

Nuclear Free Local Authorities

briefing



Date: 9th April 2010

No.73

Subject: Summary of the main points from the NFLA Steering Committee Meeting, Manchester Central Library, 26th March 2010

1. **National NFLA Forum meetings**

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

NFLA Scotland held a business meeting, Annual General Meeting and a seminar on Trident replacement and its implications for Scotland in Inverkeithing Civic Centre on Friday February 26th. In the business meeting the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor commented that, if all announced renewable energy developments come to fruition, Scotland would have 178% of its actual energy requirements.

In the AGM Councillor Euan McLeod (Glasgow) and Councillor Audrey Doig (Renfrewshire) were re-elected as Convenor and Vice Convenor.

The accompanying seminar was very well attended and considered the costs of Trident replacement and nuclear weapons proliferation. John Ainslie of CND Scotland provided an overview over the current debate over Trident replacement and its direct effects on Scotland. Revd Ian Galloway, a member of the Scottish Parliament's committee considering Scotland and nuclear weapons, provided a powerful summary of the moral imperatives around the nuclear weapons issue. Sally Romilly from Greenpeace outlined figures which suggest that Trident replacement could cost the UK taxpayer as much as £97 billion. Bill Kidd MSP concluded the seminar providing an overview of the work of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), of which he is a Council member and which is playing a close role with Mayors for Peace at the upcoming Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

The next meeting will be in Livingston, West Lothian on Friday 18th June and will include a seminar on Scottish radioactive waste management policy.

NFLA England Forum held an engaging seminar on Friday 5th March in Oxford Town Hall. The seminar considered issues around the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, the Aldermaston nuclear weapons facility and concerns over nuclear weapons convoys.

The keynote speaker was Rebecca Johnson from the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, who considered the potential for success of the upcoming Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Conference. Peter Burt of Nuclear Information Services provided a thorough overview of the developments at Aldermaston, whilst Margaret Downs and Nigel

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES

Day of the pressure group Nukewatch showed the routes of nuclear weapons convoys from Aldermaston to Faslane, Coulport and Sellafield and the concerns they have over the safety of such large transports. Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary concluded the seminar with the results of a NFLA survey of English Council Emergency Planning Units through which nuclear weapons convoys take place, which showed a patchy knowledge of such transports and a general lack of joint exercises and training in many of the Councils who responded.

A joint NFLA policy briefing on Trident replacement and nuclear weapons convoys is being developed. The NFLA Secretariat is also contacting the affected Councils in England, Wales and Scotland and appropriate Government agencies with the policy briefing.

The next NFLA English Forum seminar is planned to take place after the NFLA Steering Committee on Friday 25th June in Manchester, and will be looking at a number of issues around nuclear emergency planning.

NFLA Wales Forum held a special joint seminar with the Welsh Anti-Nuclear Alliance in the Park Inn, Cardiff on Friday 13th March. The first half of the seminar allowed representatives from the major political parties in Wales to highlight their views on Wales and the implications of nuclear new build. The second half of the seminar provided the opportunity for local groups to raise specific concerns over nuclear new build in and around Wales.

Paul Flynn MP (Labour), Jenny Randerson AM (Liberal Democrats) and Jake Griffiths (Greens) provided their own concerns over developing nuclear power in Wales and voiced their opposition to it. Representatives from Plaid Cymru and the Conservatives unfortunately had to cancel at short notice, but have been asked to provide a written policy statement which will be included in a NFLA Policy Briefing.

Amongst the notable presentations were an analysis over concerns of the highly radioactive nature of the waste that will be stored at new nuclear reactors for up to 160 years, which High Richards said was of a more dangerous variety than the existing waste legacy. Crispin Aubrey and Carl Clowes also provided an overview of the local campaigns and concerns over the potential development of nuclear power stations in Hinkley Point and Wylfa.

The next NFLA Welsh Forum seminar will take place in the Celtic Royal Hotel, Caernarfon, Gwynedd on Friday 4th June. It will concentrate on the potential development of a Wylfa B nuclear reactor in Anglesey.

NFLA All Ireland Forum held its spring seminar in Newry Council Offices on Friday 19th March. 24 Irish councils were represented at the meeting which considered issues around the impact of low level radiation on the Irish coastline, the development of renewable energy in Ireland and the benefits for Irish Councils of joining the Mayors for Peace and NFLA.

The keynote speakers were Dr Ian Fairlie, independent radiation consultant and Dr Pawel Gaca of Geosciences Ltd, Southampton University and a co-author of the Northern Ireland Radiation Monitoring Annual Report. They noted radioactive discharges in the Irish Sea have reduced in recent years, but the potential increase in reprocessing and new nuclear build may change this situation over the next decade. Ian Fairlie also highlighted a number of concerning health studies over the effects of low level radiation on human health on the Irish east coast.

Larry Staudt from Dundalk Institute for Technology provided an overview of how Ireland needed to dramatically reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and that renewable energy was the most obvious alternative for both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. He emphasised that nuclear power was not needed as an energy source in Ireland. Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary, concluded the seminar by providing councillors with an overview of the work of Mayors for Peace and the NFLA and the real benefits of joining both organisation.

A date and location for the next NFLA All-Ireland seminar will be identified shortly.

2. **New Nuclear Build**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on a number of developments in the debate over the possible commencement of a new UK nuclear build programme.

Draft National Nuclear Policy Statement, Justification Decision and Select Committee inquiries –

The NFLA Secretariat have submitted detailed responses to the UK Government's major consultations on a suite of national energy policy statements – specifically its nuclear policy statement – and its draft decision concluding that the building of new nuclear power stations was 'justified' under European law.

The submissions are on the NFLA website and have been disseminated across Councils and appropriate nuclear policy groups. The NFLA response argued that the Nuclear Policy Statement was not 'fit for purpose' and required considerable review. The Royal Town Planning Institute and the National Trust are amongst other groups who have also argued that the NPS is not fit for purpose. The NFLA response to the justification inquiry urged a full public inquiry, a view endorsed recently by a list of 92 senior academics, nuclear policy specialists, politicians and nuclear policy groups.

The NFLA Secretariat also submitted detailed responses to inquiries being held by the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee and the North West Regional Select Committee, which are also on the NFLA website. The NFLA English Forum Chair Councillor Ralph Pryke represented the NFLA in giving an oral submission to the North West Select Committee inquiry on the future of the nuclear industry. The Energy and Climate Change Select Committee has called for a full debate in Parliament on the national policy statement and is concerned with the Government's confident assertion that radioactive waste legacy issues have been resolved.

The Government's response to both consultations is not now expected to be published until after the UK general election, leaving it to whoever wins the election to pursue.

Recommendation: NFLA Secretariat to respond to any subsequent consultation.

Generic Design Assessment -

The NFLA Secretary reported that major concerns over both prospective designs for new nuclear reactors have come to light. The Head of the GDA in the Health and Safety Executive's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Kevin Allars, has warned Westinghouse that it is still not satisfied with the robustness of the AP1000 concrete reinforcements design. Westinghouse is planning to 'sandwich' concrete between two plates of steel, rather than using conventional reinforcement techniques. This technique will take less time but raises concern whether it would be able to withstand a direct terrorist attack. The NII are insisting for more information that the design could withstand an 'external shock' or it will not be granted a licence.

The other GDA prospective design – the EPR put forward by EDF / Areva, has also come under scrutiny after leaked EDF documents were sent to the French anti-nuclear group 'Sortir de Nucleaire'. These show that the EPR design presents a serious risk of a Chernobyl style nuclear accident, and that the risk is being downplayed by EDF to increase its profitability. The NFLA issued a media release highlighting the documents and asking for the documents to be thoroughly considered by the NII.

Recommendation: NFLA Secretariat to write to the NII over concerns of new reactor designs.

3. **Radiation Safety Standards**

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

German KiKK study and COMARE response

The German Government's KIKK 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. The UK's Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) are analysing the KIKK report, but are not now expected to publish their own findings until June. Concerns remain that COMARE's analysis may not be as wide-ranging as the German study. A NFLA Policy Briefing on low level radiation following the NFLA All-Ireland Forum seminar is being developed.

RPII study on radioactive doses and safety of radioactive material shipments

The NFLA have received detailed responses to letters from the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) and UK Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA) over issues relating to Irish Sea marine pollution and safety. The RPII and the MCA responses provide a robust reply to NFLA concerns over radiation safety in and on the Irish Sea. Both responses have been placed on the NFLA website. The NFLA will be responding in detail to both letters.

Low Level Radiation and Health Conference, Manchester, 19th and 20th June 2010

The NFLA are supporting and attending the 25th anniversary Low Level Radiation and Health Conference which will be held in the Friends Meeting House, Manchester on the 19th and 20th June. The Conference brings together internationally renowned academics and health officials in the low level radiation area and will be considering the effects of new nuclear build on low level radiation and health studies.

Recommendation: NFLA Secretariat to respond to COMARE report, the RPII and the MCA letters. NFLA to support the Low Level Radiation and Health Conference.

4. **Radioactive Waste Management**

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

NDA Stakeholder Dialogue –

The NFLA Chair, NFLA Secretary and NFLA member Councillor Jim Finn attended the latest meeting of the NDA Stakeholder Dialogue held in Manchester on 17th and 18th March 2010. The meeting highlighted that the NDA were in discussions with the Government over their budget and some significant trimming of budgets is likely. A large part of the NDA's budget will be concentrated on clean-up and decommissioning work of part of the Sellafield site, with other Magnox stations bundled together into a single group package. The Dialogue also had updates on the development of a deep-underground waste repository, site restoration, integrated waste management and spent fuel management.

New reactor waste

The Energy Minister Declan Kidney announced in a Parliamentary answer the likely amount of radioactive wastes that would be generated by a new generation of nuclear power stations.

The Westinghouse AP1000 reactor design would generate an estimated 2,560 spent fuel assemblies from a projected reactor life of 60 years. The Areva EPR reactor design would generate an estimated 3,600 spent fuel assemblies over the same period. Such high level waste will remain on site for around 160 years and then be sent to a deep-waste repository. The EPR reactor will also generate around 2,009 – 3,651 cubic metres of intermediate

radioactive waste over a 60 year life cycle, while the AP1000 will produce around 3,450 cubic metres of intermediate radioactive waste over the same period.

Scottish Government draft policy on radioactive waste management

The Scottish Government's draft policy and consultation paper on radioactive waste management strategy in Scotland was published on January 15th. A major concern of the NFLA with the updated policy is that it concentrates on near surface, near site 'disposal' rather than 'storage'. The updated policy also argues that 'disposal' will take priority. The NFLA Secretariat has produced a detailed overview of the policy and suggested answers to the consultation for NFLA Scotland members. A full response will be submitted to the Scottish Government before its deadline on the 9th April.

Recommendation: NFLA Secretariat to submit a response to the Scottish Government on radioactive waste policy.

5. Mayors for Peace and the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Review Conference

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

Mayors for Peace / NFLA meeting with UK Government

A small UK Mayors for Peace / NFLA delegation made up of the NFLA Chair, the NFLA Scotland Convenor, the NFLA Secretary and the Mayors for Peace Development Adviser met on the 1st March with the Foreign Office Minister Ivan Lewis and officials to discuss the UK Government's strategy for the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference at the UN in New York in May 2010.

The Mayors for Peace delegation concentrated on putting forward three key actions to the UK Government for the Conference:

- The Government should Show support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
- The Government should show support for the twenty point statement 'A New Consensus for Action on Nuclear Disarmament' from the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.
- The Government should declare that it would consider treating the use of nuclear weapons as a crime against humanity, and push for this to be incorporated into international law.

The meeting was very useful and constructive and the Foreign Office genuinely welcomed the opportunity for discussion with Mayors for Peace / NFLA. The Minister also agreed that the UK's Ambassador to the Review Conference should meet an International Mayors for Peace delegation (which will include the NFLA Chair and NFLA Secretary) at the NPT Conference.

Letter to MSPs on nuclear disarmament and a Nuclear Weapons Convention

17 Members of the Scottish Parliament have signed a protocol sent by the NFLA to endorse a protocol calling for a Nuclear Weapons Convention which has been organised by the group Parliamentarians for Non-proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament. It is planned to take this initiative to other UK and Ireland Parliaments.

Mayors for Peace membership

Mayors for Peace membership in the UK has increased to 62 members with Perth and Kinross and East Lothian joining. A presentation to Irish authorities on Mayors for Peace was also given at the recent NFLA All Ireland Forum meeting in Newry.

Mayors for Peace membership internationally has also increased and stands at 3680 cities as of 1st March 2010.

The NFLA Chair and the NFLA Secretary will be representing the organisation at the upcoming NPT Review Conference in May. Confirmed events include a major march and rally through New York, a Mayors for Peace event at the NPT, the Mayors for Peace Campaign Board meetings and a Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-bomb exhibition.

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

7. Nuclear weapons convoys – emergency planning

The NFLA Secretary reported on a Scottish Parliament report which considered all aspects of nuclear weapons in Scotland. One of the most useful parts of the report was a survey of Scottish Councils on knowledge of, and training for, accidents involving a nuclear weapons convoy going through their area. The responses from Scottish Councils indicated patchy knowledge from Council Emergency Planning Units of the convoys and of the MOD's 'Local Authorities Emergency Services Information' for nuclear weapons convoys. The responses showed that the emergency services (mainly the Police) are informed when a convoy goes through their area, but not the Local Authority. Little, if any emergency planning training is undertaken at the local level for consideration of an emergency incident involving such a convoy. The Scottish Government has asked the Regional Resilience Forums in Scotland to consider the results of the survey.

The NFLA Secretariat undertook a similar survey of English Councils using the exact set of questions as the Scottish Parliament's questionnaire. The results are markedly similar to the Scottish survey and were presented to the Steering Committee. It was agreed that the results be developed into a NFLA Policy Briefing and that letters of concern be sent to the UK and Scottish Governments, the Nuclear Emergency Planning Liaison Group and the Emergency Planning Society. A seminar on different aspects of nuclear emergency planning should also be planned for the Steering Committee's next meeting on 25th June.

Recommendation: NFLA Secretary to develop a NFLA Policy Briefing and write to relevant agencies with concerns over nuclear emergency planning issues. NFLA Secretariat to develop a seminar for the next NFLA Steering Committee meeting.

8. NFLA Budget, newsletters and membership development

The NFLA Secretary provided an end of financial year budget report and 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 in 2010/11. Liverpool City Council has formally joined the NFLA.

A detailed double edition of the NFLA newsletter had been produced and distributed to members. This will be sent out with NFLA Service plans and 2010/11 affiliation invoices to encourage membership retention.

Recommendation: NFLA members to assist NFLA Secretariat to ensure prompt payment of affiliation invoices for 2010/11.

9. Nuclear News Service

The NFLA Secretary provided a paper from the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor about the continuing development of the 'Nuclear News' daily service. This service provides the NFLA, nuclear policy groups and interested journalists with an overview of all nuclear related stories in the national, local and specialist media. The Steering Committee was asked to consider a one-off fee to assist in production of the new service for the next year, with due credit given, to allow time for bids to charitable trusts for its future funding.

Recommendation: To provide a one-off fee of £500 for the Nuclear New Service in 2010/11.

10. **NFLA and KIMO**

The NFLA Secretary reported that NFLA were assisting the International Marine Pollution Local Authority Organisation, KIMO, in tabling a report to the OSPAR Intergovernmental Marine Pollution Commission's Radiation Substances Committee. The NFLA Secretary will assist the KIMO Secretary in presenting this paper to the Committee at its meeting in Stockholm on April 20 – 22. Costs will be shared between the two organisations.

Recommendation: To approve the report.

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

The NFLA Secretary confirmed that the Mayor of Nagasaki and the Chair of Nagasaki Municipality would be the guests of honour at the NFLA's 30th anniversary commemorative events in November 2010. It is also hoped that a major photographic exhibition of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-bombings will also be held in the People's History Museum in Manchester in November. The NFLA AGM and a special evening commemorative event will be held around the 30th anniversary on November 4th and 5th.

Recommendation: To support the 30th anniversary events.

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

Friday 25th June – Manchester Town Hall

Friday 24th September – Manchester Town Hall

Thursday 4th and 5th November – Manchester Town Hall

NFLA Secretariat

April 2010