

Nuclear Free Local Authorities briefing



Date: 14th December 2009

No.72

Subject: Summary of the main points from the NFLA Steering Committee Meeting and Annual General Meeting, City Hall, Cardiff, 3rd and 4th December 2009

NFLA Steering Committee, Cardiff City Hall, 3rd December 2009

1. **National NFLA Forum meetings**

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

NFLA England and NFLA Wales held a joint seminar on Friday 9th October in Liverpool Town Hall. The seminar considered major changes to the planning laws for major developments with the upcoming creation of the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC). The IPC will determine planning approval for all large-scale national infrastructure projects such as the development of new nuclear power stations, larger renewable energy developments, airport terminals and high-speed rail lines. The meeting was addressed by Hugh Ellis, Chief Planner of the Town and Country Planning Association; Pete Wilkinson, formerly of CoRWM and a member of Nuclear Waste Advisory Associates; David Hunt, Director of Eco Environments; and Pete Roche, NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor.

The meeting was well attended and a detailed NFLA Policy Briefing has been developed from it and sent to all NFLA members and placed on the NFLA website. It is planned to hold the next NFLA England seminar on the issue of nuclear transportation and Trident replacement, hopefully in Oxford in mid February. Co-operation with the Welsh Anti-Nuclear Alliance (WANA) is also taking place for a high profile NFLA Wales event in Cardiff looking at concerns over new nuclear build at Wylfa and Hinkley Point.

NFLA Ireland held a seminar and business meeting on Friday 16th October in Bray Town Hall. The seminar considered some of the major energy and nuclear policy issues affecting Ireland. Speakers included Tim Deere-Jones, independent marine pollution consultant; Gavin Harte, independent sustainable energy consultant; Pete Roche, NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor; and Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary. The seminar was well-attended and a NFLA Policy Briefing was developed providing members with a critique of the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland's report on radiation doses in the Irish Sea. It can be found on the NFLA website. It is hoped to hold the next meeting in N Ireland.

NFLA Scotland held a seminar and business meeting on Friday 23rd October in Glasgow Parish Halls. The seminar considered issues around public health and low level radiation, climate change and nuclear power, Trident replacement and how Scotland should respond to the new nuclear build developments in England and Wales. Speakers included

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Dr Ian Fairlie, independent consultant on radiation policy; JW Storm van Leeuwen, independent civil nuclear policy consultant; John Ainslie, CND Scotland Co-ordinator; and Pete Roche, NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor. The seminar was very well attended and a detailed NFLA Policy Briefing has been developed, sent to all Scottish local authorities and placed on the NFLA website. The next meeting will be in Fife and include a seminar on Trident replacement.

2. **New Nuclear Build**

The NFLA Secretary and the NFLA Scotland Policy Adviser provided a report on a number of developments to assist commencement of a new UK nuclear build programme.

Draft National Nuclear Policy Statement –

In early November the UK Government issued a series of national policy statements on different aspects of energy supply – renewables, fossil fuels and nuclear generation.

The Nuclear National Policy Statement (NPS) asserted that new nuclear build was essential to develop as a ‘low-carbon’ energy source and to assist future long-term energy security. Ten sites have been identified for new nuclear power stations in England and Wales - Hartlepool, Durham; Sellafield, Kirsanton and Braystones, Cumbria; Heysham, Lancashire; Wylfa, Anglesey; Oldbury, Gloucestershire; Hinkley Point, Somerset; Sizewell, Suffolk; Bradwell, Essex.

The originally nominated site of Dungeness in Kent was discounted over concerns of coastal erosion and flooding. 3 additional sites – Druridge Bay in Northumberland, Owston Ferry in Lincolnshire and Kingsnorth in Kent – were also considered but discounted at this stage. They may be reconsidered in a few years time.

The Steering Committee agreed that the NFLA Secretariat produce a NFLA Policy Briefing on the NPS – an initial summary has been placed on the NFLA website – and respond in detail to the consultation. The Committee also agreed to send a summary of the NFLA response to the Parliamentary Energy and Climate Change Committee and the North West of England Select Committee to assist their inquiries into new nuclear build. The consultation ends on 22nd February 2010 and all NFLA members are encouraged to put in a local response to the consultation. The NFLA response will reiterate concerns over nuclear waste, nuclear safety, financial costs, public health and the democratic deficit in the new planning regime.

Recommendation: NFLA Secretariat to produce a Policy Briefing and a full response on the NPS.

Justification consultation on new nuclear build –

The Government has also issued their draft decision on whether a new nuclear build programme is ‘justified’ under European law. The decision has to outline how the economic benefits of new nuclear build outweigh any social or health concerns. The Government believes that the decision is fully justified and have outlined in great detail how they have to come to this conclusion. The NFLA response will concentrate on continuing concerns over public health, financial costs, waste management and the diversion of key investment away from renewable energy.

The Committee agreed that the NFLA Secretariat would produce a detailed Policy Briefing and respond in full to the consultation. NFLA member authorities are also encouraged to respond, reflecting the NFLA’s consistent views of concern over nuclear energy.

The Committee also endorsed a letter sent by the NFLA Chair to the Energy Minister asking for the consultation to be extended to take into account a report on public health and childhood cancer rates around nuclear sites which is due to be published in March 2010.

Recommendation: NFLA Secretariat to produce a Policy Briefing and a full response on the justification consultation.

DECC meeting on Generic Design Assessment -

The NFLA Secretary reported that the Department of Energy and Climate Change had held a meeting with nuclear policy groups considering issues around the new nuclear build statements and the design of new reactors. The NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor had attended the meeting and noted that a robust discussion had taken place. The Health and Safety Executive have confirmed to the media that they have a number of issues to resolve with the two prospective new reactor designs, which they are discussing with the companies concerned.

3. **Radiation Safety Standards**

The NFLA Secretary and NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor provided an update on developments in a number of issues around radiation safety standards.

Hunterston spillage incident –

The NFLA Secretary noted a reply from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) over a radioactive spillage into the Clyde estuary from the Hunterston nuclear power plant. The response noted that SEPA took the incident very seriously and had given the site operator a final warning just short of taking legal action.

German KiKK study

An update was provided on this important study commissioned by the German government, which considered cancer rates around nuclear sites and the general population. The study uncovered startling figures suggesting childhood cancer rates are statistically higher within 3 kms of a nuclear site than in other parts of the country. As noted above, Dr Ian Fairlie's talk on this study has been developed into a NFLA Policy Briefing and is on the NFLA website.

Recommendation: NFLA Secretariat to write to the devolved governments and the Irish Government to raise concerns with the UK government over the KiKK study.

4. **Radioactive Waste Management**

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on developments in radioactive waste management.

NDA Stakeholder Dialogue –

The NFLA Secretary and Councillor Finn (West Dunbartonshire Council) represented the NFLA at the November 2009 Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Stakeholder Dialogue.

The dialogue had provided an update on progress with the proposed national deep underground radioactive waste repository, the transportation of radioactive waste and an overview of the consultation on the management of low-level radioactive waste. Much talk was made of the 'nuclear renaissance' and the possibility of financial pressures on the NDA in 2010 due to the recession and likely economies being made in public spending. The main points of the dialogue can be found on the NDA website.

NDA consultation on low-level radioactive waste management

The NDA had extended their consultation period on their proposed solid low-level waste management strategy to allow more Councils to respond to it. The NFLA response is on the NFLA website. A number of NFLA member councils, such as Shetland Island Council and Leeds City Council have also responded supporting the NFLA comments and adding in their own local concerns.

CoRWM report on research and development in radioactive waste management

The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management have issued their report and recommendations on the research and development being currently undertaken in radioactive waste management to Government. CoRWM had responded to the NFLA response by stating that there would be 'no value' in an analysis of the scientific uncertainties and technical deficiencies raised by the Nirex inquiry report, given that 12 years had gone by since this report was conducted. CoRWM did agree with the NFLA comment that more information on the needs, plans and progress on research and development in radioactive waste strategies was required to be published, and this was amongst one of its key recommendations.

DECC consultation on plutonium storage strategy

The NFLA Steering Committee endorsed the Secretariat's response to the Government's second discussion paper on the key factors for managing the UK's plutonium stockpile. The response reiterated that all immobilisation options should be investigated further and tested against environmental principles. It also urged the Government to not give a preliminary view on plutonium storage in a future consultation as much more detailed research is still required.

Scottish Government stakeholder dialogue on radioactive waste management

The Scottish Government policy on radioactive waste management is not to go for a deep-waste storage facility but look at near-site, near surface storage. A more detailed policy is being developed and will be published in January 2010. NFLA will participate in a stakeholder workshop in Edinburgh on 24th January 2010.

Recommendation: NFLA Secretariat participates in the next NDA Stakeholder Dialogue in March and the Scottish Government stakeholder event in January.

5. Submarine Decommissioning Project

The NFLA Secretary reported that a full input into the Ministry of Defence's Submarine Decommissioning Project meetings was ongoing. The NFLA Secretary and Councillor Goodall (Fife Council) attended an Advisory Group meeting in Edinburgh and the NFLA Secretary has agreed to become a member of a sub-group considering a public consultation process in 2010. The Project is looking at how the MOD will decommission and dismantle redundant nuclear-powered submarines. The MOD are currently consulting with Councils of potential sites where dismantling may take place or where an intermediate level radioactive waste store may be located. The consultation is expected to take place in mid 2010.

Recommendation: The NFLA Secretariat continue to take a full part in this Project.

6. Mayors for Peace

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on progress with Mayors for Peace.

A UK Mayors for Peace Working Group meeting had taken place in Manchester on November 19th. The meeting had agreed to look at writing letters to Councils in Wales, Northern Ireland and England to encourage membership. A small delegation would also seek to see the Foreign Office Minister Ivan Lewis to discuss counter-proliferation issues and the upcoming Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. Membership of the Mayors for Peace had significantly risen with 9 new members over the last month.

Recommendation: NFLA members who are not Mayors for Peace members are encouraged to consider joining the organisation.

7. **AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on the publication of an offsite emergency plan at the Aldermaston and Burghfield atomic weapon production plants. The plan has to be published as part of the REPPiR (Radiation Emergency Planning and Public Information) Regulations.

A detailed analysis of the plan was provided and noted the huge emergency response that would be required in the event of a major incident at either site. A full briefing is available from the NIS website – <http://www.nuclearinfo.org>.

The MOD has also put forward a planning application to West Berkshire District Council for an enriched uranium facility at the Aldermaston site.

Recommendation: NFLA Secretariat to respond to the planning application on an enriched uranium facility at Aldermaston.

8. **Trident Replacement and the NPT**

The NFLA Steering Committee agreed to special seminars in Fife and probably in Oxford to consider the issues of Trident replacement and the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Conference, as well as considering concerns around the transportation of nuclear materials. These will be held in February 2010.

The NFLA Secretary spoke at a special fringe meeting of Parliamentarians attending a NATO strategic conference on its policy towards nuclear weapons, which was held at the Scottish Parliament on the 12th November.

Recommendation: NFLA national Forums hold meetings on Trident and the NPT in the approach to the 2010 NPT Conference.

9. **NFLA Membership Development**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on the challenges in both retaining existing members and recruiting new members given the severe financial pressures on local government budgets at a time of an international recession. There were some promising developments that the NFLA will be recruiting new members early in the new year.

Recommendation: The NFLA Secretary produces a report on funding streams and a financial plan for the NFLA Steering Committee meeting in January.

10. **NFLA AGM and upcoming 30th anniversary**

The NFLA Secretary provided an updated discussion paper on the possible ideas for events commemorating the NFLA's 30th anniversary in 2010. It was agreed to seek a major event around the actual anniversary in November 2010, including leading Mayors from the Mayors for Peace. All NFLA events in 2010 would be tagged as 'NFLA at 30'.

11. **Dates and venues of 2010 NFLA Steering Committee meetings**

Friday 29th January – Manchester Town Hall
Friday 26th March – Manchester Town Hall
Friday 25th June – Manchester Town Hall
Friday 24th September – Manchester Town Hall
Thursday 4th November – Manchester Town Hall
Friday 5th November (AGM) – Manchester Town Hall

It is possible one of these meetings may take place in another location.

NFLA Annual General Meeting, Cardiff City Hall, 4th December 2009

1. NFLA Secretary's and NFLA Forum's Annual Reports

The NFLA Secretary provided an annual report noting the key activities of the NFLA Steering Committee and NFLA National Forums.

Key points included:

- The NFLA Steering Committee met four times in 2009 - three times in Manchester and once in Cardiff.
- Membership of the NFLA has slightly reduced to 70 member councils.
- Staff and advisors involved in the NFLA are Sean Morris – Secretary, Rebecca Bromley (upto November 2009), Omacha Achem (from December 2009) and Andrea Lindezey – Administration, Cathy Birrell – NFLA Scotland Secretary, Stephen Cooper – NFLA Ireland Secretary, Pete Roche – NFLA Policy Advisor (Scotland), Peter Burt – Mayors for Peace Development Advisor.
- The NFLA Secretariat provides policy advice, research and information, representation at official nuclear policy meetings and events, liaison with councils, government, NGOs and the nuclear industry, a website and press information service, an Annual Policy Briefing and special national Forum seminars, an enquiry point and a media release centre.
- 16 major detailed Policy Briefings were produced – all are on the website.
- Monthly NFLA newsletters are issued to member authorities.
- A full day and very well received Annual Policy Briefing in Manchester considered the issues of climate change and nuclear weapons proliferation.
- 9 half day national Forum seminars were held, along with business meetings for member authorities.
- The NFLA Secretariat attended stakeholder meetings in 2009 with the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change, the UK Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the UK Ministry of Defence, the Irish Government, the Scottish Government, the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management.
- Full engagement with the LGA's Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum and COSLA's Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances took place.
- Full engagement and close co-operation with the Mayors for Peace and attendance at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference and the Mayors for Peace Executive Conference took place.

NFLA National Forums –

- NFLA Scotland held business meetings in Dundee, Lerwick, Glasgow and Cardiff. It held a special seminar in Glasgow. Membership has remained steady.
- NFLA England held seminars and business meetings in Preston and Liverpool. Membership has slightly reduced.
- NFLA Wales held seminars and business meetings in Bridgend, Liverpool and Cardiff. Membership has slightly reduced.
- NFLA Ireland held seminars and business meetings in Dundalk and Bray. Membership has slightly reduced.

Recommendation: The NFLA Secretariat was congratulated for the extensive work and organisation it has developed throughout 2009. Rebecca Bromley was thanked for her service and wished well for the future.

2. Financial report and membership rates for 2010/11

The financial report tabled by the NFLA Secretary was approved by the AGM. A thorough and detailed discussion was held about the financial problems that are affecting local government and which are likely to exacerbate in 2010 and 2011. It was agreed that the next NFLA Steering Committee discussed this issue in some detail to consider membership retention

and other income generation. The AGM agreed that, given the financial recession, NFLA membership rates would be frozen in 2010. It was also agreed to send the NFLA Service Plan with affiliation invoices to show exactly how the NFLA uses its budget. A proposal for harmonizing rates between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland was also agreed, with discussion on how this is best achieved deferred to the next NFLA Ireland meeting.

Recommendation: NFLA membership rates to remain unchanged for 2010.

3. **Election of Chair and Composition of the NFLA Steering Committee for 2010**

Baillie George Regan was unanimously re-elected as NFLA Steering Committee Chair for 2010. It was agreed that NFLA National Forum Chairs - Councillor Euan McLeod (Scotland), Councillor Ralph Pryke (England), Councillor David Sage (Wales), Councillor Mark Dearey (Joint Chair, Ireland) and Councillor Michael Carr (Joint Chair, Ireland) would be NFLA Steering Committee Vice Chairs. NFLA national Forum AGMs will be held at their respective first meetings in 2010.

The AGM recorded its thanks for the long and committed service of retiring members Councillor Don Yates (Lancashire) and Councillor Joyce Bosjnak (Nottinghamshire). The AGM recorded with sadness the death of its long-standing former chair Councillor Bill Risby (Manchester) and Councillor Mel Higham (Flintshire).

Recommendation: Elect Baillie George Regan as NFLA Chair in 2010.

4. **NFLA Steering Committee Terms of Reference**

The NFLA Steering Committee terms of reference, last amended in 2006, were agreed. They can be found in the NFLA Service Plan 2010 on the NFLA website.

5. **NFLA Annual Policy Briefing 2010**

The AGM agreed that the Annual Policy Briefing 2010 should be held in November 2010 to coincide with the NFLA 30th anniversary. It was also agreed to seek to hold a half-day seminar after a Steering Committee meeting in June.

6. **NFLA Service Plan 2010**

The NFLA Service Plan provides a detailed summary of the work of the NFLA and its priorities for 2010. The Plan was approved and members congratulated the NFLA Secretary for providing such a comprehensive review. It was agreed that the Service Plan should be sent out with affiliation invoices.

7. **NFLA AGM press release**

It was agreed to send a press release following the AGM. This can be found on the NFLA website.

For more information on any of the above matters contact: Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary, on 0161 234 3244 or email: s.morris4@manchester.gov.uk