

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



**Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018

**No.171**

**Subject: Summary of key points and actions from the NFLA Steering Committee meeting, AGM, and joint seminar with Mayors for Peace, Manchester, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017**

**1. Introduction by NFLA Steering Committee (SC) Chairman**

The NFLA Steering Committee Chair, Councillor Ernie Galsworthy, welcomed members to the meeting in the LEAF Centre, Manchester. The Chairman was pleased that the NFLA had reached its 37<sup>th</sup> year of operation and was holding this meeting in its headquarters of Manchester. He encouraged all members to stay on for the Annual General Meeting and the joint seminar with the UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Chapter.

**2. National NFLA Forum meetings**

The NFLA Secretary provided an overview of the work of the four National NFLA Forums across the UK and Ireland.

***NFLA English Forum –***

The NFLA English Forum held its autumn seminar in the Guildhall, Hull on the 6<sup>th</sup> October. The meeting focused on renewable energy and subsequent job opportunities being considered and developed, particularly in the north of England. Speakers included Simon Burgess from Siemens Energy, discussing its role in promoting decentralised energy strategies; Richard Burgess from the Spencer Group, about their innovative renewable energy facility being developed in cooperation with Hull City Council; and the NFLA Secretary on the future development of decentralised energy, in cooperation with community energy and private sector renewable energy schemes. The next meeting was the hosting of the NFLA Annual Policy Seminar with Mayors for Peace after this Steering Committee meeting and AGM.

***NFLA Welsh Forum -***

The NFLA Welsh Forum held its autumn seminar in Cardiff County Hall on the 13<sup>th</sup> October. The seminar provided updates of their concerns by Carl Clowes from PAWB and Roy Pumfrey from Stop Hinkley of the proposed new nuclear facilities at Wylfa and Hinkley Point. PAWB are entering in a strategic partnership with Friends of the Earth Japan to challenge Hitachi in Wales and Japan.

Independent marine pollution consultant Tim Deere-Jones profiled his research and campaigning work on the potential dumping of radiological material from a Hinkley Point C reactor to a site close to Cardiff Bay. This is profiled in more detail in Agenda Item 5. Neil McEvoy AM, who has taken this research to the Welsh Assembly, was also in attendance.

Joseph Kidd from the Welsh Marine Energy Association gave an overview of the potential for marine energy in Wales and Tony Cooke from Cardiff Community Energy profiled their work in creating a community energy company and how the sector was growing in Wales. The Forum's next meeting is being planned for March 2018.

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES  
WORKING FOR A NUCLEAR FREE, LOW CARBON WORLD**

### ***NFLA Scotland Forum -***

The NFLA Scotland Forum held a business meeting, elections and an autumn seminar on the 25<sup>th</sup> October in Glasgow City Chambers. Councillor Feargal Dalton of Glasgow City Council was elected Convener with Councillor Audrey Doig of Renfrewshire Council being elected as Vice Convener. Councillor Bill Butler of Glasgow City Council was elected as Vice Chair, Scotland, of the NFLA Steering Committee.

A well-attended afternoon seminar considered nuclear transportation and emergency planning concerns with Jane Tallents and David Mackenzie from Nukewatch and Tor Justad from the group Highlands Against Nuclear Transports speaking. Scottish radiation waste strategy and concerns over aging nuclear reactors were noted by the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor. Dr David Toke of Aberdeen University considered the development of Scottish decentralised energy policy and the potential for a Scottish Government-owned Energy Company.

A short business meeting was also held prior to the NFLA Steering Committee on the 1<sup>st</sup> December, which considered a report by the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor. It agreed its next meeting would be in early March in Glasgow City Chambers. A date would be confirmed shortly.

### ***NFLA All Ireland Forum -***

Following the well-attended NFLA All Ireland Forum meeting in Navan, County Meath on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September; the NFLA Secretariat prepared and submitted a detailed response to the Irish Government on renewable energy support schemes. The Secretariat is pleased to note that Fermanagh and Omagh Council in Northern Ireland has passed a resolution to join the NFLA. The NFLA Secretary gave a presentation to councillors at a specially arranged meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> November and membership was welcomed by councillors. It is planned that the next Forum meeting be in Omagh, provisionally set for the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

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

### **3. Implications of the EU referendum vote on nuclear policy**

The NFLA Secretary gave a round-up of key nuclear policy issues around the UK leaving the European Union.

The Nuclear Safeguards Bill was launched to Parliament in late October and is now in its committee stage. The Bill will seek to enshrine into UK regulations all the reporting and verification processes (currently undertaken through the Euratom Treaty) by which the UK demonstrates to the IAEA that civil nuclear material is not diverted into military or weapons programmes. It will also establish the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) in taking over Euratom's role in overseeing reporting on civil nuclear operations, verification (that is checked by international inspectors from the IAEA rather than Euratom), containment measures and surveillance of such materials. Additional protocols will be put in place to ensure enhanced IAEA observance, in a role that would have been previously undertaken by Euratom inspectors. Arrangements are being undertaken separately around the international trade of nuclear fuel with specific treaties having to be established with the EU and with the likes of Canada, the United States, Australia, China and Japan. All this at present will need to be in place by March 2019, though it is possible transitional arrangements could be put in place until 2021 / 22.

Dr David Lowry has submitted a response to the Bill Committee about a fundamental concern that the UK is taking control of what is currently an external inspections programme. NFLA shares Dr Lowry's core concern of the diplomatic acceptability of a nation state asserting that it will replace an independent international safeguards verification regime with a self-verified regime, albeit one that intends to be populated by the appropriate expertise from a current recruitment drive.

A key additional area of concern is whether the ONR has sufficient time to recruit enough specialist nuclear safeguards inspectors to adequately police a post-Euratom regime. The ONR has to date recruited four new safeguards inspectors but says it will need more time to fill what are highly specialised roles. The Energy Minister Richard Harrington has confirmed the UK is committed to leaving the Euratom Treaty arrangements in March 2019.

NFLA plans to include this in an updated Brexit briefing coming out in the new year, which will also include other concerns around defence, an all-Ireland energy market and around constitutional matters.

**Agreed: To note the report.**

#### 4. Nuclear new build

The NFLA Secretary provided an update on issues around the proposed development of new nuclear power stations in England and Wales.

##### ***Continuing slow progress with Hinkley Point C, Wylfa B and Sellafield Moorside -***

There remains slow progress in the development of new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point, Wylfa and Sellafield Moorside whilst financial concerns continue to mount. Despite this, the UK Government, most notably through its Clean Growth Plan and in its support for small modular nuclear reactors, continues to give new nuclear its strong and largely unqualified support. This is at a time when the UK Government was expecting over the past decade for electricity demand to have increased by 15% in the past decade, when it has actually fell by 15%, suggesting security of supply is nowhere near as prescient as the Government and media suggest.

A report by EY notes the UK Government estimates that £45 billion is required for investment to successfully develop these three proposed sites. The report argues the next decade is critical for the nuclear supply chain and it calls on a Nuclear Sector Deal between the Government and the industry to provide financial support for it. The report, which comes from interviews within the nuclear industry, admits that there remains much uncertainty over the number, scale and pace of nuclear new build in the UK.

At **Hinkley Point**, though early site work continues, the financial state of EDF continues to worsen. In mid-November ratings agency Standard and Poor downgraded its financial position from 'stable' to 'negative'. It cited increased pressure on EDF following a downward revision to its core earnings target for 2018. S&P is further concerned that EDF's remedial actions would not lead to a lasting debt reduction, with the adjusted debt forecast possibly moving back toward previous levels by 2019. EDF has admitted that future nuclear reactor maintenance outages could be longer than expected and that these could weigh on its 2018 core earnings. Around a third of EDF's nuclear fleet in France is currently out of action.

The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee is the latest body to raise concerns over the Hinkley (as well as Wylfa and Moorside) contract. The Committee argue the 35 year contract between EDF and the Government "locks into an expensive deal" which will hit the poorest hardest through increases to fuel bills. The report also notes that the plans for Hinkley Point C do not provide wider benefits such as jobs and skills.

The report recommends that the UK Government:

- needs to draw up a plan to create wider economic benefits from Hinkley Point and explain how they will prove they have been achieved;
- should commission an independent assessment of its effect on consumers;
- publish a strategic case for nuclear before any more plants are agreed;
- ensure proper cost/risk analysis of the funding options for all future big infrastructure projects;
- provide a 'Plan B' for the UK's energy security if Hinkley Point runs into trouble;
- ensure thorough monitoring of Hinkley Point's construction.

In reference to **Wylfa B**, ongoing talks between the Japanese Government and the UK Government with Hitachi are looking at ways it can be financed to avoid the pitfalls that have been encountered with Hinkley Point C. This may include for the first time formal state support, whilst much work is ongoing with under-writing private sector investment. It should be noted that Hitachi has recently made a huge loss on investments in laser uranium enrichment technology in the US of £1.3bn for the year ended 31 March 2017. Hitachi has publicly said if it fails to find partners before construction starts on Wylfa in 2019, forcing it to bear practically all the financial risk of the project, it will suspend its plans for the £14bn project.

In the interim, the Hitachi-owned Horizon partnership is seeking to prepare a Development Consent Order to go to the Planning Inspectorate in the first quarter of 2018. Two local planning applications will have to be prepared to improve the main access road to the site and get approval for clearing the site. Natural Resources Wales has initiated a consultation to consider the radioactive waste plans for Wylfa B. The Steering Committee approved the NFLA Secretariat to respond to it.

No work has been taking place at the **Moorside** site since its owner Toshiba called a halt, due to its nuclear subsidiary Westinghouse going into bankruptcy proceedings in the United States. In mid-November Toshiba confirmed it was now formally looking for a buyer to take over the Moorside development while it tries to reorganise Westinghouse to deliver American projects.

Media reports suggest South Korean and Chinese nuclear utilities are both interested in the Moorside site. Senior officials from KEPCO will be joining the Korean Energy Minister in meetings with UK Government officials in late November. The South Korean Government has announced it will be looking to slowly move away from nuclear power in the country, but parts of the government still remain supportive of Kepco being involved in overseas projects. The Chinese state nuclear company CGN was reported in September as being interested in taking a stake in the site, though the pro-nuclear GMB union has given its opposition to such a deal. GMB argues rather that the UK Government should take over financial support for the site as a core plank of energy policy. A further complicating factor is that, if either utility took over the site, then there may require a new generic design assessment of their own nuclear reactor design, rather than the Westinghouse AP1000 design.

#### ***Developments at Sizewell and Bradwell -***

Despite two local consultations, the **Sizewell** new build site is heavily dependent on success at Hinkley Point C. It is now expected a third local consultation will be issued either in early 2018. The outgoing former Chief Executive of EDF in the UK, Vincent de Rivaz has suggested he believes that a Sizewell C reactor would be in place around 2031. This is 7 years later than planned.

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) announced in November that the Chinese Hualong One reactor design planned for the **Bradwell** site is now being formally considered by the nuclear regulators under the Generic Design Assessment (GDA) process. The GDA process is likely to take 4 – 5 years and could be more complicated for the nuclear regulator given that China does not have the same kind of nuclear safety regime as European, American and Japanese utilities. Media reports have suggested that the Chinese utilities have been very reluctant to give the ONR security information about the reactor design, which is an essential part of the GDA process.

#### ***Developments with Small Modular Nuclear (SMR) Reactors -***

A report by Rolls Royce and NuScale has argued that the UK Government should prioritise the development of small modular reactors. Rolls Royce claim these could eventually come into operation at a 'strike price' of £60 per MW of electricity generated. There remains real frustration in the industry with a long delay from the government in publishing further plans for the sector or companies it wishes to seek develop the technology.

The Financial Times has reported the UK Government is planning to revive the faltering efforts to bring forward SMR's, despite an internal economic analysis casting doubt on the technology. In the Clean Growth Plan a clear indication of substantial public funding to develop SMR's with approved suppliers, which may include Rolls Royce. £480 million is being proposed for nuclear research and development in the plan, a part of which is for SMR research. The report by EY is expected to reach a negative verdict on the cost effectiveness of the technology.

Despite this, the Government are expected to offer funding to industry in three areas – the largest being to support technology which could be rapidly deployed, the second part to experimental technology in this area which could bring the costs down, and the third part to assist the supply chain working with developers of the technology.

In evidence given to the Public Accounts Committee considering the problems with developing new nuclear, Andy Stirling and Phil Johnstone of Sussex University argued the interest in SMR's comes from the need for the civil nuclear sector to support the defence nuclear sector, which has a major

staffing crisis. The same need in upscaling skills to the nuclear sector for Hinkley Point would also benefit the defence sector.

In discussion on the report, Steering Committee members requested that the Secretariat continues to emphasise the cost burden of new nuclear build on UK energy policy.

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

## **5. Radioactive waste management**

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

### ***Update on the process to develop a deep underground waste repository -***

It was expected that consultations to move the UK Government's policy on radioactive waste management forward would commence in autumn 2017, but they have been delayed again. They are now expected to be published in early 2018. Two consultations are expected to be launched – one on the definition and associated issues of appropriate 'communities' that can 'volunteer' to consider hosting a deep underground waste repository will be raised. The second will publish RWM's geological survey of England, Northern Ireland and Wales to consider the parts of each country suitable and unsuitable for locating a repository.

It is now expected that in late 2018 the Government will again ask local authorities / communities if they wish to put themselves forward to take part in a process to register an interest to 'volunteer' to host a deep underground repository. If they do, the process will be run quite differently to the last one – which ended when Cumbria County Council declined to move forward with it in 2013 – with a much longer process envisaged and the Government in an advocacy role. More will be spelt out of the potential community benefits to be offered and the process will take some years before final decisions by a potential host community are made.

### ***Concerns over Magnox and Dounreay decommissioning contracts -***

Earlier in the year, the NDA, following Government advice, decided not to challenge a legal ruling against it that it had 'fudged' the contract procurement process that had led to Cavendish Fluor winning the contract for decommissioning Magnox nuclear reactors. The ruling has led to the NDA having to pay around £122 million in compensation to Energy Solutions and Bechtel. The Government also accepted an NDA recommendation that Cavendish Fluor would be relieved of the Magnox contract two years earlier than planned. It has not yet been decided if the NDA will take over this contract internally, as occurred with the Sellafield contract, or put it back out to tender.

The UK Government has instituted an inquiry into the NDA Magnox procurement process. This is being led by the former CEO of the National Grid, Steve Holliday. The NFLA has sent its comments to the Government and to the Holliday review.

A BBC Radio 4 'File on Four' documentary has investigated the Magnox contract process. As well as outlining the major mistakes of the NDA during the procurement process, the documentary outlined that similar concerns lay within the separate and earlier attained contract for decommissioning the Dounreay site, which was also won by Cavendish Fluor. The documentary suggested Energy Solutions believed that this contract had also been under-bid for, but they did not challenge this at the time as the Magnox contract was currently being considered. As a result of the documentary, the NFLA Secretary wrote to the Scottish Environment Secretary calling for her to query this contract with the UK Government. This relates to the Scottish Government's concern over the safety record at Dounreay, at a time when redundancies are planned at the site.

### ***Hinkley Point C 'radioactive mud' and Wylfa B radioactive waste consultation -***

At the NFLA Welsh Forum meeting, the independent marine radioactivity consultant Tim Deere-Jones spoke about concerns that a license had been granted by Natural Resources Wales to EDF for the proposed Hinkley Point C reactor which could allow it to dump dredged materials containing low levels of radiation into a site close to Cardiff Bay, known as the Cardiff Deep Grounds. These concerns have been adapted into a NFLA Radioactive Waste Briefing. It highlights a large range of

radionuclides will be present in this sediment, and could, through storm surges and inclement weather, have the potential to go on to land or be consumed through the food chain.

The report has been taken up by independent AM Neil McEvoy. Two separate petitions have attracted over 60,000 signatures and have been submitted to the Welsh Assembly. The Petitions Committee has held a short hearing seeking clarification with Natural Resources Wales, and they have been given a deadline to provide further information. Neil McEvoy and other AMs are calling for a full debate in the Senedd.

The report has created a lot of concern amongst local authorities in south Wales, and a number of them attended the NFLA Welsh Forum meeting. The Leaders of the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff Councils also had a short meeting with the Welsh Environment Minister. The NFLA briefing has been sent to councillors across Wales.

#### ***Dalgety Bay remediation -***

At the recent NFLA Scotland Forum, Roy Stewart of Fife Council noted that full work to remediate the site around Dalgety Bay would be taking place shortly. Radium contamination had occurred in the area from the radium painted dials on fighter planes which were destroyed after the war and dumped in a site close to the bay. Roy Stewart thanked the NFLA for its work in raising this issue and providing technical support and background to Fife Council. Pressure had also been brought to bear by local councillors, MPs and MSPs. The Steering Committee welcomed this and asked for the Secretariat to look to update a previous report considering other contaminated sites.

#### ***NFLA analysis of nuclear site stakeholder engagement -***

At a previous Steering Committee meeting, the NFLA Secretary presented a detailed survey of civil nuclear Site Stakeholder Groups (which are organised by NDA and EDF) and defence Local Liaison Committees (who are organised by the MOD). The wider report also outlined issues with national nuclear policy stakeholder engagement and to understand international best practice. The report is on the NFLA website and is available from the NFLA Secretary.

The NDA's initial review of SSGs following the report. This was shared with the NFLA Secretary and appeared to see a greater level of support for involving NGOs. The final review though appears to have diluted some of these changes and the Steering Committee agreed that the NFLA Secretary should write to the NDA on this matter.

The ONR Chief Executive commented that the report had been very informative. In separate discussion with the ONR an action point has been given for the Chief Nuclear Inspector to table parts of the report to the Nuclear Industry Safety Directors Forum quarterly meeting being held in December. It is then planned to invite the NFLA Secretary and a civil and defence NGO sector representative to the spring meeting of this Forum to discuss ways to improve stakeholder engagement in the nuclear sector.

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

The LGA's NuLEAF (Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum for England and Wales) group held a business meeting in Workington on the 18<sup>th</sup> September. This allowed for NuLEAF members to discuss issues on decommissioning with the NDA CEO, who attended part of the meeting. The next business meeting will be taking place on the 6<sup>th</sup> December in London. A planned afternoon seminar on the UK GDF consultations has had to be postponed as they have not to date been published, but this could be rescheduled for the new year.

COSLA's SCCORS (Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances) group is meeting in Edinburgh on the 30<sup>th</sup> November. The meeting will discuss which Council will maintain its Secretariat and it will also have an update on Scottish radioactive waste issues. It was reported that two Co-Chairs, one of which is from Renfrewshire Council, has been appointed. The NFLA Scotland Forum asked the NFLA Secretary to liaise with the new Co-Chair over future plans for SCCORS and to provide some guidance with its future development.

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

## 6. Alternatives to nuclear energy

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

### ***UK Clean Growth Plan Strategy -***

On 12th October the UK Government released its long-awaited Clean Growth Strategy. This sets out how it intends to meet legally binding commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Strategy covers the period from 2023 to 2032. While the Strategy contains a number of welcome proposals, it strongly supports new nuclear and it is recognised that it is unlikely to be enough to fully meet the carbon emission cuts it is legally bound to achieve. The government will rather have to rely on carbon budget “flexibilities”.

The Plan also does not seek to reinvigorate the onshore wind industry, it has a lack of commitments towards solar and tidal energy and it rather provides large levels of funding for research and development into new nuclear, particularly small modular nuclear reactors. It is disappointing to note that, of the £900m to be invested in innovation, more than half - £460m – is to be invested in areas including future nuclear fuels, new nuclear manufacturing techniques, advanced reactor design, and recycling and reprocessing (at a time when Sellafield reprocessing is coming to an end).

Amongst the other highlights of the Plan are:

- There is a welcome renewed focus on both domestic and industrial energy efficiency. The new strategy promises around £3.6bn to upgrade the energy efficiency of a million homes, with the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) extended to 2028 at its current level.
- The government proposes a new target for the business and industry sectors to improve their energy efficiency by “at least” 20% by 2030.
- The aspiration is for as many homes as possible to be improved to EPC Band C by 2035, where it is practical, cost-effective and affordable.
- Reaffirmation of the pledge to phase out unabated coal generation by 2025 is welcome.
- The government hopes low-carbon sources of power (which in the Government’s mind also includes nuclear) will account for more than 80% of supplies by 2030, up from around 50% today.
- Offshore wind will compete for up to £557m in low-carbon support, and onshore wind on Scottish islands will be also allowed to compete, subject to state aid approval from the European Commission. The next auction will be held in spring 2019.
- The strategy repeats a 10 gigawatt (GW) target for new offshore wind in the 2020s and says it will consider going even further “if this is cost-effective and deliverable”. The government will provide an update on its approach to small-scale renewables “later this year”.
- The strategy sets out plans to invest up to £100m in carbon capture usage and storage (CCUS) and industrial innovation.
- The transport sector accounts for 24% of UK emissions, with little progress in reducing it to date. The Strategy says almost every car and van will need to be zero emission by 2050, and by 2040 cycling and walking should be the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey.
- On solar energy the Government wants to see more people investing in solar without government support and it is currently considering options for the approach to small scale low carbon generation beyond 2019, with an update expected later this year.

The Government is consulting on the plan. The Steering Committee agreed that the NFLA Secretariat should develop a submission to it.

### ***Helm Review of the UK Energy Market -***

Over the summer, the UK Government commissioned a review of energy costs, led by Oxford academic Professor Dieter Helm. This has concluded that UK energy prices have been pushed up by years of government policymaking distorting the market and shackling consumers with hefty legacy costs. The review also argues the costs of high-profile clean energy policies such as the

Renewable Obligations Certificate, the Feed-in Tariff and Contracts for Difference (CfD) schemes are largely responsible for rising energy prices.

Helm calls for a “unified equivalent firm power (EFP) capacity auction” to replace Feed-in Tariffs (FiTs) and other low-carbon Contracts for Differences (CfDs). This would ensure “the costs of intermittency rest with those who cause them”. This system would encourage intermittent generators – such as wind farms or solar farms – to team up with stabilising technologies such as battery storage to secure a power supply contract. However, Professor David Elliott has countered that this could mean a “race to the bottom” in price terms, with no one looking to whole system balancing. Helm wants a technology neutral approach, but Elliott does not feel it would be sensible to have a ‘one size fit all’ system.

Helm also argues that the most efficient way to meet the Climate Change Act’s 2050 carbon reduction target is to implement a new universal carbon price across the entire economy. Whilst this is good in theory it has proven politically difficult to achieve in a number of European countries. Helm goes on to recommend that the legacy cost of clean energy policies should be ring-fenced into a ‘legacy bank’ and charged “separately and explicitly” on consumer bills, with industrial customers exempt from the charges. Helm puts the total legacy cost at well over £100bn by 2030, incurred mainly due to what he sees as an over-emphasis on high cost renewables, in part due to the impact of the EU Renewables Directive.

Critics of the Helm Review suggest it favours big energy providers rather than supports the benefits of a wider decentralised energy system. The Steering Committee agreed that the NFLA Secretariat make a submission to a call to evidence on the Helm Review.

#### ***Irish Government Renewable Support Scheme consultation -***

At the NFLA All Ireland Forum meeting mention was made of an Irish Government consultation considering the ways it could support schemes for the more rapid deployment of renewables. The NFLA has responded to this consultation.

The key conclusions of the NFLA submission were:

- In the immediate future technologically neutral auctions are likely to favour onshore wind over other less well developed renewables. Solar, offshore wind and other more nascent technologies may not be able to compete against the cheapest renewable.
- Eirgrid predicts that solar farms will reach grid parity by the mid-2020s, but this is too late to have an impact on the renewable targets for 2020.
- Solar energy is key to Ireland reaching its 2020 targets and avoid fines of up to €300m per year from Europe. It is estimated that 1500MW of solar farms could be built by 2022, which equates to 5 per cent of Ireland’s electricity demand.
- The Irish Government, therefore, should give solar farms priority access to RESS funding over the next 5 to 10 years.
- Plans to increase community ownership and participation are to be welcomed. Community groups will need more than just money and developing a thriving community and co-operative energy infrastructure should be a major Government objective.
- The Minister is reported to have asked the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to examine how best micro-generation can be supported before a policy framework is designed – but this appears to apply to just householders rather than public authorities. Local authorities and municipalities should be supported and encouraged to develop projects which can apply for a Feed-in Premium as quickly as possible, and where appropriate in co-operation with community energy groups.

#### ***GM Big Clean Switch scheme launched -***

In early November, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority launched the ‘Big Clean Switch’. This moves on from previous moves to encourage residents to go in block tariff changes to save money on bills, towards a more determined strategy to move public bodies on to tariffs supporting 100% renewable energy providers. The scheme is the largest of its kind to date. NFLA were asked, and were welcome to support, to endorse the scheme. It has been developed by a climate change NGO ‘The Big Switch’ with GM Councils. NFLA members are encouraged to get in touch with this



NGO to understand the benefits of such policies and consider taking up a similar strategy in other parts of the country. A GM Energy Mayors summit is planned for the new year.

### ***Developments in fracking -***

The Scottish Government have decided to continue their moratorium of fracking indefinitely after the vast majority of responses to their consultation on the procedure opposed it in Scotland (the NFLA was one of those respondents). The decision received cross-party support in the Scottish Parliament apart from the Conservatives. Similar moratoriums are being maintained in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Wales, and are expected to continue indefinitely as well.

The situation is quite different in England, where the UK Government remains strongly supportive. Despite considerable public and popular opposition, moves continue to start fracking at sites in North Yorkshire and Lancashire. NFLA has been consistently concerned with fracking from the perspective of radiation danger and risk from the fracking and wastewater removal processes. At the June 2017 NFLA Steering Committee / English Forum joint seminar, Dr Ian Fairlie and John Busby gave detailed perspectives on the radiation dangers of fracking.

***Agreed: To note the report and respond to the relevant consultations.***

## **7. 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 -***

As of November 1<sup>st</sup> 2017, 7,469 towns and cities were members of Mayors for Peace in 162 countries. 30 new members have joined in the past two months. It is hoped to pass the 7,500 mark before the end of 2017, representing effectively over 1.1 billion people.

Following the Mayors for Peace General Conference, discussion has taken place between European Lead Cities around the proposed development of a loose European Secretariat structure and the creation of a new post (funded by Hiroshima) of a European-based Mayors for Peace Executive Advisor. A telephone conference has been held. The Catalan city of Granollers has developed a proposed job description for this post, and the NFLA Secretary (in his role as Manchester's Mayors for Peace officer) has developed a strategy document to take this process forward.

The Mayors for Peace has formally congratulated the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons – ICAN – for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2017. The Secretary General of Mayors for Peace met with the CEO of ICAN at their offices in Geneva, and also met with other senior UN officials. The Mayors of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Froyon and Biograd na Moru, and the NFLA Secretary (representing Manchester), will attend the ceremony and side events on the weekend of 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> December.

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

Manchester City Council held three prominent events as part of its role as a Vice President of Mayors for Peace in October. They included:

- An event to re-dedicate the memorial stone for the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association in the Cenotaph. BNTVA are keen for other NFLA members who host such memorials to consider similar events.
- A civic reception for the Mines Advisory Group to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of it receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for its work on an international treaty to ban landmines.
- A schools peace education event as part of the work to promote Manchester's Hiroshima seeds. Some of the trees are being planted in the participating schools in early December.

The next UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace meeting is a joint seminar with the NFLA following the Steering Committee meeting and AGM on the afternoon of the 1<sup>st</sup> December in Manchester. The seminar focuses on the nuclear weapons issue and planned development of the Chapter.

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

**8. Nuclear Weapons, defence nuclear safety and defence diversification update**

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

***ICAN awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize -***

On the 6<sup>th</sup> October the Nobel Committee announced that the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was the recipient of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. The Committee awarded ICAN the Peace Prize for the innovative way it had helped to secure the Nuclear Weapon Prohibition Treaty at the United Nations, and the ways it had sought to change the culture around the debate, ending years of stalemate on nuclear non-proliferation.

ICAN is a coalition of over 440 large and small groups in 100 countries and it supports a steering committee and a small Secretariat based in Geneva. One of those supporting groups (since 2013) is the UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities, so by definition NFLA is a part of the coalition that is a Nobel Peace Laureate.

ICAN UK are holding a planning meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> November, which will be followed by a Parliamentary reception hosted by the SNP. A second Parliamentary meeting is also being organised by Parliamentary CND to be held in the week leading up to the award. The planning meeting will discuss how member groups can hold celebratory events around the time of the ceremony. The NFLA / Mayors for Peace joint seminar being held after the AGM is its way to celebrate the award. Other events are being planned around the country and a national event is being held in London on the 9<sup>th</sup> December.

One way individual members of NFLA / Mayors for Peace can celebrate the award is to sign ICAN's pledge to work for a nuclear weapons free world. The Lord Mayor of Manchester and the Lord Provost of Glasgow are amongst those who are signing the pledge shortly.

***Ratifying the UN Nuclear Weapon Prohibition Treaty -***

On the 7<sup>th</sup> July over 120 states, around two thirds of the UN's membership, agreed to pass the International Nuclear Weapon Prohibition Treaty. Over the past 3 months, 53 of the 122 states have now started the process to ratify the Treaty into their national law, which now means it will shortly be ratified into international law (over 50 states is the minimum). Most of the other supporting states are expected to ratify the Treaty within the next 12 months. However, the P5 nuclear weapon states (which includes the UK Government), NATO members and nuclear 'umbrella' states still remain opposed to signing the Treaty.

Considerable debate is now taking place on ways to try and bring this stubborn bloc of states into more meaningful discussion. The Vatican State, led by Pope Francis, organised a major international conference in early November on nuclear disarmament at which many of these states participated in. Pope Francis said it was time to move on to a new debate on disarmament and he strongly endorsed and supported ICAN receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, by being photographed with ICAN staff and other Nobel Peace Laureates.

The six states that were the architects of the International Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons – Austria, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, Nigeria, Mexico and Brazil – have issued a joint opinion piece on the pathways to a nuclear weapons free world. They make great effort to emphasise how the Treaty is compatible with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and they encourage more meaningful engagement with nuclear weapon states and their supporters.

A High Level Conference (which is similar to a UN Summit) on Nuclear Disarmament will provisionally take place at the UN in New York from May 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> with a mandate to find effective measures to promote nuclear disarmament. This will also take place shortly after the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference in Geneva, which is being held from April 22<sup>nd</sup> – May 3<sup>rd</sup>. While the UK Government will attend the NPT Conference it is not clear if they will engage with the High Level Conference, and a recent Parliamentary answer suggests they will formally vote

against the Conference being held when a follow-up vote takes place in December. The answer notes the Government have not made up their mind if they would attend the conference if it is held.

### ***North Korean nuclear crisis and Iran nuclear agreement -***

Over the summer the growing tension between North Korea, the United States and its allies over North Korea's nuclear weapons programme rapidly grew in intensity. Whilst an alarming escalation has reduced somewhat, as there have been no additional live tests of the programme since early September, the ongoing war of words between North Korea and President Trump continues. During his recent tour of Asia, President Trump held meetings with the Prime Ministers of Japan and of South Korea and committed support to both governments, while calling for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. He also urged the Chinese Government to additional action to 'rein in' North Korea.

Japan has recently published plans for dealing with thousands of evacuees from North Korea in the event of a military crisis. Meanwhile evidence has emerged that the latest underground nuclear test undertaken in North Korea may have led to serious environmental damage and could have damaged the structure of the mountain where the tests are held, close to the Chinese border. With so little information coming out of the country it is difficult to verify such claims. North Korea has said it will not enter into negotiations on its nuclear weapon programme while South Korea and the United States continue to conduct military exercises.

In a separate development, President Trump has decided to 'disavow' the joint agreement made during President Obama's term of office between the US, EU, Russia, China and Iran, which had curtailed Iran's assumed nuclear weapons programme. This decision pushes the issue back to the US Congress to consider whether it would wish to reimpose sanctions on Iran. At present it does not appear like Congress will make such an action. Other signatories to the agreement, including the UK Government, criticised Trump's announcement and said they would not change their policy towards Iran. The Iranian Government also said it would keep to the agreement, but it has been sharply critical of the President's announcement.

### ***Ministry of Defence plans major new facilities at Faslane site -***

A list released under the Freedom of Information Act has indicated that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) is aiming to complete a "nuclear infrastructure continuous availability project" at Faslane by 2027 and at Coulport by 2030. There are also plans for a "nuclear support hub", a submarine "support hub" and a "security continuous availability programme". According to the released papers, the MOD has said it plans to invest £1.3 billion over the next ten years at the two Clyde bases.

### ***MOD censors Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator reports -***

In a recent and alarming move, the Ministry of Defence has changed the classification on annual safety reports of the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR) to 'secret'. This means they cannot be made public, even under the Freedom of Information Act. Following a challenge under that Act in 2006, the DNSR has been publishing its annual reports assessing defence nuclear safety across the sector. The most recent report made public (2014) had highlighted real concern over acute shortages of specialist and experienced support staff across defence nuclear sites. It also noted concern around the safety performance of aging nuclear submarines. This was consistent with reports from previous years. However, the MOD has made the entire text of the 2015 and 2016 assessments redacted and secret as they "would impact on national security".

### ***Defence diversification progress -***

As noted at the last Steering Committee meeting, two motions urging energy democracy and the establishment of a Shadow Defence Diversification Agency were passed at the TUC Annual Conference. The NFLA Secretary is involved in a Defence Diversification Steering Group, who very much welcomed this decision and have been in touch with the staff who have led on it. They are attending the Steering Group's meeting, which is in Manchester Town Hall complex on the 30<sup>th</sup> November. This Steering Group is gradually bringing together an impressive range of trade unions, academic groups, NGOs, faith groups and cross-party politicians together.

### ***60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)***

The 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018 will be the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of CND. The movement has played a leading role in the UK and globally in challenging the need for nuclear weapons, and NFLA

has cooperated with in many ways over the past 37 years. The NFLA Chair and NFLA Secretary have been invited to a special Parliamentary reception to celebrate this milestone in Portcullis House, Westminster. The Steering Committee approved attendance at this event.

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

#### **9. Nuclear health and safety issues – Fukushima update**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report on progress with civil nuclear safety and health issues, which included a brief update of its report of concern on nuclear plant life extensions.

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

Six years after the Fukushima nuclear disaster, the company who owns the facility, TEPCO, have finally managed to get unmanned robots into the stricken reactors to look at the scale of damaged. Repeated attempts had failed due to the extremely high levels of radiation in the most damaged reactors. The latest robots are made of radiation-hardened materials with a sensor to detect hot-spots in the plant's flooded reactor buildings. According to a report in the New York Times, the robot managed to reach the heavily damaged Number 3 reactor. The video pictures it beamed back showed a gaping hole at the bottom of the reactor and clumps of what look like solidified lava. This follows successful attempts to manage to look at the state of Reactors 1 and 2. Up to this point, no one was clear what had happened to the fuel that was in the reactors prior to the disaster. It would now appear that three of the six reactors had a full meltdown and uranium fuel rods liquefied a little like candle wax, dripping to the bottom of the reactor vessels. This material was so hot that it burnt through the steel walls around the reactor and even penetrated the concrete floors below.

Now that the fuel has been found, TEPCO are seeking to persuade their critics that the plant has moved from post-disaster to something less threatening - in clean-up. Around 7,000 people still work at the site building new water storage tanks, moving radioactive debris to a new 'disposal' site and erecting scaffolding over the damaged reactor buildings. In September the Japanese Government gave a deadline of 2021 for workers to start extracting the melted fuel from at least one of the three damaged reactors.

In October, a Japanese court has awarded £3.4 million in damages from 3,800 plaintiffs who were evacuated from the disaster, who had sued the Japanese Government and TEPCO. Around 30 similar lawsuits involving an additional 12,000 people are still going through the courts. This was the second lawsuit in which the courts have found the Japanese Government accountable for the meltdowns. In a separate initiative, a class action lawsuit has been filed in a federal court in Boston on behalf of 150,000 Japanese residents and a number of countries seeking to gain damages from General Electric, the company who designed the Fukushima reactors.

The disaster generated huge levels of radioactive waste. The first 'disposal' of such waste took place in mid-November when the first shipment of waste was stored in a site in Tomioka in Fukushima Prefecture. At present the Japanese Environment Ministry is responsible for managing 200,000 tons of radioactive waste. 170,000 tons of that figure derives from Fukushima. Such waste is supposed to be stored at sites around Japan, but the Tomioka site is the first to see storage take place, amidst sharp public opposition in other prefectures. It will take around six years to move the stored waste to the intermediate disposal site in Tomioka.

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

#### **10. Nuclear emergency planning, nuclear security and nuclear materials transportation**

The NFLA Secretary provided a report of work on progress with issues around nuclear security, nuclear emergency planning and nuclear transportation.

##### ***NFLA submission to proposed changes to nuclear emergency planning regulations -***

The NFLA Secretariat has submitted a detailed response to the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments on proposed and significant changes to nuclear emergency planning. The changes arise from the need to transpose parts of the Euratom Basic Safety Standards Directive (BSSD) into UK law. In the consultation the Government argued this would require major changes to the REPPiR regulations (Radiation Emergency Planning and Public Information), which relate to offsite

emergency plans at nuclear sites, and some minor changes to regulations on the transportation of radioactive materials.

The Government see the opportunity to use the Directive to 'strengthen' the nuclear emergency planning regime in a number of areas:

- Moving from a prescriptive form of emergency planning to embrace '**outcome-focused**' planning in order to concentrate on dealing with the most severe impacts of an emergency. Duty holders will be expected to demonstrate to the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) how they intend to meet requirements in light of local conditions.
- The Directive encourages **proportionate** planning to deal with a wider area of emergencies.
- The Government plans to introduce a **graded** approach to emergency planning to target emergency preparedness and response to the most hazardous activities.
- **Flexible** planning will also be encouraged to allow local emergency planners to make pragmatic and effective decisions. For example, the Government will remove regulatory obstacles for the timely distribution by local authorities and other emergency responders of stable iodine tablets to assist the population in the event of a radiation release.

NFLA welcome the broad direction of these changes, which come from European best practice rather than internal policy development. NFLA has been concerned for many years that existing nuclear emergency planning has been too narrow in scope, and welcomes a wider approach arising from the Directive.

In its response, NFLA make a number of conclusions:

- NFLA is disappointed that the UK Government has implemented various parts of the Directive and not consulted on it in its entirety. It has also given just a relatively short amount of time to receive responses from stakeholders to what is a very detailed consultation document.
- The considerable changes required to the existing REPPIR regulations arising from the Directive give NFLA a sense of concern that existing regulation is not completely fit for purpose.
- NFLA is somewhat concerned that the changes will increase the burden on local authorities at a time when emergency planning units around the country have been contracting due to spending cuts. Moving the ONR from prescribing the likes of the detailed emergency planning zones to become more of an advisor and auditor needs to be considered very carefully.
- A wider concern remains around the consistency of plans around nuclear sites. REPPIR was by no means perfect, but it did create some level of standardisation and generic planning. Whilst there are distinct advantages to outcome planning, proportional planning and graded planning, they are significant and considerable changes to the current norm that require significant training and preparation for.
- NFLA would like to see some guarantees for a follow-up consultation on the final edition of a Code of Practice that will embed the new arrangements.
- In terms of nuclear material transportation, NFLA would like to see a more pro-active educational planning process for all local authority emergency planning units, to be added to the reactive manner of the current guidelines.
- NFLA would like to see the Ministry of Defence not just fully implement new regulations in the same manner as for civil sites and transports, but to be more open and transparent about it.
- In the area of nuclear weapon convoys, NFLA argue the Ministry of Defence need to bring local authorities, fire and ambulance services more closely into the planning process.

#### ***NFLA Scotland seminar on nuclear weapon convoy transports -***

A recent report by Nukewatch Scotland argued that Scottish local authorities have a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act to 'warn and inform' the public to all perceived risks in the district, but they are not providing any information on the potential risks of nuclear weapon convoys. NFLA has argued a major reason for this is that Councils, Fire Services and Ambulance Services are not made aware of when road convoys come through their district, only the Police. Councils only receive generic guidance from the Ministry of Defence on such convoys through 'Local Authority Emergency Service Information (LAESI)' guidelines for such road transports. There are also some limited involvement for some Councils in MOD exercises, which in the past have shown considerable problems could occur from a catastrophic incident.

The report authors Jane Tallents and David MacKenzie spoke about the report at the NFLA Scotland seminar in Glasgow. The slides from the presentation will go on the NFLA website shortly. Scottish NFLA representatives that attended the seminar were encouraged to query the report with their own Emergency Planning Units and report back to the next NFLA Scotland meeting. At the meeting Tor Justad of HANT also highlighted similar concerns over the safety of transports from Dounreay to Sellafield by road, rail, sea and air, which have been noted previously. The NFLA will look to cooperate with Nukewatch on such matters in England and consider focusing this on a 2018 English Forum seminar in the Oxford / Reading area.

**Agreed: To note the report.**

#### **11. NFLA Steering Committee meetings in 2018**

The next NFLA Steering Committee meeting will take place in **Meeting Room 1003, 'Wilson', Level 1, Manchester Town Hall Extension on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018.**

Other planned dates and locations for Steering Committee meetings in 2018 are:

- Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, Leeds Civic Hall
- Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June, Glasgow City Chambers
- Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September, Cardiff County Hall
- Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December (with AGM), O'Hagan House, Newry

#### **12. NFLA Annual General Meeting 2017**

The NFLA Annual General Meeting took place directly after the Steering Committee.

Key actions from it included:

- Councillor Ernie Galsworthy was elected as the NFLA Steering Committee Chair for 2018.
- Thanks were given to all Secretariat staff and support staff for their dedication.
- A finance report was deferred until the next NFLA Steering Committee to allow all the affiliation fee income from member authorities to be fully gathered in, so as to have a clearer idea of the 2017/18 budget situation.
- The NFLA constitution and membership of the Steering Committee was approved.
- The NFLA Service Plan was approved, with suggestions made to prioritise certain core activity over more mundane areas to reduce pressure on the Secretariat.
- A discussion on the name, logo and identity of the NFLA was held. It was agreed to retain the name NFLA as it is a strong and long-enduring 'brand'. It was agreed that the Secretariat review its workload. A new logo which incorporates renewable energy symbols with the peace dove was approved. Moves to develop a Facebook page and Twitter feed was also agreed. It was agreed that NFLA is the principal local government champion for renewable energy and peace.
- A strapline of 'NFLA – seeking a renewable, safe and peaceful future' was agreed with additional mention that it was part of the ICAN movement, a Nobel Peace Laureate.

#### **13. NFLA / Mayors for Peace joint seminar**

A well-attended joint seminar was held between NFLA and the UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Chapter.

The seminar was opened by the Lord Mayor of Manchester. It included the following speakers:

- Elizabeth Minor from Article 36 and the ICAN UK Steering Group. She spoke about the importance of ICAN winning the Nobel Peace Prize and how the international discussions on the UN Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty may move forward in 2018.
- Dr Nick Ritchie from York University considered the current discussion over the Trident replacement issue and how the Prohibition Treaty may affect its direction. The huge costs and technical difficulties in developing Trident were touched upon.
- The Mayors for Peace Chapter Secretary outlined the agreed developments within the Mayors for Peace following the August General Conference.
- Nick Taylor from the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Peace Foundation provided an overview of its work following the Manchester and London terrorist attacks, and the plans it had developed to promote peace education at Greater Manchester schools. A report of the seminar is on the NFLA and Mayors for Peace websites.