18<sup>th</sup> in Nogeun-ri, South Korea. The prize was created in 2008 by the No Gun Ri International Peace Foundation to commemorate the No Gun Ri massacre during the Korean War. The Peace Prize is awarded annually to individuals and organisations that have contributed to the enhancement of human rights and world peace.

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

There remain 78 UK members and 12 Republic of Ireland members of Mayors for Peace. However, major reorganisation of local government in the Republic of Ireland means that 9 of its 12 members need to be reviewed as town councils are incorporated within county councils.

On October 3<sup>rd</sup> a meeting was held of UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace members to discuss the potential upgrading of its Working Group into a cross-national chapter. The meeting in Manchester Town Hall was chaired by the Lord Mayor of Manchester and had representatives from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Notable attendees included the Deputy Mayor of Cork, the Deputy Mayor of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, the Mayor of Rochdale, the Leader of Otley Town Council and nominated members of NFLA / Mayors for Peace members from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Fife, Leeds, Hull and Caerphilly.

The meeting agreed an 'in principle' agreement to develop a UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter, which is a major step forward. A follow-up meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> January in Manchester Town Hall will formally agree to a terms of reference / constitution, the instituting of voluntary membership fees and it being called the 'UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Chapter' to encourage its wider acceptance. The meeting will also include a guided tour of a major art exhibition in Manchester City Art Gallery which highlights how artists have covered the effects of war from 1914 to the present day. It includes 14 haunting paintings from survivors of the Hiroshima atomic bombings.

### ***Hiroshima ginkgo trees peace seeds project -***

As noted in previous reports, the city of Hiroshima has been developing a project of offering seeds from a second generation A-bomb damaged tree, and peace flames from its eternal peace flame, to Mayors for Peace members.

In early September, the NFLA Secretary received from Hiroshima a package of 12 seeds. They have been given to Hulme Community Garden Centre in the south of Manchester for planting and nurturing. A formal civic event at the garden centre was held on November 5<sup>th</sup> – the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Manchester's nuclear free declaration - with the Lord Mayor of Manchester taking 'ownership' of the saplings on behalf of the city. A schools art competition is being developed to encourage peace education through the project. School children from ages 8 –

11 will be asked to develop posters on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the role nature can play in restoring devastated communities. Successful winners will be exhibited in the summer and their schools will 'adopt a tree' and monitor the progress of the growth of each sapling before they are then transferred to five schools in 2016. Some saplings are also being planned for city centre locations, such as a reconstituted Peace Gardens.

The NFLA Secretary will discuss in Vienna with Hiroshima staff what budget is available for other UK and Irish Mayors for Peace / NFLA members to receive seeds, as capacity allows.

***Agreed: To note the report and welcome the development of UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter.***

## **6. Nuclear Weapons and defence nuclear safety update**

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

### ***International Conference on Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, December 2014 -***

With real concern at the growing stalemate that arose in the May 2014 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Preparatory Conference, many disarmament NGOs and non-nuclear weapon states have been concentrating their efforts on the continuing momentum arising from the separate International Conferences on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons. The third of these conferences will be hosted by the Austrian Government in Vienna on December 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 2014.

The NFLA Chair and NFLA Secretary are attending a Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> November and the ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) Civil Society Forum on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> November in Vienna. The Mayors for Peace meeting will discuss its strategy for lobbying national delegations prior to, and during the International Conference.

The ICAN Civil Society Forum is expecting to bring around 600 delegates from 200 organisations together to discuss the NGO strategy to the International Conference and the NPT Review Conference, as well as to go on to lobby national delegations who attend the Civil Society Conference. Mayors for Peace representatives will be asked to speak at relevant workshops and the International Secretariat and 2020 Vision Campaign staff will stay on for the main International Conference to directly lobby the 140 countries planning to take part.

One notable delegation that has announced it will take part in the Vienna Conference is the United States. It is the first of the 'P5' group of nuclear weapon states (US, UK, Russia, France and China) who have said they would attend one of the International Conference on Humanitarian Consequences. Previously the P5 as a block have boycotted previous conferences as they have argued that they are unnecessary diversions from the NPT. It is not clear whether the other members of the P5, and particularly the UK Government, will attend in Vienna. A cross-party Early Day Motion (EDM) has been tabled to encourage them to follow the United States decision, and disarmament groups are directly lobbying the Government. A verbal report will outline progress on this development at the Steering Committee.

### ***Ypres 100 Conference and NPT Review Conference, late April 2015 -***

April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015 will be the centenary of the first use of chemical weapons in warfare, on the western front in the First World War around Ypres in Belgium. As a Vice President of Mayors for Peace, Ypres is hosting a three day international conference on April 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> commemorating the anniversary and relating it to the 'Cities are Not Targets!' campaign of the 2020 Vision.

The Ypres Conference takes place just a week before the NPT Review Conference at the United Nations in New York (28<sup>th</sup> April – 9<sup>th</sup> May, with the NGO part of the conference 28<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> May). The NFLA Secretary understands that Mayors for Peace plan to focus on the conference being held in the same year as the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki

atomic bombings. A large Japanese presence at the conference, including many 'hibakuska' survivors of the bombings, will be present as the culmination of a 'Peace Boat' world tour.

The Steering Committee discussed representation at these events and felt it was important to particularly attend the Ypres Conference. A final decision on attendance will be agreed at the January Steering Committee meeting.

### ***Rethink Trident statement and NFLA Policy Briefing on Trident replacement -***

At the NFLA Annual Policy Seminar, the NFLA Secretary has invited the General Secretary of CND, Kate Hudson, to talk about the 'Rethink Trident' coalition and its role in the debate over Trident replacement through the 2015 UK General Election campaign and the 2016 decision on Trident that is expected of the next UK Parliament.

The 'Rethink Trident' statement was formally agreed in September by a number of nuclear disarmament groups. The NFLA Steering Committee agreed to formally sign up to the statement. The aim of the initiative is to provide a cogent and prominent view around opposing the military and financial costs of Trident replacement, and challenge all the UK political parties over the next 18 months as these decisions are being made.

The NFLA Secretary is developing a Policy Briefing to consider the likelihood of nuclear weapons and Trident replacement being an issue in the 2015 UK general election debate, and the likely position of the UK political parties towards nuclear weapons policy. The report will also consider the 'nuclear free' policy of the Republic of Ireland Government and the expectation of the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

### ***UK – USA nuclear weapons agreement -***

In early November MPs debated, for the first time in 20 years, the controversial (and largely secret) agreement between the UK and US Governments to co-operate on the development of nuclear weapons. The two governments signed an agreement to extend the Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) until 2024 at the end of July, and are now preparing to ratify the agreement as a formal new treaty. President Obama laid proposals to amend the MDA before the US Congress on 24 July, and the deadline for objections has since expired with no challenge to the renewal plans.

The UK government laid papers announcing renewal of the MDA before Parliament on 16th October, and Parliament had 21 sitting days to object to the proposals before they are deemed to have been accepted. The 6<sup>th</sup> November debate in Westminster Hall gave MPs an opportunity to explore the UK's dependency on US nuclear technology for its nuclear weapons programme and highlight the role the US will play in the UK Trident replacement programme. However, with the three largest political parties all in favour of some form of Trident replacement, debate was unsuccessful in blocking renewal of the agreement.

The MDA is a significant Treaty in reference to the replacement of Trident missiles. Existing arrangements for co-operation on the design of nuclear warheads will be extended to allow closer collaboration on the design of nuclear reactors to power the new submarines which will carry the UK's Trident ballistic missiles. The US and UK will also increase intelligence and information-sharing aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons technology.

As Peter Burt of the Nuclear Information Service has commented, the new changes to the MDA open the possibility that reactor components will be purchased from the USA, and in the longer term that US contractors may begin to play a role in the operation and maintenance of the Royal Navy's nuclear propulsion programme. The extended Agreement will also allow the transfer of special nuclear materials and non-nuclear warhead components between the two nations, although details of these transfers remain confidential. Existing arrangements which allow the exchange of information on nuclear warhead design remain unchanged.

Whilst these changes may be considered to be going against the spirit of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, the UK and US Governments counter that a key part of the updated agreement will be to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons technology. The modified



Agreement confirms that ongoing 'nuclear threat reduction' activities between the US and the UK include "evaluation of potential enemies, whether state or non-state actors", providing a framework for the exchange of information and intelligence on nuclear proliferation and security risks. Further changes, aimed at extending the role of the Agreement in military planning to include "the evaluation of potential enemy capabilities" also boost the scope for nuclear intelligence exchanges between the two countries.

The UK Government claims that "none of the proposed changes seek to pre-empt a Main Gate acquisition decision on the successor to the Vanguard submarine in 2016" – Trident replacement. However, ratification of the amended MDA will represent a significant milestone in delivery of the Trident replacement programme and makes the 2016 Parliamentary decision ever more likely to endorse it.

***More defence nuclear safety concerns at sensitive weapons sites -***

As noted at the NFLA English Forum seminar in Oxford, there has been a sharp increase in the number of safety incidents at the Faslane and Coulport submarine bases that host Trident submarines. This highlights an ongoing concern of the NFLA that defence nuclear safety is lagging behind civil nuclear safety due to issues such as staff shortage and poor health and safety training.

Following a Freedom of Information request from the Sunday Herald, the Ministry of Defence provided information on the number of safety incidents at Her Majesty's Naval base Clyde. This showed in the period 2009–13 there had been 316 nuclear safety events, 2044 fire alarm incidents, and 71 fires at the facility. It took 9 months for this information to be released by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), shortly after the Scottish referendum vote had taken place.

Though most of these incidents were fairly minor in scale, some serious incidents did also occur. The most serious incident took place in August 2012, when a group of civilian workers were exposed to low doses of radiation when carrying out maintenance in a tank next to a live submarine reactor at the Faslane submarine base. The report noted that proper radiation controls had not been put in place and the risks to workers had not been adequately assessed before work began. As a result of the incident the MOD received a reprimand from government safety regulators. In April 2013 the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the MOD's Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator jointly issued a formal warning letter requiring improvements in the control of work near submarines at Faslane.

3243 industrial health and safety incidents were reported as 'near misses' in 2009 - 2013. This in an increase of more than 50% from 724 in 2011-12 to 1143 in 2012-13, although the report notes this is believed to have resulted from an increased awareness of the importance of reporting safety incidents.

***Agreed: To note the report. To support the 'Rethink Trident' statement.***

**7. Fukushima and UK civil nuclear safety**

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

***Temporary closure of EDF reactors at Heysham and Hartlepool -***

Since August 2014, four nuclear reactors – two at Heysham and two at Hartlepool – have been closed due to the locating of a "structural problem" with one of the boiler spines at Heysham 1 nuclear reactor, which had been initially identified in November 2013. EDF have indicated that the reactors are almost ready to re-open, subject to regulator approval, but only at 75 – 80% of previous capacity.

EDF argue that "As boiler spine defects can only develop into cracks at very high temperatures, two reactors at Hartlepool and one at Heysham 1 could be returned to service at 75%-80% power to reduce the temperature to which the boiler spines are exposed." EDF also added that it would isolate the boilers affected by the structural defects located in the Heysham 1 nuclear reactor. Providing the regulator approve this operation EDF hope to have the

reactors operating again in December. Planned maintenance in 2015 and 2016 on both reactors will allow attempts to gradually see if it is possible to work back up to 100% capacity. In boiler tests of all the boilers of the four reactors no other safety defects have been detected.

The major rush to get the reactors back online relates to National Grid concerns on the availability of electricity over the winter period following the major fire that destroyed half of the Didcot power station. National Grid claimed that 90% of nuclear capacity would be available by December 2014. A NFLA Policy Briefing on the unreliability of operating nuclear power stations and wider safety concerns is being finalised and will be published shortly. The Steering Committee welcomed the report as providing an input into this important debate.

#### ***ONR NGO Forum -***

The NFLA hosted the most recent meeting of the ONR NGO Forum, which was held in Manchester Town Hall on the 9<sup>th</sup> November. The NFLA Chair also attended the meeting with the NFLA Secretary. 12 NGOs were represented, and there were five senior ONR nuclear inspectors, including the Chief Nuclear Inspector and the CEO of the ONR.

A large part of the morning of the meeting was to determine the future working of the Forum, the expectations of the NGOs and the legal powers of the ONR. This was discussed as the ONR felt previous meetings had led to unreasonable discussion and expectations that the ONR would provide an advocacy role for the NGOs to Government, which was not possible.

The second half of the meeting determined what key issues NGOs wished to take further forward with the ONR. Key priorities that emerged from this discussion included:

- further discussion on the Generic Design Assessment (GDA) process for Hitachi's ABWR design and for post GDA issues with the Hinkley Point EPR design;
- further discussion on the impact of new build radioactive waste and the transportation of radioactive waste;
- further discussion on the security of nuclear sites;
- the ONR to focus discussion on the effectiveness of Nuclear Site Stakeholder Groups.

These would be taken forward for further meetings. The meeting also allowed for discussion over recent photographs of the Sellafield spent fuel ponds, where ONR noted they remained concerned with the slow progress in dealing with these facilities. Risks and hazards at Sellafield remain as the ONR's highest issue for remediation. Both the NFLA Chair and NFLA Secretary felt the meeting had allowed for a useful sharing of views and a structure was now being put in place to make the meetings more effective with well-reasoned discussion.

#### ***Fukushima update -***

At the NFLA Welsh Forum, Brian Jones of CND Cymru provided an excellent overview of the recent Green Cross Fukushima Study tour. The NFLA Chair and NFLA Secretary had been invited to attend this, but were unable to do so because of conflicting meetings. A Welsh delegation of four representatives attended, including Brian, along with Julie Ward MEP and Rob Edwards of the Sunday Herald. Rob Edwards will also be giving his observations of the Study Tour at the NFLA Annual Policy Briefing.

The presentation by Brian and Rob will be placed on the NFLA website. Clearly the key issues the Study Tour discovered were the huge issues in dealing with contaminated water and contaminated soil from the reactor, understanding what has happened to the fuel rods in three reactors where it has not yet been possible to enter, public health concerns and the trauma still experienced by evacuated communities.

The NFLA Secretary plans to include the information garnered from Brian and Rob's presentations within an updated NFLA Policy Briefing on Fukushima. This will consider the state of nuclear politics in Japan, where final approvals for re-opening of 3 – 4 reactors has been given. The Steering Committee welcomed production of such a report.

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

## 8. **Alternatives to nuclear energy**

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

### ***NFLA Policy Briefing on Local Energy Service Trusts / Companies -***

In August the NFLA Secretariat published a detailed Policy Briefing on how Councils can develop more comprehensive energy policies, including the creation of arms-length Energy Service Companies (ESCOs). This report has been widely welcomed by council officers and councillors. It takes NFLA policy forward by advocating that local authorities take a much more prominent role in energy policy, with an ESCO a potential solution for local energy generation, local energy security, the reduction of local fuel poverty and, over time, potential income generation.

The NFLA Secretary has profiled the report to the NFLA Scotland and NFLA Welsh Forum meetings, and will consider its application to Ireland at the upcoming NFLA All Ireland Forum meeting. A key part of these presentations is to advocate that councillors disseminate the briefings to their member colleagues and to appropriate Councils officers considering the development of energy policies and / or ESCO's.

The NFLA Secretary has been assisting officers and councillors in Manchester with development of Manchester City Council policy in this area. A resolution on developing a more definitive energy policy, and a task and finish group to assist the development of a Greater Manchester Energy Service Company, is being considered by the Council.

The Steering Committee welcomed the dissemination of the report and encouraged each member to use it actively at a local level.

### ***Irish Government Green Energy Paper and Community Energy -***

In late July, the NFLA submitted its views on the Republic of Ireland Government's Green Paper considering the future development of energy policy and how it could reduce its dependence on fossil fuels. The NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor is outlining the detail of this report to the NFLA All Ireland Forum. The seminar will also have a presentation from Donal Traynor of the company UC Investment Ltd on the potential for developing community energy projects.

### ***Renewable energy and energy efficiency -***

The World Wildlife Fund has published a report urging the UK Government and devolved governments to develop a more definitive renewable heat policy. The report calls for stronger government action to tackle carbon emissions from heating homes. The report states that currently just 2% of UK heating demand is met by low-carbon sources and the Government is "very far" from the 25% goal to be achieved by 2030. This is especially important as heating accounts for 32% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions and 44% of energy use.

A separate report from Cambridge Econometrics and Verco and commissioned by the lobbying group 'Energy Bill Revolution', shows that a much more ambitious energy efficiency investment programme would pay for itself and significantly boost the UK and the Irish economies. For example, the report argues such a programme would add £13.9 billion annually to the UK economy by 2030, with GDP boosted by £3.20 for every £1 invested by the Government. A national scheme to make homes super-energy efficient would result in £8.6 billion in energy savings per year by 2030, an average energy saving of £372 per household. After taking into account loan repayments this would result in £4.95 billion in financial savings per year for Britain's households.

### ***Update on shale gas -***

A report by the UK Energy Research Centre, based at Imperial College, argues that the UK's fracking potential has been over-hyped and that it is far fetched to suggest it would make the UK self-sufficient in energy, as occurs in the United States.

The NFLA Secretariat will continue to monitor the shale gas issue from the point of view of radiation risks from fracking. Members in Scotland may be interested to note that a major coalition of 26 community and environmental groups has just been established to urge the

Scottish Government to ban fracking for shale gas and underground coal-gas. The coalition is particularly concerned around proposed developments near Falkirk and Stirling.

**Agreed: To note the report. To disseminate the ESCO report widely.**

## 9. Low level radiation and health issues

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

### ***Infant Leukaemia near Nuclear Power Stations / DECC NGO Forum -***

One of the major concerns the NFLA has held for many years is the potential issue of increased childhood cancers in the proximity of nuclear power stations. The NFLA Secretary disseminated a CND UK report authored by Dr Ian Fairlie of a new research study which suggests there may be indeed be an increased risk.

At the DECC NGO Forum attempts are still being made to develop further dialogue between the independent health committee COMARE (Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment) and its independent critics.

### ***Fukushima derived radiation detected off California coast -***

Recent American research has confirmed that small levels of radioactivity, deriving from Fukushima, have been detected off the coast of California. The findings were made by Dr Ken Buesseler from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI). Dr Buesseler confirmed the study had detected very small amounts of the radioactive isotope caesium-134, which can only originate from nuclear reactors and does not form naturally.

The amount of caesium-134 found so far is very small and it currently does not pose a health risk, said Dr Buesseler. Two becquerels per cubic metre of water were found in seawater 100 miles (160km) offshore from the town of Eureka in California. (A Becquerel is the number of decay events per second per 260 gallons of water). Dr Buesseler added though that it is important to track the spread of radioactivity across the Pacific to ensure radioactivity does not reach dangerous levels. "The models predict caesium levels to increase over the next two to three years, but do a poor job describing how much more dilution will take place and where those waters will reach the shore line first".

### ***Low Level Radiation Conference, March / April 2016 -***

The NFLA Secretary has had an early discussion with Dr Jill Sutcliffe and Chernobyl Children's Project Co-ordinator Linda Walker about holding a Low Level Radiation and Health Conference in March / April 2016. This would coincide with the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fukushima and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chernobyl. Early indications for low level radiation specialists to attend are positive. Other actions would also be organised for these two important anniversaries.

A further discussion has taken place and an email has gone out to as many groups that would be interested as possible. The draft plan would be to link the first day around a NFLA Steering Committee and joint afternoon seminar in co-operation with Chernobyl and Fukushima charities, a second day with an academic style Low Level Radiation and Health Conference, and a third day with an activist's event. The aim is to try and get as wide an organising committee together as possible and then to seek funds and support from charitable trusts and other potentially interested organisations like Green Cross.

**Agreed: To note the report.**

## 10. Nuclear emergency planning and nuclear materials transportation

The NFLA Secretary provided a report of his work on nuclear emergency planning issues.

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

The NFLA Secretary met with other NGO representatives, DECC, ONR as part of the DECC NGO Sub-group on nuclear emergency planning at DECC offices on the 12<sup>th</sup> November. The

group was established in 2013 to allow for full and frank discussions on nuclear emergency planning matters and allow for appropriate collaboration on policy development where possible and practical.

The key issues discussed and agreed at the meeting included:

- DECC are currently undertaking a review of their national nuclear emergency planning work plan, having decided that the previous version was too wide in scope. The priorities for the work plan will be:
  - Ensuring DECC national nuclear emergency planning arrangements are workable.
  - Reviewing RIMNET – the national radiation monitoring warning system.
  - Implementing in full all the recommendations of Weightman review relating to management of a large incident.
  - Concluding work on nuclear transportation risks.
  - Updating guidance documents, especially on incident recovery.
  - Ensuring local authorities have plans in place to deal with 'reasonably foreseeable' incidents.
- EU Basic Safety Standards Directive: DECC are currently considering what changes are needed to ensure the UK is fully compliant with it. It is likely that this will include a review of REPPiR (the main emergency planning arrangements around nuclear sites) aimed at clarifying existing regulations, rather than adding new powers (HSE will lead on this, not DECC or ONR). DECC seem willing to allow NGOs like the NFLA a voice in this important review.
- EU Nuclear Safety Directive: the UK Government's assessment seems to be that they are already compliant with this Directive and few changes will be needed.
- Future work involving NGOs: The following areas were flagged up as areas where all present at the meeting felt NGOs could play a useful role:
  - REPPiR review (a priority for NGO's);
  - For NGO's to view the 'Warning and Informing' chapter of the Nuclear Emergency Planning Liaison Group (NEPLG) 'Consolidated Guidance document (this is a practitioners guide of best practice in nuclear EP);
  - Involvement in a future workshop on the potential use of social media and other emergency communication in nuclear emergency planning;
  - further consideration of public information on nuclear safety (linked to REPPiR);
  - DECC will decide what their processes are for dealing with these issues and invite involvement when they've done this.

The NFLA Secretary found this the most useful sub-group meeting so far, and is particularly pleased that DECC is willing to discuss a review of REPPiR (Radiation Emergency Planning and Public Information Regulations).

The DECC NGO Forum has also agreed to establish a sub-group to consider nuclear security issues. The NFLA Secretary attended its inaugural meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> October. This proved quite a frustrating meeting as DECC staff outlined a highly limited area of discussion due to the sensitivity and 'national security' issues around these issues. There was some reasonable discussion around the areas where DECC can engage with NGO staff and a follow-up meeting will allow DECC to determine this further.

### ***NFLA nuclear emergency planning / security policy briefing -***

The NFLA Secretary is in the process of developing a detailed update of issues and concerns in nuclear emergency planning, nuclear security and from the ongoing problems arising from the Fukushima disaster. The report will also consider issues of concern around the size of emergency planning zones around nuclear sites, the effectiveness of emergency planning exercises and public communication techniques, and the safety issues and security concerns around fixed sites and nuclear transports. It is now hoped to have this report completed before the end of the year.

### ***Nuclear transportation concerns -***

A key and ongoing concern of the NFLA has been the safety and security of transporting nuclear materials by road, rail and sea. Particular interest has focused on sea shipments due to ongoing discussion between the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and councils around the Highland and Islands over proposed movements of radioactive materials from Dounreay to Sellafield. The NDA argue such shipments would reduce the number of rail transports of Dounreay's 'exotic fuels' to Sellafield, and that the material transported by sea will have a lower radioactive content.

The NFLA Secretariat has assisted the Western Isles Council and Shetland Island Council with background information in preparing for individual meetings with the NDA. In discussion at the NFLA Scotland meeting, a Shetland Island Councillor noted concern at the responses provided by the NDA to its questions. Of particular concern would that material being transported would not have transponders on it that could locate it if it went overboard, and the real safety issues of sending such shipments through hazardous shipping lanes, such as 'the Minches' around the Western Isles. It also relates to a wider KIMO concern over the reduction to just one emergency towing vessel for the north and west of Scotland, which is based at Orkney.

This issue increased in its topicality after a fire on the vessel 'MV Parida' off the north east coast of Scotland on the 8<sup>th</sup> October. The fire meant the vessels engines had to be turned off and it was adrift for some hours until assistance came from the Pacific Pintail. The vessel had been returning radioactive materials from Dounreay to Belgium. An oil rig had to be evacuated as a precaution and the Emergency Towing Vehicle at Orkney was called out for it. This incident also occurred in some of the worst autumnal storms of the season. A joint NFLA / KIMO media release was issued.

This matter highlights the real concern of transporting radioactive materials by sea, as outlined in several NFLA Policy Briefings. The NFLA Secretary, on the approval of the NFLA Scotland Forum meeting, has written to the Scottish Environment Minister, the Scottish Parliament's Infrastructure Committee, the UK Government, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the UK Parliament Transport Select Committee. The NFLA Chair has also sent information through to one of the members of the Select Committee, Manchester MP Graham Stringer. The NFLA Secretariat will continue to actively pursue this issue with NFLA member councils and campaigning groups. A Policy Briefing to put the issue into its full context is also in preparation.

### ***Radioactively contaminated scrap metals - Iraq report***

The NFLA Secretary is continuing to follow up further research to develop a related briefing on the decontamination of nuclear materials and recycled metals which are then released back into the consumables market. The NFLA Secretary has also been discussing this matter with the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW). It has recently published a report about the trade in contaminated military scrap metal in Iraq, which arises from the large amount of damaged military equipment that has been recycled and returned to the consumable market. The report is at <http://www.bandepleteduranium.org/en/docs/215.pdf>.

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

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

The next Steering Committee meeting is planned for ***Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January in Manchester Town Hall***. An afternoon UK & Ireland Mayors for Peace meeting will also take place.

### **NFLA Annual General Meeting and Annual Policy Seminar 2014:**

#### **1. Secretary's report -**

The NFLA Secretary provided a detailed report outlining the activity of the Secretariat in 2014. It was welcomed by the AGM that membership had remained stable. The AGM welcomed the large amounts of briefings, newsletters, media releases and letters, stakeholder meetings and activity of the Secretariat. The co-operative work the NFLA undertakes with the Mayors for Peace, KIMO International, CNFE, ICAN and many anti-nuclear groups was also welcomed.

***Agreed: To note the report and provide thanks to Secretariat staff.***

**2. Finance report -**

The NFLA Secretary provided a finance report which showed that in FY 2014/15 it was anticipated that a balanced budget was likely to be achieved. The AGM welcomed this and agreed to a 1.5% increase in membership fees to take into account the inflation rate.

***Agreed: To note the report and agree to a 1.5% increase in affiliation rates.***

**3. NFLA Steering Committee Chair and wider composition -**

The NFLA Secretary noted that there had been one nomination to be NFLA Steering Committee Chair for 2015 – Councillor Mark Hackett of Manchester City Council. Councillor Hackett had been nominated by Councillor Bill Butler of Glasgow City Council and seconded by Councillor David Blackburn of Leeds City Council. The AGM unanimously elected Councillor Hackett as NFLA Chair for 2015. Councillor Hackett thanked members and noted that he would work closely with the NFLA Secretary to continue to improve the effectiveness of the NFLA.

The current composition of the Steering Committee was considered by the AGM. It was noted that Irish representation would be finalised at the upcoming NFLA All Ireland Forum meeting.

***Agreed: To elect Councillor Hackett as NFLA Chair and to note the report.***

**4. NFLA Constitution -**

The NFLA Secretary provided the AGM with a copy of the NFLA Terms of Reference and Constitution. In discussion, the AGM felt it would be useful to add more detail in the terms of reference around the development of local authority energy policies and the positive role this can bring to reducing carbon emissions.

***Agreed: The NFLA Secretary to bring a report updating the Terms of Reference to the NFLA Steering Committee of the 30<sup>th</sup> January, and to note the wider report.***

**5. NFLA Individual Members -**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on individual councillors in three categories – individual member councillors, individual non-member councillors and retired former NFLA councillors. The AGM agreed a one-off membership fee of £50 was reasonable, with a lower rate of £20 for retired members.

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

**6. NFLA Service Plan for 2015 -**

The NFLA Secretary provided the AGM with a draft Service Plan for 2015. The AGM welcomed the Service Plan. The AGM agreed that a short paper on the name, image and role of the NFLA should be developed by the NFLA Secretary for next NFLA Steering Committee.

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

**7. NFLA Annual Policy Seminar 2014 -**

CND General Secretary Kate Hudson, NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor Pete Roche and Sunday Herald Environment Editor Rob Edwards spoke at the NFLA's Annual Policy seminar.

The presentations from each speaker were thought-provoking and generated a considerable amount of panel discussion. The presentations will be placed on the NFLA website.

**8. Next NFLA AGM meeting -**

The next meeting of the NFLA AGM should be held (under the annual rotation system) by a NFLA All Ireland member. It will either be the last Friday of November or the first Friday of December 2015.