

NFLA Policy Briefing No.206



Date: 30th September 2020

Subject: Summary of key points and actions from the NFLA Steering Committee web-based meeting, 18th September 2020

1. Introduction to the meeting

The NFLA Steering Committee Chair, Councillor David Blackburn, welcomed all to NFLA Steering Committee. Councillor Blackburn welcomed the good attendance for the meeting which was an indication of strong support for the ongoing work of the Secretariat.

2. The covid-19 outbreak and future meetings / ongoing work of the Secretariat

The NFLA Secretary noted that, the potential of a 'second spike' of the Covid-19 virus remains as infection rates and 'local lockdowns' increase across all four areas of the NFLA. With autumn and winter approaching there is concern that the virus could reach the dangerous levels seen in April and May. Social distancing will continue for the foreseeable future, with the main bright spot the possibility of a usable vaccine available in the next few months.

The Steering Committee agreed that it would be impractical to consider holding live face-to-face meetings for the next few months, until governments suggest it is safe to reduce social distancing. Online NFLA meetings, though having some obvious limitations, have been generally well attended and are the safest way to communicate at present.

The Steering Committee agreed to the following future plans:

- That the November 6th NFLA Steering Committee meetings, which will include the 2020/21 AGM, will be held online on the Microsoft Teams package.
- The NFLA Secretary to look at ways to appropriately commemorate the 40th anniversary of the NFLA in November / December. This will include a joint webinar with the Mayors for Peace European Chapter and ICAN in November or early December.
- There has been consideration of holding a second joint international webinar with relevant groups on the new nuclear issue, given that it is at a pivotal juncture this winter. This is being considered for December.
- NFLA National Forum webinars and business meetings have been set for September and October, as noted below in item 3.
- That consideration of live or online meetings in 2021 can be looked at in the NFLA AGM or in at the first Steering Committee in January 2021.
- To respond to relevant nuclear policy consultations, and develop original reports on the green recovery / climate emergency, divestment, 'Hinkley mud', the deep waste repository debate and stakeholder engagement in the nuclear sector, as resources and Secretariat capacity allow.
- To process NFLA invoices as quickly as possible, so as to consider the future of the NFLA in these difficult, financial times.

Action: To approve this outline work plan for the NFLA Secretariat in the remaining months of 2020.

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES:
WORKING FOR A RENEWABLE, SAFE & RENEWABLE FUTURE**

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3. NFLA Forums progress and the NFLA's 40th anniversary

NFLA All Ireland Forum webinar, 25th September

The NFLA All Ireland Forum Sustainable Energy Forum is meeting on the 25th September for their autumn meeting. The NFLA Secretary is pleased to note that the Irish Climate Action Minister Eamon Ryan has agreed to speak at the meeting on the need for a green recovery and what the role of Councils should be in climate change policy. Also agreeing to speak are staff from Derry and Strabane Council on their climate change adaptation plans, which were recently profiled by APSE Energy. Tim Deere-Jones will profile the recently published report on a near miss between the main Belfast – Cairnryan passenger ferry and the NFLA Secretary will look at Sellafield and related developments. The flyer has gone out to all councillors across the island of Ireland. Members are encouraged to attend the meeting.

NFLA Welsh Forum webinar, 9th October

The NFLA Welsh Forum's autumn seminar will focus on four issues of real interest to the NFLA and Forum members. The lead issue remains the growing 'Geiger Bay / Hinkley mud' campaign with Tim Deere-Jones giving an overview of the core issues around it. Neil Crumpton of PAWB will focus on new build issues in North Wales. Don McCullum from Egni Cooperative Energy will talk about the work they are doing with a number of South Wales Councils. The webinar will end with Thomas Pitt of CND Cymru talking about the work of ICAN and to encourage Welsh Councils to pass resolutions on the TPNW. Members are encouraged to attend the meeting.

NFLA Scotland business meeting and webinar, 22nd October

The NFLA Scotland Forum is holding its autumn business meeting and a short webinar on the 22nd October. The business meeting will consider a report by the NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor, an update by the NFLA Secretary and from CND Scotland. A short webinar after it will consider the decision to restart the Hunterston reactors and wider concerns of the AGR fleet. Members are encouraged to attend this meeting.

NFLA English Forum webinar, 23rd October

The NFLA English Forum is holding its autumn webinar on the 23rd October. This will focus on how Councils are looking to develop policies and projects in tackling the climate emergency from the likes of Leeds, Greater Manchester and Humberside. It will also consider what happens after the disappointing failure of Nottingham's and Bristol's energy companies. Members are encouraged to attend this meeting.

NFLA 40th anniversary – proposed joint webinars and other actions to take

November 5th 2020 is the 40th anniversary of Manchester's 'nuclear free city' declaration that commenced the process of establishing the NFLA. If there had not been Covid-19 issues the Secretariat would have looked to hold events in Manchester with a civic reception, possible exhibition and conference. Instead, the NFLA Secretariat is looking at alternative ways to commemorate this important milestone.

The first part of commemorations will be to replicate what was done for the Hiroshima and Nagasaki 75th anniversary with having a series of links and background on a webpage, likely to be co-hosted on the NFLA website and the Manchester City Council websites (other members are welcome to do the same at their Council websites).

The second part of commemorations is the development of a joint international webinar with the Mayors for Peace European Chapter and the Nobel Peace Laureate ICAN. This will consider the state of peace and security in Europe, supporting Council resolutions for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and considering ways to promote peaceful and safe cities. It will include prominent speakers including major Mayors from around Europe. The meeting will be held in either early November or early December. The programme will go out shortly.

The third part of the commemoration is a special webinar with other groups looking at the new nuclear build issue nationally and internationally. This may link into existing campaigns as well as what is happening overseas. Support and cooperation with the Vienna-based CNFE and the Linz-based Alliance of Regions for a Nuclear Power-free Europe is being investigated. This

webinar would be at the end of November / early December, or in early January, depending on Secretariat capacity and support from other groups.

Action: To encourage attendance at the webinars. To consider proposed plans for the 40th anniversary of NFLA. To successfully process affiliation fee invoices.

3. New nuclear developments

The development of new nuclear reactors is coming to a critical juncture at the moment, as the sector is lobbying the UK Government as hard as possible over financial support to assist the building of large and small nuclear fission reactors, whilst also encouraging the creation of an experimental nuclear fusion reactor.

An Energy White Paper and a full response to the UK Government's Revenue Asset Base consultation are awaited. Similarly a National Infrastructure Strategy was expected to have been published in April. All have been delayed for some time as many relevant government staff have been transferred over the past few months into Covid-19 duties. The severe economic problems that has been generated by the Covid-19 outbreak adds further complication to the UK Government's response, as there are many parts of the economy that require central government support, and public debt levels have reached heights comparable only with the Second World War.

At the same time, the reduced energy demand has seen renewable energy at its most effective, with proportions of wind and solar covering reductions in nuclear (due to temporary closures at Hunterston, Hinkley Point and Dungeness) and hardly any use of coal energy. Indeed, the National Grid has paid EDF Energy £50 million to reduce output from Sizewell B. The ongoing dramatic increase in offshore wind power, and the reducing cost of solar and onshore wind, threatens the need for new nuclear going forward. Therefore, whilst it is clear the UK Government remains publicly very supportive of new nuclear, as part of its post-Brexit high technology strategy, the list of projects it wants to fund is getting larger and key decisions will have to be made. Funding all of 'big' nuclear, small nuclear and fusion in the current climate, as well as seeking to support renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy storage is a huge undertaking for any government.

In response to this, the nuclear industry has been working in overdrive to lobby the government that nuclear remains essential to a 'clean' low energy future in a number of areas:

- **Hinkley Point C** – despite some slowdown, EDF Energy has sought to continue to develop the Hinkley Point C (HPC) plant. However, the financing of this project still remains unclear. NFLA have placed on its website a link to a report undertaken by the Stop Sizewell C group authored by Professor Steve Thomas and Alison Downes that argues EDF still do not have the required finance to fully fund the project. It should be noted as well that in August EDF has been fined €5m (£4.5m) by the French financial regulator for misleading investors about the cost of HPC. They told investors in October 2014 that the terms of its deal with the UK government were “unchanged” from the 2013 agreement when, in fact there had “been significant changes”. With only the Chinese nuclear utility CGN involved in funding a third of the project, EDF needs to find as much as £15.5bn, and costs are likely to be going up due to Covid-19 delays. There appears to be an assumption that the development is “too big to fail”, but if the money is not found (and EDF's company debt has gone up significantly last year) it potentially could, at the cost of the UK taxpayer.
- **Sizewell C** – the National Infrastructure Commission has started its consideration of the proposed Sizewell C reactor, and interested parties need to submit their core issues around it by the end of September. The NFLA Secretariat has submitted its interest in the inquiry. In addition, as part of the Espoo Convention other European countries are being asked to comment on the development. The NFLA are talking with the Irish Environment Network to encourage Irish Councils to make representations on the risks of an accident to Ireland and a model resolution has been sent to Irish Council Regional Assemblies.
- **Bradwell B** – the majority Chinese nuclear utility CGN stake in the development at Bradwell has encountered significant early problems as it tries to move forward. The NFLA's response was amongst a large number of negative submissions put into the first round of local consultation on the proposals. Colchester Borough Council passed unanimously a resolution

to oppose the Bradwell B development, and the local Maldon Council has now twice rejected a planning application to create boreholes on the proposed site. The wider political tensions between the UK and China could also lead to a review of the development by the UK Government in the medium term.

- **Wylfa B** – whilst Hitachi has pulled out of financing and developing a proposed new nuclear reactor at the Anglesey site, it has not stopped the process of seeking to have planning regulatory approval for the site. There has been considerable public comment from Hitachi / Horizon that public funding through the RAB model should be considered. A decision on the planning application was deferred for the second time by the Government at the end of September, suggesting the detailed meetings with it are struggling to get traction for Hitachi.
- **Small nuclear at Moorside / Trawsfynydd and other sites** – a consortium led by Rolls Royce, with interest from EDF, has publicly stated its wish to create a ‘clean energy park’ at the Moorside site close to Sellafield, that had become moribund following Toshiba’s near collapse and exit from building a large nuclear reactor. The consortium is at present lobbying for finance under the RAB model being considered by the UK Government.

In discussion on these matters, Steering Committee members raised concerns over the potential reduction of democratic controls in the UK Government’s proposed changes to the planning regime. It was noted that the collapse of interest from Hitachi in Wylfa B has seen Rolls Royce suggest this could be a site for small modular nuclear reactors. The Committee also felt the national security issues over the UK’s relationship with China made the Bradwell development much more difficult to progress.

Nuclear fusion – English Councils have received a joint letter from the UKAEA and the UK Government to seek their interest in providing a site for a nuclear fusion reactor. On the request of Leeds City Council, the NFLA Secretariat has developed a detailed briefing on the real problems in developing such reactors, including requiring billions of pounds in investment, while they are always 5 – 10 years away from being realised. The detailed report is on the NFLA website and was welcomed by the Steering Committee.

Action: The NFLA Secretariat to develop responses in relation to Sizewell C. To continue to work with groups opposing such developments.

4. Radioactive waste

UK & Scottish Government reviews of waste and decommissioning strategies -

At the recent NuLEAF meeting, a speaker from the UK Government confirmed that it was developing a full update of UK Radioactive Waste Management Policy. It was also reported at the meeting that the Scottish Government were doing the same as a response to update their own policy. This will include, for both governments, an updated policy position on near surface disposal and longer-term storage. The UK position will also incorporate policies with dealing with small and advanced nuclear reactors, should they be developed. Both policies are likely to be consulted upon in late 2020 / early 2021.

Deep waste repository update -

For almost 2 years now, the UK Government has been calling on Councils and other landowners to declare an interest to host a deep underground radioactive waste repository. Copeland Council’s Executive Cabinet has become the first to publicly start talks with Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) to investigate this process further. In a statement the Council said that this decision does not presuppose support for a repository in West Cumbria. Instead their engagement is intended to help understand more about the project and its implications, given that a number of expressions of interest have been received from other interested parties in the community. Copeland has also made clear that the Lake District National Park is completely excluded from consideration as a possible site for the new facility. However, of concern for NFLA is that putting part of a repository off the coast and under the Irish Sea is not being ruled out.

It is understood other Councils and landowners remain interested and are still in discussion in private with RWM. The NFLA Secretary has discussed stakeholder engagement with their new Head of Stakeholder Relations, Guy Esnouf, to understand the concerns of the NFLA and those

more sceptical of this process. An engagement event with other groups with similar views is being planned shortly.

NDA Strategy 4 development, stakeholder engagement and Sellafield issues –

In August, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) published its fourth five year strategy document, outlining its core plans for 2021 – 25. The consultation will continue for 12 weeks into early November. The Steering Committee agreed for the NFLA Secretariat to respond in detail to this important nuclear policy consultation.

In other news, the NDA has announced that Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd and the LLW Repository at Drigg will become wholly owned subsidiaries of the NDA in March 2021. This is part of the 'One NDA' strategy that has seen Sellafield Ltd and Magnox sites being taken back in-house.

The NFLA Secretary has been in discussion with the NDA Stakeholder Engagement Manager John McNamara about improving liaison between the NDA and more critical groups like the NFLA and NGOs. As part of this, the NFLA Secretary and Professor Andy Blowers have been invited to participate and speak at the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency conference on improving nuclear policy stakeholder engagement. The Steering Committee welcomed this development.

The NFLA issued a media release after the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team was called to the Sellafield site to remove organic chemicals in the Magnox reprocessing plant that had an explosive potential. The material was disposed of safely, but it is not the first time such incidents have taken place at the Sellafield site. It has also been reported that, after 10 months, a leak on a facility on the site has only just been finally dealt with.

NuLEAF and SCCORS update -

Cllr Newman, the NFLA Steering Committee Chair and the NFLA Secretary attended the NuLEAF meeting on the 9th September. The meeting included a presentation and a full discussion with four members of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management, with NFLA representatives raising issues around placing part of an underground repository under the sea, the need for a plan B and international lessons, as well as concerns over the transport of large levels of radioactive materials. There was also a presentation from the NDA on its spent fuel and nuclear materials strategy. Reports considered an update on the underground waste repository, national radioactive waste and decommissioning developments and its website upgrade.

It was confirmed NuLEAF have now been provided with funding from RWM and NDA of £114k. There will be a separate meeting between the Chairs and Vice Chairs with Cllr Newman and the NFLA Secretary on the 25th September over NuLEAF developing a webinar on small modular reactors on the 3rd October. There will also be a webinar considering the NuLEAF response to Strategy 4 of the NDA on the 23rd September.

The NFLA Secretary has been in discussion with the two Co-Chairs of the SCCORS group, who have not met for some time. Cllr Campbell of Renfrewshire Council has said she wants to discuss with the NDA and the Scottish Government putting the group on a firm financial footing so as to recruit staff and / or consultants. The NFLA Scotland Vice Convener will discuss this matter with Cllr Campbell.

'Geiger Bay' / Hinkley mud update -

The NFLA Secretary has engaged actively with a new campaign called 'Geiger Bay' which is campaigning against the dumping of as much as 780,000 tonnes of sediment from the Hinkley Point site to the offshore Cardiff Deep Grounds. The campaign has garnered over 16,000 signatures to a petition to the Senedd for a full debate on the matter and it calls for a full environmental impact assessment of the decision. The group has a wide range of independent scientific experts, NGOs and local campaigners. The Welsh Government has set up an expert panel to advise it of issues around the plans and whether there are any environmental and radiation health concerns. The campaign group is concerned that Natural Resources Wales does not have the required specialism to make a detailed decision on the EDF application, relying on other agencies. Tim Deere-Jones will talk of the core issues with the campaign at the NFLA

Welsh Forum webinar on the 9th October. The Steering Committee welcomed the work of this campaign group.

Dalgety Bay / Submarine dismantling delays –

It was confirmed in August that there would be a further delay to the remediation work to the Dalgety Bay shoreline, where radioactive particles from the radium dials of dumped military aeroplanes continue to be found. Delays in agreeing to the final licences for the work has been blamed by the Ministry of Defence. The work will now begin in spring 2021. The NFLA Secretariat issued a media release criticising this delay, as well as the slow progress with the dismantling of submarines at the Rosyth site. The media release is on the NFLA website.

Action: To note the report. To develop a detailed response to the NDA Strategy 4 consultation.

5. The UK leaving the EU and impacts on nuclear & energy policy

As recent disagreements have emerged between the UK Government and the European Union, the possibility of a 'no deal' Brexit less than 3 months away has increased.

The row has emerged over the UK Government bringing a Brexit Internal Market Bill that would make proposed changes to the trade between Britain and Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. To the surprise of many, the Northern Ireland Secretary admitted such changes would breach international law. The European Commission has raised real anger in the proposals and legal action is possible.

In the area of nuclear regulation, the plans are that a new UK domestic nuclear safeguards regime will come into force in January 2021. It will be run by the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), which already regulates nuclear safety and nuclear security in the UK. The NFLA Secretary is attending a meeting of the ONR NGO Forum on the 23rd September so will seek some clarification as to whether a 'no deal' will affect this change in any way

The UK would also cease to be a member of the Euratom Research & Training Programme of Fusion for Energy. This means that UK organisations could no longer bid for International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor contracts through Fusion for Energy. That is why a move to create a UK experimental fusion reactor, as noted above, has started to be looked into.

Other concerns that a 'no deal' could exacerbate, is around the price of energy imports. As the UK imports about 12% of its gas and 5% of its electricity through the EU interconnector system, which it currently uses for free, there are fears the country's energy sector might become subject to tariffs for these power imports and exports.

In order for the UK to keep using its interconnectors, the government has to negotiate favourable conditions during the 12-month transition period ending on 31 December 2020. Depending on new agreements, UK energy suppliers could be subject to substantial taxes which could become a burden for both operators and customers with energy price surges trickling down the line. A 'no deal' could make these taxes much higher.

In addition, as part of a report on energy security, Durham Energy Institute (DEI) warned that it is possible that the UK will become vulnerable to post-Brexit energy shortages. The report says that "the UK can no longer meet its own heat and power demands with indigenous supply" and the country could be further put at risk by fluctuations in international supply of energy.

With around 20% of current UK power being produced by nuclear reactors, a recent House of Lords' report on the impact of Brexit on the UK energy security has questioned the consequences on the local nuclear industry. The likely exit from the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), has the potential to impact the UK's future nuclear operations by jeopardising the availability of skilled labour from abroad and impede research, protection of nuclear energy, cooperation with other member states and the transport of nuclear materials. At the IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security in February 2020, Energy Minister Nadhim Zahawi sought to boost confidence by announcing plans to reinforce industry cooperation and contribute a further £1.6 million to the Nuclear Security Fund, which the UK is a part of.

Another area of concern is around the continuation of the Integrated Single Electricity Market between Ireland and Northern Ireland. The UK Government's Brexit advice notes that "the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol provides the basis for the continued operation of the Single Electricity Market and trade of wholesale electricity across the island of Ireland". However, it also notes that "market participants should be aware there may be alternative trading arrangements between Great Britain and the Single Electricity Market". As this protocol is part of the current conflict between both the UK and the European Commission it is not yet clear how this part of the protocol will be affected. The Irish Climate Change Minister is speaking at the NFLA All Ireland Forum on the 25th September and there may be opportunity to get his view on this matter.

If this row makes it likely that current negotiations may make no deal much more possible then an urgent report will be developed by the NFLA Secretariat.

Action: The NFLA Secretariat to clarify what a 'no deal' Brexit may mean for nuclear policy and the Irish Single Electricity Market and develop a report around such matters.

6. Climate change, green stimulus and alternatives to nuclear power

NFLA climate emergency and Covid-19 reports -

In May, the NFLA released a detailed progress report on how Councils should tackle the climate emergency. This report has been welcomed and disseminated

NFLA also published a second report which considered the impact of Covid-19 on the nuclear sector and on the climate crisis. The report argued there is a real and urgent need to use the response to the economic crisis brought on by the lockdown to develop a green stimulus.

A plethora of recent reports from local authority groups, think-tanks, political parties, energy agencies and a wide range of businesses is calling for a move to 'Build Back Better' with a more equitable and huge fiscal stimulus to support renewable energy, energy efficiency, smart energy, renewable heat and transport solutions and energy storage projects. The reports also suggest a large jobs potential is a core part of such projects, and urge a 'Just Transition' to help transfer jobs from the fossil fuel and nuclear sectors to the renewable economy.

The NFLA Secretariat is in the process of developing a report on a green recovery as part of the response to the huge economic challenges brought about by Covid-19. Part of this is to review all the major recent reports on green recovery that have come out for a new report on the way forward for Councils.

Green recovery -

The NFLA Secretary attended on the 10th September an APSE Energy conference looking at the climate and ecological emergency. One of the speakers was Patrick Allcorn, Head of Local Energy at BEIS in the UK Government. He noted that the initial response to green recovery from the UK Government included £3 billion of support for domestic energy efficiency programmes such as the Green Homes Grants, a voucher scheme and support for some local authority fuel poverty schemes. There will be an announcement later in September for a further £1 billion investment in public sector building decarbonisation, which will include some parts of the local government estate.

The UK Government are also going to make further announcements in the autumn / winter, including:

- An Economic Recovery and Devolution White Paper, to set out post-Brexit funding arrangements.
- An Energy White Paper setting out energy priorities for the next decade.
- The Comprehensive Spending Review outlining specific budget for a green recovery.
- A 'kick-off to COP' which will start events planning for the November 2021 international climate change summit (delayed due to Covid-19). A meeting between ministers and metro mayors on this is planned shortly.

Many expert commentators are concerned with the lack of ambition for a green recovery to date from the UK Government, so these announcements are critical. The NFLA Secretariat will keep a close eye on this matter.

In Scotland, there was some disappointment to the findings of the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Economic Recovery. Friends of the Earth Scotland for example argued the report did not chart a pathway to a greener, fairer Scotland. The Advisory Group argues the Scottish Government should be able to borrow £6 billion to invest in that recovery, which is three times larger than the Scottish National Investment Bank will have available to lend over a ten-year period when it opens in late 2020.

Environmental groups welcomed the Scottish Government's Programme for Government which included £1.6 billion in heat and energy efficiency in our homes and buildings over 5 years. The £1.6bn will be spent directly supporting up to 5,000 jobs and tackle fuel poverty as part of an enhanced Green New Deal. Scotland is also planning to update its Climate Change Plan by the end of 2020. A part of new programmes includes an additional £500m on nature-based solutions, such as £150m to increase woodland creation by 50% by 2024 and a further £150m on flood risk management. The NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor will have much more detail in the upcoming NFLA Scotland Forum.

In Wales, a July announcement from the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths has asked the Chair of Natural Resources Wales Sir David Henshaw to lead a coalition of experts to develop ideas that link climate action with job creation, inclusive and fair economic growth, and other development priorities. Environmental group and local government groups have been included in this new group.

In Northern Ireland, the NI Executive is developing a 'Green Growth' strategy as a core part of its economic response to Covid-19 issues. The aim of 'Green Growth' will be to ensure the sustainability of Northern Ireland's natural environment while fostering the necessary conditions for innovation, investment and competition that can give rise to new sources of economic growth and building resilient ecosystems. Further details are being developed for a launch in spring 2021.

In the Republic of Ireland, the new coalition government of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Greens has announced an ambitious set of policies to tackle the climate emergency in its programme for government. It is also going to shortly announce its plans for a Covid-19 green recovery, some of which may be trailed at the NFLA All Ireland Forum meeting by the Climate Change Minister Eamon Ryan. Its Programme for Government includes reducing Ireland's carbon emissions by an average 7% per year, adding up to 51% by 2030. The Government is also planning to enshrine in law a target to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

Local Council energy companies sold at a loss -

One issue around developing local renewable energy that has taken a battering over the summer is Council energy companies. Both Nottingham's Robin Hood Energy and Bristol Energy have now been sold to other companies at a lower price than in creating them, due to the huge problems Covid-19 has created to the energy market, where UK energy demand has inevitably reduced. Nottingham City Council has lost about £60 million on Robin Hood Energy (RHE), with Bristol City Council losing around £40 million. A former consultant to RHE will be speaking at the upcoming NFLA English Forum seminar on this matter.

Action: The NFLA Secretariat to produce an additional report on the positive impacts of a green recovery as central government plans become clearer.

7. Mayors for Peace progress

UK & Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Chapter -

The NFLA Secretary, in his role as UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Chapter Secretary, hosted a Chapter webinar on the 3rd July. This looked at progress nationally and internationally with the Mayors for Peace, as well as a consideration of events for the 75th anniversary of the first use of nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There was an

excellent attendance to this meeting, with the clear suggestion that such meetings should remain online for the foreseeable future.

A Chapter recruitment campaign has started. It is first focusing on Irish (north and south) and London local authorities, and will then look at English, Welsh and Scottish Councils. Voluntary invoices are also being sent out shortly.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki 75th anniversary -

Important events took place with the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Peace Ceremonies on the 6th and 9th August. They received considerable global media coverage. The Mayors for Peace International Secretariat also developed a webinar on youth peace education to promote its work in this area, and leading Mayors and nuclear disarmament figures took part in a Mayors for Peace YouTube video using the slogan 'No More Hiroshima! No More Nagasaki'.

Events in solidarity with Hiroshima and Nagasaki were held across the world. In the UK and Ireland, one of the most notable took place in Dublin, where the Irish Government joined with the Lord Mayor of Dublin in an event to support their formal ratifying of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Live events were also held in Leeds, Sheffield, Glasgow, London, Perth and Liverpool. Online webinars were also held by a number of other members. Mayors for Peace Vice President Manchester, for example, developed a detailed webpage of messages and background information on the anniversaries and its support for the Mayors for Peace. A full Chapter briefing on these events can be found on the NFLA website.

European Chapter of Mayors for Peace & ICAN Cities Appeal -

The NFLA Secretary is also heavily involved in the development of the European Chapter of Mayors for Peace. Whilst delayed a little due to Covid-19, the Chapter has now agreed upon new logo and outline website. It should agree on new legal statutes in October and will then start to look to recruit an Executive Advisor. As noted above, the NFLA Secretary is working with colleagues in the European Chapter Working Group on a joint webinar with ICAN and (hopefully) the UCLG on the state of the nuclear weapons, peace and security debate in Europe, as well as support for the ICAN Cities Appeal / TPNW and case studies on developing safe and resilient cities. It is hoped to hold that meeting in the first half of November 2020.

The London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham have passed resolutions to support the TPNW and have gone on the ICAN Cities Appeal website. The NFLA Secretary is aware a number of other Councils are close to passing resolutions as well.

The NFLA has joined with a coalition of civil society groups in a calendar of events that supports the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and International Peace Day 2020. A series of events are planned between September 21st and October 2nd under the strand 'We the People'. A website of all the events that is being planned can be found at:

<https://www.unfoldzero.org/wethepeoples2020/>.

Action: To welcome the events held for the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic weapon attacks, and to support the work of the UK & Ireland and European Chapters of Mayors for Peace. To support the plans for the 75th anniversary of the UN and International Peace Day.

8. Nuclear weapons and defence nuclear safety

NPT and the TPNW -

As noted previously, the NPT Review Conference planned for May 2020 has been moved to January 2021. However, this date remains conditional given the ongoing issues with social distancing and international travel.

On Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day four states formally ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons - Ireland, Nigeria, Niue and St Kitts and Nevis. This takes the number of ratifications to 44, whilst there are another 47 states who have signed it and are in the process of ratifying. The Treaty becomes a part of international law when 50 states ratify it. Most notable for the NFLA is the welcome ratification by the Irish Government after unanimous cross-party

support in the Dail. The Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney wrote an Op-Ed in the Irish Times noting the strong support Ireland plays in delivering a world without nuclear weapons, and it will continue to play a prominent role at the United Nations on such matters. The NFLA issued a media release strongly supporting Ireland's ratification and calling on the UK Government to take note.

ICAN are now starting a new campaign called 'Entry into Force' which will seek to reach the milestone of 50 states by the end of 2020. There will be a Zoom call on this new campaign on the 17th September, so the NFLA Secretary will provide a verbal report on it at the Steering Committee meeting.

Ongoing international tensions on nuclear weapons -

In an interview with the journalist Bob Woodward, President Trump claimed the United States has built a 'secret' new nuclear weapon system. It is possible that Trump was referring to the W76-2 warhead, according to the defence publication 'Task & Purpose'. It was announced in February 2018 as a relatively "low-cost" addition to the U.S. nuclear arsenal, and it has a smaller explosive yield than the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It follows on to suggestions that both Russia and China have been actively developing new types of nuclear weapons going against the spirit and potentially law of the NPT. The Pentagon has suggested China plans to double its amount of warheads to 400 in the next decade as part of the growing tensions between the two countries.

The issues between the US and China have been developing since Trump became President. On the issue of nuclear weapons, the US has raised concerns over a growing relationship between China and Iran. This comes at a time when Iran has allowed IAEA inspectors to access its nuclear sites, and a serious fire at one of those sites, which may have been sabotaged. On the converse, the decision for Israel to go into full diplomatic relations with the United Arab Emirates has been seen as a victory for US diplomacy.

A United Nations report released in August has noted that North Korea's production of nuclear weapons continues despite aggressive sanctions. The new report says North Korea has likely developed the capability to manufacture miniaturized nuclear devices that can fit on its ballistic missiles. The UN report also details Japan's independent conclusion that North Korea "may seek to further develop miniaturisation in order to allow incorporation of technological improvements such as penetration aid packages or, potentially, to develop multiple warhead systems."

All of this does not bode well for the NPT Review Conference, whenever it is held. The outcome of the US Presidential election will play a focal role in how this debate may change through the 2020s.

Select Committee reports show underlying weakness of MOD programme management on the Trident programme –

An analysis by the Nuclear Information Service (NIS) of reports from the National Audit Office (NAO) and the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (PAC) reveal that recent cost overruns in the UK nuclear weapons programme have the same underlying causes as repeated Ministry of Defence (MOD) management failures dating back to the 1980s.

The reports look in detail at three case studies from the MOD's many infrastructure upgrade projects: the primary build facility at Barrow-in-Furness, the core production capability facilities at Raynesway and project MENSA at AWE Burghfield. Whilst much of the media attention has focussed on the scale of the cost overruns, which have already amounted to £1.35bn across the three projects. NIS though argue what is more significant is the underlying message of the reports that the MOD has failed to learn the lessons of the past, and is repeating the same mistakes made during the transition from the Polaris missile nuclear weapons system to the current Trident fleet: beginning construction before designs are complete, giving insufficient oversight to contractors, and commercial arrangements where the MOD assumes too much risk and contractors are not properly incentivised to deliver.

The PAC report states that the MOD “cannot explain why its leadership has not learned from these experiences”. NIS conclude that, given the tight timetables of myriad interlocking projects involved in upgrading the UK’s nuclear weapons, the prospect of the MOD being able to deliver the upgrades as planned to its Trident programme appears slim and the budget for it will inevitably increase.

Rolls Royce breaches safety limits on its nuclear reactor programme –

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) has served Rolls-Royce Submarines Ltd (RRSL) with an improvement notice on 8th July for breaching the safety limits designed to prevent a critical mass of nuclear material from being assembled. During the breach 21 units of fissile material were inside a nuclear fuel production facility at one time, more than 25% over the maximum limit of 16 units stipulated by the facility’s safety case.

UK Strategic Defence Review -

NFLA is supporting other groups within ICAN UK who are submitting responses to the UK Integrated Strategic Defence Review. Whilst it is unlikely that views from ICAN groups will be seriously considered at present by the current government, it remains important to make these views to them. The core issues of the submission include:

- The UK’s security and prosperity is dependent on the health of our international system of laws, norms and treaties, also known as the rules-based international system – therefore a successful national security strategy will need to lay out plans for global cooperation to support and strengthen the international system.
- The cross-border nature of the threats we face – climate change, pandemics, conflict, cyber insecurity – mean that we need a broad definition of national security, one that acknowledges the overlap between global security and national security.
- Previous security strategies have failed to recognise the possibility that UK actions can both weaken, as well as strengthen, the rules based system and the attendant dangers.
- Nuclear security is one area where UK policies should be modified to ensure that UK actions are consistent with the imperative to strengthen the rules-based international system.

Action: To note the report and continue to monitor the issues.

9. Civil nuclear safety, Fukushima update

Hunterston B restart and the wider AGR fleet -

The NFLA has been concerned for some time about the safety of EDF’s aging Advanced Gas Reactor (AGR) fleet. The oldest of them is Hunterston B and Hinkley Point B at over 40 years old. The others are Dungeness, Heysham, Hartlepool and Torness.

After the last Steering Committee meeting, the NFLA developed a detailed briefing on the AGR fleet. It argued the Hunterston and Hinkley should be closed due to the level of keyway root cracking. It also argued the other sites would close earlier than their planned closure dates for similar reasons. This report is on the NFLA website.

On the 27th August the ONR announced it was giving EDF permission to restart Reactor 3 at Hunterston B for a limited period – generating up to a total of 16.425 Terawatt days, approximately six months’ operation. On the same day, EDF said it is hoping to restart both reactors at the site for two last six-month periods each and then begin decommissioning them “no later than 7 January 2022”. The reactors were previously scheduled to be shut down in March 2023. ONR has yet to give reactor 4 permission to restart, but it is now expected.

The NFLA and campaigners have condemned the moves to restart Hunterston, warning that public health is being put at risk. Reactor 3 has an estimated 377 cracks in its graphite core and had been shut down since 9 March 2018. It will only be allowed to operate for six months before it will have to close down again so that its core can be checked for new cracks. The NFLA Scotland Forum joined with Friends of the Earth Scotland, WWF Scotland, CND Scotland and the Nuclear Consulting Group to raise serious concerns over the decision of the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) to allow EDF Energy to restart Reactor 3. This statement is on the NFLA website. The upcoming NFLA Scotland Forum will discuss further actions that can be

taken. What is clear though is that the AGR fleet is coming near its end-life and all of the reactors will close considerably earlier than EDF would like.

Fukushima update -

The main issue of progress with the stricken Fukushima site relates around the clean-up to the area around the site, where years of expensive decontamination has taken place financed by the Japanese Government. In the past 2 weeks, the government has given approval to the lifting of evacuation orders for highly radioactive areas near the Fukushima without decontamination work on condition that residents will not resettle there. The Nuclear Regulation Authority gave its consent to the government policy, paving the way for residents to enter areas outside the specified disaster reconstruction and revitalization base zones.

There remains no final decision on whether contaminated water will be allowed to be dumped in the Pacific Ocean. The decision of the current Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to resign for health reasons is likely to lead to the potential for some political change in Japan, and the policies around Fukushima may be reviewed within this. NFLA will continue to monitor the issues, with 2021 being the 10th anniversary of the disaster (and the 35th anniversary of Chernobyl).

Action: To note the report. To consider further action over Hunterston B and the AGRs fleet.

10. Nuclear emergency planning and transport

The NFLA Secretary is reworking detailed reports on progress with Councils implementing offsite emergency plans and on nuclear transport. The sheer amount of work has just got in the way of completing both reports, but this has become a real priority to complete. The NFLA Secretary gives his apologies over this delay. The Steering Committee noted they look forward to reading these reports.

Action: To note the report.

11. Date of next Steering Committee meeting

This is planned as a web meeting for Friday 6th November from 11am – 12.30pm. It will also include the NFLA 2020/21 Annual General Meeting and commemorate the 40th anniversary of the NFLA.