

NFLA Policy Briefing No.221



Date: 16th September 2021

Subject: Summary of key points and actions from the NFLA Steering Committee, 10th September

1. Introduction to the meeting

The NFLA Steering Committee Chair, Councillor David Blackburn, welcomed all to the NFLA Steering Committee for early autumn 2021. He noted some time would be provided at the end of the meeting to celebrate the work of the NFLA Secretary, Sean Morris, for whom it would be his last meeting in the role. Sean is moving on to a 2-year secondment as Policy and Strategy Lead with Manchester Climate Change Agency.

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

The NFLA Secretary reported that since the last NFLA Steering Committee, the vaccination programme in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has reached a considerably higher level, allowing restrictions to be reduced somewhat. By late-August over 89% of the UK adult population (people from 18 years upwards, as well as those who were shielding due to underlying serious health issues) had received at least one vaccination, and over 81% have now received two vaccinations. Vaccination rates in Ireland have rapidly increased with over 80% now fully vaccinated.

Most restrictions were lifted in June and July in the UK, though remain tighter in Ireland. However, there has been a significant increase in infections, particularly amongst young people and those who have not been vaccinated. There has been a limited return to the office amongst most councils, though caution still remains.

Given these issues, it was agreed the Steering Committee should remain as an online meeting, though this can remain now under regular review.

In July, the NFLA Secretary informed the Steering Committee that he had accepted the opportunity to work for the Manchester Climate Change Agency on a two-year secondment. A special meeting was held in August to discuss future developments. Interviews were held in early September and a replacement officer has accepted the post, subject to references, to start in early November. The new Secretary has substantial local government experience and has also worked for CND.

Sean has met and discussed with the NFLA Policy Advisor Pete Roche interim arrangements to ensure a response to any nuclear policy consultations that come in during the next couple of months. It was agreed at the NFLA Scotland meeting prior to the Steering Committee to publish a NFLA report on the upcoming COP26 climate change conference in Glasgow.

The December / January Steering Committee and Annual General Meeting will allow for a good discussion on priorities for 2022. Steering Committee members agreed that it was important to actively support the new NFLA Secretary to settle in and work out the core issues moving forward with the organisation.

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Since the last NFLA Steering Committee meeting the NFLA Secretariat has issued detailed reports on the following policy areas:

- A report of the 4th June NFLA Steering Committee meeting.
- A thorough overview of increased nuclear transports across the UK and Europe, which has been very well received.
- Adapted responses to the Irish Climate Change Consultation and to the Northern Ireland Assembly Environment Committee inquiry into the cross-party Climate Change Bill.
- A detailed response on the 'Just Transition' Commission report for the Scottish Parliament and prospects for such developments across all parts of the UK and Ireland.
- A detailed consideration of Local Authority pension schemes and divestment issues from fossil fuels and nuclear weapons. This will be issued in early September.
- A joint response with other NGOs to a BEIS consultation on a proposed expansion of powers to the Civil Nuclear Constabulary, which policies all civil nuclear sites.
- A NFLA Radioactive Waste Briefing on UK plutonium policy by Pete Roche.
- A NFLA New Nuclear Monitor with a guest response by Dr Paul Dorfman on the impacts of climate change on existing and proposed new nuclear reactor sites. A follow-up assessment on defence sites is also being developed, and a separate report undertaken by the Pugwash group will also be linked to shortly.
- Two Mayors for Peace Briefings on the European Chapter board meeting, the Mayors for Peace Executive Conference and the 76th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic weapon attacks.

Agreed: To note the report and welcome the efforts of the NFLA Secretariat over the summer. To support the new NFLA Secretary when they come into post.

3. NFLA Forums progress

NFLA Scotland Forum meetings and progress -

The NFLA Scotland Forum met on the 25th June. The business meeting had a thorough discussion on all aspects of Scottish nuclear and renewable policy, and it was agreed to ask the Policy Advisor to develop a report on Just Transition issues. The NFLA Secretary's report on nuclear transports was also discussed. It was agreed to look to set up a meeting between the Forum Convener / Vice Convener and the new lead on nuclear policy in the Scottish Government. There was also a discussion on developments at SCCORS with one of its Co-Chairs, Councillor Michelle Campbell.

It has been decided to hold a short NFLA Scotland meeting on the 10th September prior to the NFLA Steering Committee. This discussed interim arrangements and received a full update on Scottish policy.

NFLA English and Welsh Forum progress with upcoming webinars -

The NFLA Secretary has been engaging on two issues which are of real relevance to the NFLA English and NFLA Welsh Forum. Over the summer, the Marine Management Organisation approved for EDF to dump dredged materials from the Hinkley Point C site into a new site close to Portishead Bay in North Somerset. In addition, an ongoing campaign has been taking place to prevent more dredged dumping into the Cardiff Deep Grounds close to Cardiff Bay. This has included close discussions with councillors in North Somerset District Council, Portishead Town Council and the Devon and Severn Conservation Authority, all of which are interested in working closely with the NFLA on common opposition to this decision. Legal action is currently being pursued to try and stop the dredge happen imminently. It is also hoped to hold a short webinar on some of the issues that affect both sides of the Bristol Channel. The NFLA Secretary hopes to keep these matters moving with the relevant groups as well as with Pete Roche and Tim Deere-Jones.

The NFLA Secretary has also cooperated with representatives of Beyond Nuclear International, Greater Manchester CND and Chernobyl Children's Project UK on a special webinar considering the potential impacts on sensitive wildlife sites from large and small new nuclear projects. This will take place on the 7th October with further details in item 3. NFLA members from all four Forums are encouraged to attend, but particularly those in the English and Welsh Forums where the push for new nuclear continues.

NFLA All Ireland Forum progress -

The Secretariat has developed detailed NFLA All Ireland Forum submissions to two important climate change discussions in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. One of them has gone to the Irish Government's climate change discussion as part of the development of a new Climate Change Act that has been passed in the Dail. The second was submitted to the Northern Ireland Assembly's Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee inquiry into the Cross-Party Climate Change Bill that is being considered presently by the wider Assembly. This inquiry has widened out to also consider the Northern Ireland Executive's own Climate Change Bill proposal. The NFLA Secretary is engaging with Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland to determine if a further submission to this extended inquiry is required. Both submissions called on increased powers and resource for Irish Councils, north and south, in the challenge to tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions. The responses are on the NFLA website.

The new Secretary should look to develop these matter further and engage on a potential webinar as soon as can be practically organised.

CNFE annual symposium –

NFLA members are encouraged to attend the CNFE supported annual Vienna Nuclear Symposium on the 17th September. It will consider the potential for possible nuclear accidents in Europe and what might happen to the release of radioactive materials if they took place. An expert speaker panel has been recruited and the details on the event have been circulated to members by email.

Agreed: To attend upcoming webinars and support the new Secretary develop national forum meetings.

3. New nuclear

The UK Government, Welsh Government and the nuclear industry's concerted political push to support new nuclear continues, with a number of new issues coming to the fore over the summer.

Small modular reactors and advanced modular reactors –

An update from the UK Government on its funding models for both large and small new nuclear reactors was expected over the summer, but it has not yet materialised. That may be partly due to major staffing changes in the Government's Office for Nuclear Development, and the pressure in getting a large suite of energy policy measures out before the November COP26 Conference.

The Welsh Government announced in late August that a new company, Cwmni Egnó, has been established to promote the deployment of a small modular nuclear reactor at Trawsfynydd (and possibly later at Wylfa) in Gwynedd, as well as a medical isotope research reactor. Mike Tynan has been appointed as its new Chief Executive to assist the existing Chair, John Idris Jones. Tynan is a former Chief Executive of Westinghouse UK and CEO of the Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Centre in South Yorkshire. He is likely to engage actively with Rolls Royce, who are keen to develop their proposed technology at UK sites.

A major event was also hosted by Copeland / Cumbrian Councils, MPs and the nuclear industry (including the CEO of the NDA David Peattie) with UK Government officials to encourage development of a similar site with Rolls Royce close to Sellafield. Much was said about the area being ideal for the development of new nuclear.

There has been media reports suggesting Rolls Royce has found substantial external financial support for its modular technology, though these reports may be an attempt to pressure the UK Government to provide further support, and the details on it remain sketchy.

NFLA will need to keep a close eye on this debate, where there remains a concerted political push to assist this technology in moving forward. The Steering Committee agreed it was important to challenge the need for such technology.

Experimental nuclear fusion reactor –

15 potential sites have been put forward by a range of local authorities to potentially host an experimental Tomahawk nuclear fusion reactor by the UK Atomic Energy Authority. These include councils with a number of existing or decommissioned reactor sites like at Dounreay, Chapelcross, Oldbury, Sellafield and Hinkley Point, as well as some surprising sites like in Pembrokeshire, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and Nottinghamshire. Such a reactor would not be built for some considerable time, and not be producing (if at all) fusion electricity until the mid-2040s. Again it is part of a parallel push by the nuclear industry and the UK Government to support the technology. It was agreed that the NFLA needs to keep a close eye on the developments with this technology.

A number of smaller private sector led developments are also taking place in nuclear fusion in the UK. The Canadian company General Fusion has announced plans to build and operate a plant to demonstrate its nuclear fusion technology at the UKAEA's Culham Campus near Oxford. The Fusion Demonstration Plant (FDP) will pave the way for a commercial pilot plant using Magnetised Target Fusion (MTF) technology, and they hope to begin operations in 2025. The NFLA Secretary attended a webinar that will look into the proposed regulation of such sites and questioned how likely fusion is to be developed in such a quick time. However, it is clear it is another part of the concerted push from the nuclear industry to try and remain relevant, seek finance and political support to remain relevant in tackling the climate emergency.

BEIS advanced nuclear reactor public dialogue study –

A report on developing public dialogue around Advanced Nuclear Technologies (ANTs) has been published by the UK Government. This explores public attitudes towards small and advanced modular reactors and was commissioned by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) with support from UK Research and Innovation's 'Sciencewise' programme. Professor Stephen Thomas, who has recently published a report on such technology for the NFLA, was one of those involved in the discussions on the report.

The report concluded that participants' views were complex and nuanced, and largely grounded in their perspectives on:

- achieving net zero (in part due to the design of the dialogue, framing nuclear as an approach to support achieving net zero),
- current nuclear energy (as it was more familiar, and advanced nuclear was felt to have many unknowns as a developing technology); and
- the information provided within the dialogue.

The report noted there was “no one simple take-away” – the dialogue provided insight across a wide range of issues related to advanced nuclear, “valuably indicating several potential areas for future research and engagement”

Large nuclear site issues -

Hinkley Point C – whilst work continues on the site, two issues took centre stage over the summer creating new challenges for its development. The first was a public inquiry over the need for 'acoustic fish deterrents' on the two massive cooling water intake heads that are being placed 3 kilometres offshore from the nuclear site. EDF sought the inquiry as it is trying to renege on its commitment and is seeking a variation on the planning conditions imposed. The public inquiry was heard by the Planning Inspectorate, but the final decision on it will be made by the Environment Secretary, following a final report from the Inspectorate. At the inquiry a large amount of representations, including from the Environment Agency and the Conservation Authority, said the deterrents were essential to prevent billions of fish being killed by being sucked into the intake heads over the 60-year operation of the plant. NFLA is supporting a Stop Hinkley report written by Pete Roche on the matter, and it is developing a joint media release of its own in conjunction with KIMO International.

The other issue of real concern relates to a leak in a similar EPR reactor recently opened at Taishan in China. According to a CNN investigation, in late May, one of the EPR reactors started venting radioactive gases – it is not known precisely why or when. There may also have been possible fuel failures. It appears the Chinese nuclear regulator and the Chinese Government

reacted by proposing to increase the safety limits for residents downwind in order to keep the reactor operating, and they told Framatome (a subsidiary of EDF) of this intention. Framatome objected to such an action and said CGN should instead shut down the reactor to find out what had gone wrong. The response from Chinese authorities was negative to this suggestion. As a result, Framatome (unusually) submitted an operational safety assistance request to the US Government on June 3rd, formally asking for a 'legal waiver' that would allow them to address an urgent nuclear safety matter. This was sent to the US Department of Energy (DOE), warning their officials that the nuclear reactor was leaking fission gas. In a NFLA media release, it called for the UK ONR to investigate the matter carefully and consider its implications for the Hinkley Point and possibly Sizewell sites. A meeting with the NFLA Secretary and the Chief Nuclear Inspector has confirmed they are actively looking into the incident and will provide a report on it shortly. The incident is of real concern for the technology.

Sizewell C – the National Infrastructure Commission is continuing its extensive consideration of the proposed Sizewell C reactor through a detailed public inquiry. The NFLA has engaged closely with Together Against Sizewell C, Stop Sizewell C, Friends of the Earth Nuclear Network and Greenpeace UK and a detailed presentation was given to representatives from some of these groups to the Planning Inspectorate. The inquiry has created an extensive public debate across Suffolk with increasing public concern to the size and impacts of the development. This has intensified as it has emerged that EDF will now have to develop a new desalination plant to provide sea water to cool such a new reactor, as the local water company said that local water supplies could not cover its needs. A recent example of local coastal erosion close to Sizewell has also intensified the concern that climate change could create should the site be developed. The other major issue is how the reactor will be funded, and talks are continuing between EDF and the UK Government on the potential use of public funding through the Revenue Asset Base model. Media reports suggest an announcement may be made on this matter in the autumn. There has been a considerable amount of concern in parts of the conservative media over the cost to billpayers from such a measure.

Bradwell B – there has been increasing reports through the media that the UK Government is preparing to pull the plug on Chinese involvement in new nuclear reactors, which would particularly impact on the Bradwell B development, majority owned by CGN. A 'Whitehall source' confirmed a report by the Financial Times that the Government is seeking to remove China General Nuclear (CGN) from future projects in the UK, which particularly means the Bradwell B project. This may also impact CGN financial support for Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C. The media reports suggest American finance to replace CGN is being investigated. Whilst this would put new pressure on the Hinkley Point and Sizewell projects, it would look like it would stop the Bradwell project completely, as it is with a different reactor design. NFLA needs to keep a close eye on this issue.

Wildlife and new nuclear webinar -

NFLA are cooperating with Beyond Nuclear, GM CND and Chernobyl Children's Project on a 7th October webinar looking at the issues of large and small new nuclear on sensitive wildlife sites and issues. Confirmed speakers now included Jonathon Porritt, Craig Bennett (both former CEOs of Friends of the Earth with Bennett now CEO of the Wildlife Trusts) and former Good Energy CEO Juliet Davenport. This high-profile event will focus on real local concerns that new nuclear could damage sensitive wildlife sites in Suffolk, Essex, Somerset and other locations. It will also consider other impacts from climate change and coastal erosion. We already have over 120 participants signed up for this event with only limited promotion, which is now ramping up over September. This is a really good event that NFLA members need to strongly support.

Agreed: To monitor the issue carefully, support a report on biodiversity and Hinkley Point C and the joint webinar on wildlife and new nuclear.

4. Radioactive waste

UK & Scottish Government reviews of waste and decommissioning strategies -

There is still no confirmation of when BEIS will launch the consultation on Nuclear Decommissioning and Managing Radioactive Substances Policy. The aim now appears to publish it in the autumn. The NFLA Secretary has discussed this matter with Pete Roche to

ensure a NFLA response can go in if this takes place during the interim arrangements between Sean's departure and a new Secretary taking up the post.

Deep waste repository update and RWM Exchange -

Allerdale and Copeland Councils are continuing their early discussion into whether they will move into a more formal Community Partnership consideration of expressing an interest to host a deep underground waste repository. The Cumbria Trust have highlighted recent comments made by a member of this discussion which suggests that the Lake District and the Solway AONB may still need to be considered as part of a suitable site, having been expressly excluded at the beginning of this process. It is to be seen if such a change takes place, should it formalise into the Community Partnership. There also remains concern raised by some CORWM members around undersea development of such a repository.

It has also emerged over the summer that RWM has been discussing with senior councillors in Lincolnshire County Council over a possible site being put forward in Theddlethorpe next to a redundant gas-fired power station; as well as with Hartlepool councillors over potentially expressing interest in offering sites in the area. In both cases, there has been real anger expressed from East Lindsey District Council and a number of Lincolnshire councillors, as well as local residents, where groups are immediately organising to oppose it. In Hartlepool, the regional Conservative Mayor and its new local Conservative MP have raised very public opposition to the proposal, and the Deputy Leader of Hartlepool Council has resigned over the lack of wider discussion on the proposal.

In all these cases, the early expression of interest has come from private companies and charitable trusts putting forward sites and bringing the local councils then into the discussion. It is clear there is already some public discontent over these sites and the process. English Steering Committee members agreed to meet with each other to discuss making approaches to councillors in Lincolnshire in particular.

The next meeting of the RWM Exchange is on the 21st September. NFLA Policy Advisor Pete Roche will be attending the meeting, and the NFLA Secretary will try to attend as a one-off to finish his involvement on the issue.

NuLEAF and SCCORS update / NFLA meeting with NDA and RWM -

NuLEAF are holding their next business meeting on the 15th September. At the last meeting members narrowly agreed to take forward a proposal to merge back-office functions with the LGA New Nuclear Local Authorities Group (NNLAG). NFLA had expressed their strong opposition to this proposal and had written a strongly worded letter seeking a meeting with the NDA and RWM over such a change. Following this meeting, the NuLEAF Secretary has informed the NFLA Secretary that NNLAG do not want to merge back-office functions and are determining its future given different discussions taking place directly between councils and new nuclear developers. In the discussion though, it was noted there remains real tensions on these matters within NuLEAF. It is to be seen how the meeting will conclude this discussion in mid-September. The NFLA Secretary has also been asked to provide a personal view of his engagement with NuLEAF for a blog post, which is now on the NuLEAF website.

A meeting with the NDA and RWM and the NFLA took place directly after the NFLA Steering Committee. NFLA discussed the above matter in detail, and clarified the position of NDA and RWM towards new nuclear and the ways independent challenge of a deep waste repository development can be articulated – for example the Swedish model includes the public funding of an independent NGO with €300k annual budget.

The SCCORS Co-Chair Councillor Michelle Campbell attended the NFLA Scotland meeting in June and explained how she was moving forward with the group, which will include a national meeting in the near future.

'Geiger Bay' / Portishead Bay Hinkley mud update -

Despite a whole host of groups submitting responses to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) not to approve an application allowing EDF Energy to dump dredged material from the

Hinkley Point C site off Portishead Bay in North Somerset, the MMO decided to do so in mid-August. NFLA and the Geiger Bay group issued a joint media release of dismay at the decision.

NFLA has cooperated with the local Councils and the Devon and Severn Conservation Authority, who are all opposed to this decision. The Conservation Authority have decided not to pursue legal action to stop the dredging starting shortly, but remain completely opposed to the decision. Geiger Bay are looking into a legal challenge on the matter. An attempt to hold a webinar to raise local concerns across both sides of the Bristol Channel is being organised, though it is problematical for the NFLA Secretary given the short period left in post. There has been excellent engagement with North Somerset District Council and Portishead Town Council on this matter and NFLA should try to keep a presence going on this matter in the interim, perhaps through Pete Roche and Tim Deere-Jones.

The 'Geiger Bay' group is continuing to engage with the Senedd calling for an environmental impact assessment on the dredging application. A further detailed response to the Senedd has just been submitted, which the NFLA has seen and supports.

Sellafield update –

One of Sellafield nuclear site's "biggest ever" construction projects has taken a huge step forward after receiving approval for the full business case from the UK Government. Once completed, the Sellafield Product and Residue Store Retreatment Plant would treat and store historic nuclear waste for at least 100 years. The project can now move forward, leveraging investment from Sellafield Ltd and its delivery partners and helping create longer-term construction and manufacturing opportunities. Construction of the plant started in February 2020, with the laying of its vast base slab via 18 separate concrete pours.

In a separate announcement, Stainless Metalcraft and Sellafield Ltd have agreed to enter the second phase of the contract to provide high integrity stainless steel storage boxes for Sellafield. The three-metre-cubed box contract is now worth up to £70 million, and represents a £20 million uplift to the original contract, which was awarded in 2015. The agreement to exercise the option marks Metalcraft's successful transition to the second phase of the 3M3 box work with Sellafield. The boxes will be used to store intermediate level waste (ILW) retrieved from silos at legacy locations across Cumbria.

A 'whistleblower' who raised concerns of bullying and racism at the Sellafield site has lost a tribunal case for unfair dismissal. Alison McDermott made a series of complaints against Sellafield and the NDA. However, the tribunal employment judge ruled that she did not qualify as a whistleblower and dismissed all her claims. Sellafield welcomed the decision and said it did not tolerate bullying. Mrs McDermott said she was devastated with the judgement which she claimed has glaring inconsistencies. The issues over bullying, racism and harassment remains a sensitive issue on the site and is being carefully considered by the ONR in its oversight of the site.

Dalgety Bay / SEPA cyber-attack concerns / meeting with Scottish Government –

Remediation work of the Dalgety Bay site is continuing of the contaminated shoreline. The aim is for the work to be completed by September 2022. Fife Council and the NFLA will keep a close eye on the matter, and both are pleased work has finally started some three decades after it was originally spotted. Fife NFLA representative Cllr Barratt commented that the Ministry of Defence had informed SEPA and the Council that the work was not going as fast as they had anticipated and it may have to go into a third year if these delays could not be rectified.

In a summer statement, SEPA has stated that most services are now back and running six months after the devastating cyber-attack on the environmental agency. SEPA has commissioned an independent audit and through its experience will seek to speak openly about the challenges of internationally orchestrated cyber-crime. Once complete, SEPA will share the learnings widely so that the organisation and all others with an interest can benefit from the agency's experience in preparedness, response and recovery. NFLA will be interested in the final audit report when it is complete.

The NFLA Secretary has been in touch with the new lead officer on Scottish Government nuclear policy seeking a meeting. It is hoped to have the meeting with Daniel Coulridge as soon as is practical.

Agreed: To note the report. To discuss the outcome of the NuLEAF discussion on new nuclear and the meeting with the NDA / RWM. To cooperate with Somerset councils and conservation groups over the Portishead Bay dredging application and related issues.

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

An article by the Mondaq Energy Team web service has provided an analysis of the impact of Brexit on nuclear policy six months on.

As part of Brexit, the UK also left the Euratom agreement, as it is governed by the European Commission and under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. There were three core concerns for the future with this action:

- Continuing the supply of isotopes for medical use - The UK does not have a reactor capable of producing the half-life isotopes. As these decay within hours (or at most, days), a continuous supply is therefore required from reactors on the continent. Over the last decade, the Euratom Supply Agency has done a good job in overseeing this supply.
- Access to nuclear fuel - The UK has no domestic sources of nuclear fuel. As a member of Euratom, the UK did have the benefit of the co-operation agreements signed by Euratom with eight other countries (including Canada, Kazakhstan and Australia), who together account for 71% of the world's uranium production.
- Participation in nuclear research - The UK had been a net beneficiary of the Euratom Research and Development Program and, due to the impetus for new nuclear development in Britain, was a leading member of the programme.

Mondaq commented that the Nuclear Safeguards Act, a Nuclear Co-operation Agreement with Euratom and four core states – Canada, Japan and the US, as well as a bilateral agreement with IAEA, means that most gaps have been filled. Mondaq notes the UK may lose out on some areas of European nuclear research now that are 'outside the tent'.

Mondaq conclude:

“Efforts have been made to minimise the gaps but even the broadest and most comprehensive nuclear cooperation agreement is unlikely to replicate the benefits of a nuclear common market. The analysis of the agreements put in place to avert the risks of leaving Euratom is still ongoing. However, the efforts of BEIS, together with the ONR, in addressing the Brexit crisis (in addition to the COVID pandemic) has meant that much-needed attention in developing strategies for nuclear new build, nuclear funding and nuclear research has been put on hold for the time being. This means opportunities have already been missed, with shovel ready sites for gigawatt capacity reactors being mothballed due to lack of government action.”

Mondaq note such issues are having a clear impact on delaying new nuclear build and relying too heavily on overseas technology. Issues over immigration and travel may also hinder bringing in experts from overseas. It also notes the additional burdens on the ONR will see it struggle to take on new activity.

In discussion, Steering Committee members noted concern over interconnectors after Ireland announced that it had temporarily closed its link with Britain due to perceived energy shortages.

Agreed: To note the report and monitor post-Brexit development.

6. Climate change, green stimulus and alternatives to nuclear power *IPCC report on the state of climate change prior to the COP26 Conference –*

A report by the IPCC report published in August says there are no scenarios where a 1.5 degrees Celsius increase in temperature in the world will now not be avoided, meaning some of the negative challenges of climate change will take place.

Core findings of the report also include:

- Climate change is widespread, rapid and intensifying due to human actions (and inaction in preventing it).
- Extreme heat events, like that taking place presently across southern Europe, North America and northern Russia, will become more frequent.
- The 1.5C global temperature increase limit is now on 'life support'. Keeping temperatures under this level was a key 2050 target, but the IPCC suggests the world will hit it possibly as early as 2030. The IPCC has previously said there are great advantages of staying under the 1.5C limit compared to a 2C temperature increase. To do that, it argued carbon emissions would need to be cut in half by 2030 and net zero emissions reached by 2050. Otherwise, the limit would be reached between 2030 and 2052.
- Under all likely scenarios, global sea levels will rise. The IPCC report shows that under current scenarios, the seas could rise above the likely range, going up to 2m by the end of this century and up to 5m by 2150. While these are unlikely figures, they cannot be ruled out under a very high greenhouse gas emissions scenario.
- There will be an increase in extreme rainfall, creating the types of serious flooding recently seen in the likes of Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands.

In a media release, the NFLA called on more resource and powers for local government to assist it in tackling the climate emergency. It also commented that the time lag in realising new nuclear projects precluded its role in dealing positively with climate change.

NFLA submissions to the Irish and Northern Irish climate change discussions

The NFLA had sent detailed submissions, adapted from its most recent report on how Councils tackle the climate emergency, to the Irish Government's Climate Change Conversation and the Northern Ireland Assembly's Environment Committee inquiry into the cross-party Climate Change Bill and Executive's own version. The submission called for greater powers and resources are required for Councils to play a more meaningful role in carbon reduction. The Dail has approved a relatively ambitious Climate Change Act. Fermanagh and Omagh NFLA representative Cllr Currie commented there were real concerns that the Northern Ireland Assembly could collapse in a few weeks' time. This would impact on all proposed legislation.

NFLA report on Just Transition & its importance for tackling the climate emergency

Following on from its latest analysis of how councils can tackle the climate emergency in a post-pandemic era, the NFLA have published a companion report considering the 'Just Transition' needed to transfer workers in the fossil fuel and high carbon industries into low carbon alternative jobs.

The report provides a thorough analysis of the Scottish Government's 'Just Transition' Commission. Its recommendations are designed to ensure the "benefits of climate change action are shared widely, while the costs do not unfairly burden those least able to pay, or whose livelihoods are directly or indirectly at risk as the economy shifts and changes". As such, it is not just about managing the impact on workers in carbon-intensive sectors, but also about recognising an opportunity to advance a range of social justice issues. The Scottish Government has accepted the Commission's recommendations. NFLA has encouraged the Scottish Government to now implement them into policy.

The report notes though that there does not currently seem to be any kind of detailed plan to retrain workers in the oil and gas industries, or other industries likely to disappear or change radically as a result of the net zero transition. Oil workers are not hearing anything from employers on how they can retrain for work in offshore wind or other green growth sectors.

The report argues that the Scottish Government (and the other governments of the UK and Ireland) needs to learn from the failure to create a strong local manufacturing supply chain for the offshore wind industry, so that the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy is more orderly. The Commission calls for bold action to agree concrete steps that will support participation and local democracy, and investigation into the potential for increased powers and resources to be directed at community level to ensure any new arrangements support for wider participation. The Commission wants to see the benefits of the transition shared widely and burdens shared on the basis on ability to pay.

The report notes that in Ireland there is a welcome transformation of Bord na Móna, once the largest employer for burning peat, into a climate solutions company. NFLA welcomes the new Irish Just Transition Commission and Just Transition Fund. NFLA also encourages some early moves to just transition with the UK Government, and encourages it to embed the ‘just transition’ concept into policy. There is much to be learnt from the Scottish Just Transition Commission for all the governments of the UK and Ireland. Climate change is necessitating unprecedented changes in the energy and other sectors of our economies. Without environmental justice and equity being a part of the transition to ‘net zero’ NFLA are concerned that large parts of each nation will potentially see local economies devastated and many left unemployed with difficult challenges to transfer to the new jobs on offer. The report is on the NFLA website.

Divestment from fossil fuels and nuclear weapons

The NFLA has also published a report on divestment. This outlines the growing divestment movement and the push to encourage Council Pension Funds from investments in fossil fuels and nuclear weapons. It also encourages such Pension Funds to prioritise local investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy storage.

The report outlines that, whilst such investments in fossil fuels have gone down, they still amount to £16.1 billion across the UK (the Republic of Ireland’s public sector pension fund is divesting from fossil fuels after legislation was passed in the Dail). The report considers the internal argument used by many funds, along with the need to maintain the fiduciary duty, of putting pressure on fossil fuel companies and nuclear weapon producing companies to look at their environmental and social policies and push for transition. The NFLA report questions how much actual pressure is placed on creating real change. The report outlines some of the Pension Funds that have made divestment decisions, but highlights change is still required and it has been slower than many pension members would like it to be.

The report is on the NFLA website. It is aimed at councillors in pension committees, so NFLA members should pass the report onto such elected members.

Agreed: To disseminate the NFLA reports on Just Transition and divestment.

7. Mayors for Peace

International meetings -

The newly formed European Chapter of Mayors for Peace held its first board meeting on June 10th to agree its legal statutes, an operational plan, a new website, social media channels and a protocol for issuing statements. It is now working on developing a second joint webinar with ICAN and the NFLA to prepare for the first States Parties Conference of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The webinar is planned for the 21st October. This webinar will include again key city mayors, foreign ministers of TPNW states in Europe and ICAN lead staff. The NFLA Secretary is helping with issuing invitations and NFLA members are encouraged to attend it.

The global Mayors for Peace Executive Conference was held online on July 7th. It agreed an Action Plan for 2021 – 23. The ‘PX Vision’ updates plans to work on embedding the TPNW and the NPT, promoting strategies for safe and peaceful cities and a peace education programme. The NFLA Secretary published a detailed report on both meetings, which is on the NFLA website.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki 76th anniversary events -

With the pandemic easing over the summer, there were a good number of live events that commemorated the 76th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic weapon attack. These included major events at London, Dublin, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Southampton, Glasgow, Paisley and Llandudno. A major peace crane exhibition took place in Edinburgh and in Lerwick, NFLA member Councillor Malcolm Bell (Convenor of Shetland Islands Council) was involved in a ceremony to plant one of their Hiroshima ginkgo trees. 10 UK members now have ginkgo tree seeds. A full report of these events is also on the NFLA website.

Agreed: To note the report and attend the October webinar.

8. **Nuclear weapons and defence nuclear safety**

UK Defence Review and an increase in the cap of Trident warheads

As noted at the last NFLA Steering Committee, a legal review undertaken for CND has found that the UK's plans are incompatible with its commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. CND UK has now instituted a campaign to support their reporting of the UK to the President-designate of the upcoming NPT Review Conference, and they are seeking thousands of signatures in a petition to send at the same time.

NPT and the TPNW / ICAN Cities Appeal

The provisional rescheduling of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty Review Conference is the 4 – 28 January 2022. This third attempt to hold the conference is still subject to international travel issues in January. As a result, the TPNW States Parties Conference has now been moved to the 22nd – 24th March 2022. If this goes ahead, travel issues permitting, then Mayors for Peace European Chapter Lead Cities and the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are hoping to attend it. ICAN is organising the civil society part of this conference in Vienna.

Merthyr Tydfil Council have become the fourth Welsh Council to pass a resolution of support for the TPNW within the ICAN Cities Appeal. The Steering Committee congratulated Cllr Galsworthy on his resolution. The 21st October webinar with ICAN, NFLA and Mayors for Peace will be a new attempt to encourage more towns and cities to pass similar resolutions.

Nuke Free Europe events

The Nuke Free Europe network (which has brought activist groups together from around Europe) is coordinating a month of action through September to highlight the presence of nuclear weapons stationed across the continent. In the UK, peace groups are holding events at Aldermaston, Burghfield, Faslane, Coulport and Barrow on the International Day for the Eliminate Nuclear Weapons on September 26th. The Mayors for Peace European Chapter has joined the network as an observer and will be discussing supporting these events in a joint statement shortly.

International nuclear weapon discussions

President Biden and President Putin held their first summit on June 16th but little concrete progress was made. The two sides agreed to begin a dialogue on nuclear arms control. They also said they would return ambassadors to each other's capitals. However, there was little sign of agreement on other issues, including cyber-security, Ukraine and the fate of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Talks are continuing on Iran's nuclear programme, but they remain tense. The election of a more hard-line President in Iran adds challenge to the talks, and in July Iran noted that it was producing enriched uranium metal.

The IAEA also have reported that North Korea appears to have restarted its biggest nuclear reactor after more than two years. They call it a "deeply troubling" development. The IAEA called the isolated country's nuclear program "a cause for serious concern" and pointed specifically to "new indications of the operation" of the 5-megawatt Yongbyon reactor as "deeply troubling." North Korea has to date rejected all requests from the Biden administration to restart talks on its nuclear programme.

NIS report on nuclear weapons modernisation attitudes

Nuclear Information Service has developed a new report looking at the attitudes of non-nuclear weapon states to the modernisation of nuclear weapon programmes by the likes of the UK, through their Trident replacement programme. The study shows a consistently high level of concern – over 90% - about the issue from non-nuclear weapon states, and it also mentions that nuclear-weapon states have voiced concern about nuclear weapon modernisation programmes. A total of 172 of the 193 UN member states have been party to individual or group statements that treated the issue as a problem. This does not bear well for the upcoming NPT Review Conference in January. The NFLA Secretary is attending a NIS webinar which is looking at the current politics of nuclear disarmament at which Professor Paul Rogers, Dr Tim Street and

ICAN's Alicia Sanders-Zakre are amongst the speakers. A verbal report on this webinar was provided.

Defence diversification

The NFLA Secretary has been engaged for some years with the UK Arms Conversion / Defence Diversification Steering Group. Sub-groups were being established on political strategy, grass-roots engagement with defence trade unionists and cooperation with climate emergency groups, as well as a research group developing new ideas in this area. However, with the upcoming changes in the NFLA, and funding challenges for the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, a meeting was held on the 1st September to discuss how the group can move forward. Members of the group are going to help recalibrate the sub-groups and work with the new NFLA Secretary and CAAT staff to move this forward in 2022.

Agreed: To note the report.

9. Civil nuclear safety, Fukushima update and key anniversaries

The aging AGR fleet -

Just after the last Steering Committee meeting EDF announced that it was moving the Dungeness site into defueling. It has decided the major metal corrosion and other issues at the site meant that it was impossible to bring it back to service.

With Hunterston B and Hinkley Point B closing in early and mid-2022, focus will inevitably start shifting to Heysham, Hartlepool and Torness, all of which are showing similar aging issues. The NFLA Policy Advisor will keep a close eye on these issues.

Fukushima update -

In April the Japanese Government announced that it would permit contaminated water from the many storage tanks on the Fukushima site to be released into the Pacific Ocean, starting in 2023. As much as 1 million tonnes of water will be slowly released into the ocean. The process is likely to take decades.

The decision has created real anger within Japan, particularly amongst the local fishing community, as well as Japan's neighbours South Korea, China and Taiwan. To try and gain the support of the fishing communities, the Japanese Government has pledged to buy any unsold fish, and it will financially compensate these areas. It is unlikely to assuage them after such groups have spent years trying to improve the international image of local fish stocks. With TEPCO, it has also announced that it will seek to support the development of an underground tunnel from the site to slowly move the treated tritiated water into the Pacific Ocean. The move is firmly opposed by Japanese and international environmental groups. The IAEA is considering the Japanese Government plans to ensure they conform to international standards for sea discharges.

An IAEA team on the Fukushima site is also calling on TEPCO to make a greater effort to examine the melted fuel in the stricken reactors. Without doing this, a clearer idea on the amount of time it will take to decommissioning the reactors remains unknown.

Agreed: To note the report.

10. Nuclear emergency planning and transport

The NFLA Secretariat has issued a full and detailed report considering all of the main nuclear transport risks within the UK and Europe. The report is on the NFLA website. It includes a full review of the transport of nuclear weapon materials by road and continuing concern around an accident taking place. While a recent review has been welcome, there remains concern, particularly when convoys go during periods of inclement weather. These convoys are increasing due to the aging nature of existing weapons and Trident replacement.

The report also looks at the increasing level of nuclear transport by road, rail and sea and looks at safety issues around them. A section also considers air transports. NFLA encourages the NDA and MOD in particular to review the necessity of increasing nuclear transports. They are not

particularly liked even by those who support nuclear power. The public, when alerted to them, has shown to be in large opposition to such increases in transport.

The NFLA have also submitted a joint response with six other anti-nuclear groups raising concerns over UK Government plans to expand the powers and reach of the Civil Nuclear Constabulary to potentially police non-nuclear sites in certain scenarios. The proposals could affect peaceful protest and wider safety of the sites. Both reports are on the NFLA website.

It was reported at the meeting that a major shipment of plutonium using NDA ships is transport this material from France across the world to Japan. There remain real concerns about undertaking such risky activity.

Agreed: To welcome the new reports.

11. Thanks to the NFLA Secretary for his work for the organisation

All members of the Steering Committee gave their personal thanks and appreciation for all the dedicated work of the NFLA Secretary Sean Morris. As noted above, Sean is shortly moving on to a new secondment in the Manchester Climate Change Agency. He has worked for 13 years as NFLA Secretary and 23 years with the NFLA (the previous 10 as NFLA English Forum Secretary as a Leeds City Council officer). The Steering Committee wished Sean well for the future. Sean responded with sincere thanks and noted how much of an honour it has been to work for the NFLA and Mayors for Peace as a Manchester City Council officer.

12. Date of next Steering Committee meeting

This is planned as a web meeting, to allow the new NFLA Secretary to organise a NFLA AGM and report for 2022, and it is provisionally planned for Friday 3rd December from 11am – 1pm.

The date will be finalised by the new NFLA Secretary in consultation with the Steering Committee.