1. **Introduction to the meeting**

The NFLA Steering Committee Chair, Councillor David Blackburn, welcomed all to the NFLA Steering Committee and Annual General Meeting for 2021/22 which was being held as a video conference on the Microsoft Teams platform. Once more it was good to see all four Forums represented. 14 attendees. Apologies were accepted.

2. **NFLA Steering Committee Minutes, 3 December 2021**

The Chair proposed and Cllr Butler seconded these be accepted as a true and correct record. Agreed.

3. **Reports from National Forums**

Cathy Birrell reported that the Scottish NFLA Forum will be holding its AGM on 10 Feb.

4. **Progress report from the NFLA Secretary**

Richard Outram gave his first progress report since appointment as a power point presentation. This was subsequently sent out to all members.

The written report that was circulated prior to the meeting outlined:
- the work of the NFLA Secretary since appointment on 22 November 2021
- the current issues and developments within the civil nuclear industry, renewable technology, and in connection with Mayors for Peace and nuclear disarmament
Consultation and Lobbying

Letters were sent to the Minister of State for Energy and the Head of the ONR (Office of Nuclear Regulation) seeking an indefinite suspension of work at Hinkley after Taishan. The NFLA also sponsored a letter by the CNFE (Cities for a Nuclear Free Europe) to the EU Commission President opposing changes in taxonomy rules.

The NFLA responded to a consultation by the NDA (Nuclear Decommissioning Authority) over new guidelines for SSGs (site stakeholder groups); to a consultation by BEIS (the Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy) over proposed safety regulations for future fusion reactors; and to the NDA’s consultation over their draft Business Plan for 2022-5.

Media

A great deal of work has so far been expended in bringing the media contacts list up to date and creating bespoke listings of local media outlets around each of the new nuclear sites and for Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. There is still some work to do, but good progress has been made. The update has meant that press releases on specific nuclear sites can be targeted at local media, which has led to local coverage (for example, with Wylfa - ‘Energy Island’ and Dounreay - ‘Nae Nuclear’).

The Secretary has also collaborated with investigative journalist Rob Edwards of The Ferret over the failure of the NDA to institute democratic reforms in the SSGs and this led to a recent story in The National newspaper in Scotland.

Since appointment the Secretary has issued the following media releases:

- Mayors for Peace UK / Ireland Chapter and NFLA celebrates first nuclear weapons ‘anniversary’ – 21 Jan
- Stranded in Vladivostok: KIMO International and NFLA express concern at mysterious plight of Russian nuclear-powered freighter – 21 Jan
- Nuclear is not green: NFLA endorses taxonomy appeal to European Commission President – 19 Jan
- Minister and Chief Nuclear Regulator respond to NFLA concerns over Hinkley safety issues, but no shutdown promised – 17 Jan
- Energy island (Anglesey) does not need nuclear, says Welsh NFLA – 17 Jan
- ‘Nae need’ for new nuclear to achieve ‘net zero’ in Scotland, says NFLA – 12 Jan
- EDF case for continued AGR reactor operations ‘cracking up’, says NFLA – 12 Jan
- NFLA says Nuclear Tax is a ‘poisoned chalice’ for public – 7 Jan
- Public safety must come before profit: Nuclear Free Local Authorities call for ‘no watering down’ of nuclear regulation for fusion reactors – 15 Dec
- NFLA seeks indefinite halt to work at new Hinkley power plant whilst Chinese nuclear accident investigated – 13 Dec
- NFLA gravely concerned Taishan leak could represent potential fatal flaw in UK new reactor design – 7 Dec
- NFLA welcomes New Guidelines, but seeks Greater Independence and Community Involvement in Nuclear Stakeholder Groups – 2 Dec
Pete Roche also issued the following press statement:

- NFLA comments on Plans to Impose a Nuclear Tax on Consumers’ Bills – 4 Nov

A newsletter was also released in late December and another followed in early February for January.

All these materials can be found on the NFLA website.

Former NFLA Secretary Sean Morris has kindly agreed to continue to maintain the Twitter and Facebook accounts.

**Briefings**

Two briefings have been issued – one of the draft minutes of the Steering Committee meeting of 3 Dec and another about the mysterious circumstances leading to the only nuclear-powered freighter in the world, the Russian Sevmorput becoming stranded at Vladivostok.

This latter tale, brought to us by marine radioactivity and pollution consultant Tim Deere-Jones, has elicited quite a lot of interest from a world-wide audience, and one correspondent has advised me that the mystery has now deepened as the vessel appears to be moving, possibly under tow.

Both briefings can be found on the NFLA website.

**Meetings and Webinars**

The Secretary has attended the following formal meetings:

- Nuleaf (Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum) Steering Group – 8 Nov
- Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) Exchange – 14 Dec
- Radioactive Waste Planning Group – 25 Jan

And webinars:

- ‘Keeping the Conversation Going’, NDA – 26 Nov
- Nuclear Energy Inclusion Criteria in the Taxonomy – 25 Jan

Informal introductory meetings have so far also been arranged with the NDA, Nuleaf, CNFE: with the Chair of BEIS SSG NGO Forum and all of the campaigning groups at the new nuclear sites to discuss joint campaigning; with MEDACT, national CND, Greater Manchester CND, Yorkshire CND, and Nukewatch to discuss collaboration on future webinars and the Nuclear Ban Communities campaign; and with Rob Edwards, investigative journalist at The Ferret to discuss future news scoops.

In the week prior to the SC meeting, the Secretary has meetings arranged with KIMO International (1 Feb) and with the Chair, Secretary and Advisor to the NFLA Scotland Forum (2 Feb).
New nuclear power developments

Large nuclear reactors

The EPR (European Pressurised Water) reactor design planned for Hinkley Point C is fast losing credibility.

Olkiluoto-3: Built by EDF (Électricité de France S.A.) for Finnish operator Teollisuuden Voima (TVO). After numerous technical issues and a lengthy legal dispute, the EPR Olkiluoto 3 plant on an island in the Gulf of Bothnia in Finland was completed in December 2021, over 12 years late, but there has been a further delay in start-up operations under the end of Feb 2022. TVO expected the 1.6 GW plant to be online in 2009.

Flamanville-3: Meanwhile fuel loading at the much-delayed EDF EPR Flamanville-3 plant on the Cotentin Peninsula in Normandy, France has been put back a further six months to the end of 2023. Construction has like Olkiluoto been plagued with technical problems, the latest being faulty welds. Work on the 1.65 GW plant started in December 2007.

Taishan 1: Most seriously an accident at the operational EPR Taishan-1 plant in China in June 2021 led operator, Framatome, an EDF subsidiary, to report a leak of radioactive gas. Although Chinese authorities initially demurred, the plant was finally indefinitely closed after international pressure.

It is still unclear what the cause was, but Criirad (the French Commission for Independent Research and Information on Radioactivity) reported to the French Nuclear Safety Authority that a design flaw inherent to all EPRs causes early wear in the reactor and that the accident 'raises serious questions in terms of nuclear safety and radiation protection, both for plant workers and for residents.'

Letters were sent by the NFLA to the Minister of State for Energy, Greg Hands MP, and Head of the ONR (Office of Nuclear Regulation) expressing our concerns and questioning whether the EPR remained safe as the same design would be employed at Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C. In their responses, BEIS (the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) and the ONR advised us they were monitoring the inspection at Taishan but would not accede to our request to indefinitely halt work at Hinkley Point C until the results were known.

Hinkley Point C: A legal challenge has been launched against plans to dump hundreds of thousands of tonnes of sediment from Hinkley Point into the Bristol Channel at Portishead.

Environmental groups, represented by Tarian Hafren, say that the MMO (Marine Management Organisation) unlawfully varied EDF Energy’s licence to deposit dredged material at the Severn Estuary Marine Protection Area.

The site is near Portbury Wharf Salt Marsh, part of the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Tarian Hafren, representing the groups, argues that the MMO did not have the statutory power to change the licence for dredging to include dumping, did not give adequate reasons for doing so, failed to examine the potential impact of the dredging on marine life, and ignored a less harmful method of waste disposal.
High Court Justice Beverley Lang has ruled that the grounds for a judicial review are arguable with the claim scheduled to be heard this spring.

French energy company, EDF Energy, won permission in August 2021 to dredge and dump material from Hinkley Point C off Portishead, despite objections from North Somerset Council and Portishead Town Council and their calls for a public inquiry.

Rowan Smith from law firm Leigh Day, which is representing Tarian Hafren, said: “Our client has been clear from the outset that the MMO did not have the legal power to license the dumping of mud from Hinkley Point C in the Severn Estuary in the way that it did.

“The court’s decision vindicates why this case is being brought. Our client’s aims are to uphold the Marine Protection Area’s special conservation status.”

Sizewell C: The planning application for a Development Consent Order to build and operate a new nuclear power station to the north of Sizewell B was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 27th May 2020.

Residents, community groups and Councils had until 14th October 2021 to submit comments as part of the inspectorate’s Examination of the proposal. 632 submissions were received, many of them from concerned residents. Eleven parish councils, East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council also all submitted comments, some of these have clear objections to the scheme.

A summary of the core objections is encapsulated in the submission from Together against Sizewell C:

- The EPR design is unproven
- The Applicant is unable to demonstrate fiscal probity
- The development cannot go ahead without massive public subsidy
- The development will not make the required urgent contributions to reducing greenhouse gases
- Its electrical output can be met by other means far more quickly and cheaply
- The site is too small
- The coast is eroding
- The AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) will be significantly compromised
- An SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) will likewise be threatened
- There is no coherent transport strategy
- 12 million tonnes of aggregate will be transported from one side of the UK to the other, mostly by road
- The construction phase will lead to 24/7 light, noise and air pollution
- The health impacts are unknown and no quantification by the Applicant
- There is no viable potable water strategy
- The construction phase of a £23bn plant will rely on tankered water supplies followed by a desalination plant with no fall-back strategy in the event of the desalination plant failing
- There is no guaranteed and identified long-term potable water supply for the plan
- Desalination technology has already been dismissed as inappropriate by the Applicant
- The desalination plant will add to the marine impact of the plant and to air pollution
- The cooling seawater system will devastate fish populations in the Sizewell Bay
- There are serious uncertainties about the long-term stability of the geomorphology of the East Suffolk coast
- Climate change predictions leave coastal developments vulnerable to more extreme weather events, storm surges and accelerating erosion.

Following a request by the Planning Inspectorate, the Secretary of State for BEIS, Kwasi Kwarteng MP, has granted an extension to enable a recommendation to be returned to him by 27 February 2022.

The Government has recently announced a £100 million ‘sweetener’ to incentivise further external investment in Sizewell to replace the Chinese 20% stake.

**Bradwell B:** Theoretically a partnership between CGN (China General Nuclear Power Group) and EDF. The proposal requires the granting a development consent order. This will then be subject to a lengthy Examination by the Planning Inspectorate, during which residents, local groups and Councils can submit comments and objections.

On the Bradwell B website, the applicant concedes that ‘We are still in the early stages of developing proposals for Bradwell B, and as such do not expect to be in a position to submit an application for a while yet.’

The Generic Design Assessment for the Chinese HPR100 type reactor is expected to be completed early this year [since approved].

**Small Modular Reactors**

The NFLA has issued press releases countering recent claims made by the Liberal Democrat MP for Caithness, Jaime Stone, and the Plaid Cymru Leader of Ynys Mon Council, Councillor Llinos Medi, that small modular reactors would both a jobs panacea for their areas and a ‘green’ power source to address climate change.

Both politicians are out of sync with their own parties' positions – the Liberal Democrat Conference voted to oppose new nuclear requiring public subsidy and Plaid is opposed to civil nuclear power in Wales. In the meantime, the Conservative MP for Ynys Mon, Virginia Crosbie, continues to make a nuisance of herself agitating for new nuclear. The self-proclaimed ‘Atomic Kitten’ is particularly keen to bring new projects to her own constituency, the so-called ‘energy island’ of Anglesey.

The two former Welsh nuclear power sites at Trawsfynydd and Wylfa are expected to be earmarked for new SMRs as part of a bid by a consortium led by Rolls-Royce to build five £2bn small modular reactors by 2031.

In November, the UK government pledged £210 million of public money towards the development of the Rolls-Royce SMR, amidst claims that it is also backed by £250 million in private investment, including a reported £85m from the Qatar Investment Authority and support from France’s wealthy Perrodo family.

Rolls-Royce has just written to several of England’s regional development bodies and the Welsh government asking them to bid to host the factory to build SMRs. They expect to decide on where to locate the factory this year and to start construction soon after.
The £200m main factory will build some of the key components of the reactors which will then be assembled at sites around the UK. The letter from Rolls-Royce promises 200 “high value, sustainable jobs which will produce products that will be exported globally for many decades to come”. It also seeks “financial and non-financial support” from the host.\textsuperscript{vii}

At Wylfa, Bechtel and Shearwater Energy unveiled details of their plans for new nuclear on the site during a Welsh Affairs Committee evidence session.

Bechtel claims that its funding model for the proposed Wylfa Newydd nuclear power plant could provide an alternative to the previous developer-led approach to nuclear projects, while Shearwater proposes trialling 12 77Mw reactors on the Magnox site and has nearly completed a feasibility study.\textsuperscript{viii}

In December, Sheffield specialist steel makers, Forgemasters, which has been strategically renationalised, was awarded a £3.7 million contract with Rolls Royce to make parts for the SMRs.\textsuperscript{ix}

**Fusion Reactors**

In 2019, the UK Government committed £220M to the conceptual design of a fusion power station – the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) - in the hope that a commercially-viable plant can be established by 2040.\textsuperscript{x}

The government is now looking at five potential locations to build a prototype fusion power plant: these are Ardeer, near Stevenston, on the Ayrshire coast; Goole in Yorkshire; Moorside in Cumbria; Ratcliffe-on-Soar in Nottinghamshire; and Severn Edge in Gloucestershire. Inspectors will make the final site recommendation to the UK Government's Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy in the spring.

In December 2021, NFLA responded to a public consultation by the Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy over the regulatory framework that will be applied to new fusion reactors. \textsuperscript{xi} We opposed government proposals that fusion reactors be excluded from rigorous regulations applicable to nuclear installations, calling for ‘no watering down’ of safety provisions, and identified the risks attendant to fusion.

**Nuclear in Space**

Not a nuclear power station as such, but a nuclear power project none the less.

In January, Rolls Royce announced they have signed a contract with UK Space Agency to explore the use of nuclear power in space and moved a project team into Space Park Leicester. This £100 million facility brings industry and academics together to collaborate on space projects. Rolls-Royce is apparently the only UK company engaged on this work.\textsuperscript{xii}

**Existing nuclear power stations**

Following EDF executive, board, and shareholders’ meetings on 13 and 14 December 2021, it was announced that generation at the Heysham 2, Lancashire and Torness, East Lothian AGR (Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactor) plants would cease two years earlier than expected on 31 March 2028.
Generation ceased one year early at the final AGR reactor at Hunterston B on 7 January 2022.

In July 2022, EDF’s Hinkley Point B power plant will also finally cease operations. In 2016, EDF received regulatory approval to continue operations at the company’s AGR plants until 2030 but increasing instances of cracks in the graphite cores of these reactor have forced the company to accelerate its closure programme. Concerns about plant safety being compromised by graphite cracking were first raised by nuclear consultant John Large in June 2006:


and these concerns were echoed in an NFLA Briefing 164 published in October 2017:


The revised schedule of AGR planned closures and dates for statutory outages, where plants are temporarily taken off-line to facilitate inspection, are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant</th>
<th>Reactor</th>
<th>Planned Closure</th>
<th>Statutory Outages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hinkley Point B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>July 2022</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>July 2022</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartlepool</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td>Jan 2022 (Now)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td>Jan 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heysham 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td>April 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td>March 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heysham 2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>March 2028</td>
<td>May 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 2028</td>
<td>March 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>March 2028</td>
<td>March 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>March 2028</td>
<td>May 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: https://www.edfenergy.com/energy/power-station/daily-statuses

The statutory outages may represent opportunities for NFLA to press for earlier closure if further significant cracking is found.

**Radioactive Waste**

**Geological Disposal Facility**

**Hartlepool, County Durham:** There has been a significant political fallout over the proposal to bring a GDF to the town.

The GDF proposal was first publicly backed by local charity, The Wharton Trust. The Conservative Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen, new Conservative Hartlepool MP Jill Mortimer, and the Independent Council Leader Shane Moore have all expressed opposition to the plan. Houchen and Moore claimed to have no advanced knowledge of the proposals, yet Conservative Deputy Leader and Mayor Cllr Mike Young resigned his positions after admitting he had arranged meetings between Council officials, RWM and The Wharton Trust.
To deflect attention, Houchen accused the Labour Council Group of conspiring secretly with The Wharton Trust, something they strongly denied and appears unlikely as in 2019, the then-Labour controlled Council rejected a GDF outright on principal.

Given the level of cross-party opposition to a GDF in Hartlepool, this looks like a dead duck. The current Independent-led administration at Hartlepool Council is not however anti-nuclear – Cllr Moore has called for a replacement nuclear reactor once the current Hartlepool plant closes. xiii

Threddlethorpe, Lincolnshire: A small village located near the popular seaside resort of Mablethorpe, the focus has been upon the suitability of the former Threddlethorpe Gas Terminal Site, now owned by National Grid, and the surrounding area located within the administrative boundaries of East Lindsey District Council, including the adjacent inshore area up to 22kms off the coast.

The local parish council, East Lindsey District Council and Lincolnshire County Council have all expressed support for the proposal, and a working party has been formed:

- Jon Collins – Independent Chair
- Victoria McCusker – Independent Facilitator (from company Facilitating Change)
- Radioactive Waste Management
- Lincolnshire County Council
- East Lindsey District Council
- Theddlethorpe Parish Council

However there is a very active and vocal residents’ opposition group which has mobilised – Guardians of the East Coast - who are citing the unsuitability of the site, the lack of the necessary infrastructure, the impact on tourism (there is a Haven holiday park 200 metres away), and a prior promise made to return the gas terminal site to agricultural use once operations ceased.

https://theddlethorpe.workinginpartnership.org.uk/
https://www.gotec.org.uk/

An email has been sent to GOTEC requesting an online meeting.

Allerdale, West Cumbria: Formed in January 2022, the Allerdale GDF Community Partnership will focus its engagement activities in a 320 sq km search area covering 13 electoral wards: Aspatria; Broughton St Bridgets; Dalton; Ellen & Gilcrux; Flimby; Harrington & Salterbeck; Maryport North; Maryport South; Moorclose & Moss Bay; Seaton & Northside; St John’s; St Michael’s and Stainburn & Clifton.

The initial Allerdale GDF Community Partnership comprises Interim Chair Mary Bradley (Councillor, Broughton Council) and:

- Cllr Marion Fitzgerald, Allerdale Borough Council
- Gordon Grant, Radioactive Waste Management
- Chris Shaw, Cumbria Association of Local Councils
- Suzanne Caldwell, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce
- Deborah Naylor, Inspira
All is not well in Allerdale as Allerdale Borough Councillor Ian Greaney said: "I just don’t feel the process has been done correctly". The councillor for Maryport North, representing Allerdale Independents, proposed a vote at full council in 2021 to withdraw from the process.¹⁴

[https://allerdale.workinginpartnership.org.uk/](https://allerdale.workinginpartnership.org.uk/)

**Mid-Copeland, West Cumbria:** Formed in November 2021, the Mid-Copeland GDF Community Partnership will focus on the electoral wards of Gosforth & Seascale and Beckermet.

Initial membership comprises Interim Chair Mark Cullinan and:

- Cllr David Moore, Copeland Borough Council, who is also Nuclear portfolio holder on the Council and active in Nuleaf
- Gillian Johnstone, Radioactive Waste Management
- Andy Pratt, Cumbria Association of Local Councils
- Cllr Bob Jones, Chair, Ponsonby Parish Council
- Cllr Julie Nugent, Chair, Beckermet with Thornhill Parish Council
- Cllr David Halliday, Chair, Seascale Parish Council
- Cllr Mark Fussell, Gosforth Parish Council
- Cllr John Jennings, Chair, Drigg and Carlton Parish Council

[https://midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/](https://midcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/)

**South-Copeland, West Cumbria:** Formed in December 2021, South Copeland GDF Community Partnership will now focus further engagement activities in a search area covering the electoral wards of Millom and Black Combe & Scafell.

The initial South Copeland GDF Community Partnership comprises Interim Chair Mark Cullinan and unknown representatives from:

- Copeland Borough Council
- Radioactive Waste Management
- Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC)

[https://southcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/](https://southcopeland.workinginpartnership.org.uk/)

The Cumbria investigative sites exclude the Lake District National Park and any former or future coal mining sites but include looking at a possible off-shore facility under the Irish Sea up to 22kms from the coast as well as an on-shore facilities. Offshore surveys will take place over the summer of 2022.

Community groups within the areas covered by a Community Partnership can now apply for funding from a £1 million Community Investment Fund establish in each area. Detractors might label this a bribe!
Political

UK Government

National Security and Investment Act

Described as the ‘biggest shake-up of the UK’s national security regime for 20 years’, this act came into force on 4 Jan 2022. The act permits the government to scrutinise and intervene in certain acquisitions made by anyone, including businesses and investors, that could harm the UK’s national security. The government will also be able to impose certain conditions on an acquisition or, if necessary, unwind or block it.xv

There is no doubt that one of the primary drivers behind the legislation is to prevent Chinese investment in critical national infrastructure. One of those sectors which will be most affected will be new civil nuclear power projects, where until UK Government statements grew more hostile, the Chinese were a key player. CGN owns 66.5% of the Bradwell B projectxvi and a 20% stake in Sizewell C. The government is now looking to offload the CGN Sizewell stake to institutional investors or even the public and find a new partner for Bradwell (assuming either goes ahead). xvii

Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill

The Government-backed bill secured majority support on 10th Jan of its Third Reading in the House of Commons and has now been sent to the Lords. The Bill would apply a different funding mechanism to nuclear infrastructure project by applying a Regulated Asset Base which ‘allows a company to charge consumers to construct and operate new infrastructure projects.’

NFLA has been consistently opposed to the Bill as it will require consumers to pay a surcharge on their electricity bills to finance the construction of new nuclear power plants, including meeting any cost overruns and so remove financial risk from a constructor or indeed provide them with any incentive to manage costs (i.e. EDF).xviii, xix Consumers would also be saddled with the abortive costs of abandoned projects and with the massive subsidy provided to the operator (i.e. EDF) in the form of an inflated strike price for electricity purchased for a nuclear plant.

Ofgem Price Cap Rise

In April and October 2021, the government’s price cap for customers not under a default fixed price contract with an energy provider will increase to pre-pandemic levels to reflect the high wholesale price of gas or electricity. As a result of the failure of many small energy suppliers over recent months, the number of households covered by this price cap has risen to 22 million from 15 million since August 2021. There is an increasing fear that more households will be pushed into fuel poverty. Standard variable tariffs are capped at £1,277 a year for a typical household until April and from October similar bills are expected to rise to £2,400 a year.xx Bills will rise still further when the government’s ‘nuclear tax’ from the Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill kicks in.
**European Union**

**Taxonomy**

Under proposed new European Union ‘taxonomy’ rules, nuclear and gas would be classed as ‘sustainable’ fuels meaning new developments of power plants using these energy sources would be subject to more favourable treatment for tax and could also attract substantial investment from European Union structural funds.

The EU Commission’s new position is totally at odds with a previous statement made only seven months ago by EU Commissioner Gabriel that “the Commission has recently proposed that the construction and operation of nuclear power plants should be excluded from EU financial instruments such as InvestEU or through the European Regional Development Fund.”

The new rules are incredibly controversial and have set state against state, as for example Germany, which is rapidly abandoning nuclear, being in opposition to the plans, whilst nuclear-dependent France is a proponent.

Although the majority of the NFLA Councils are situated within the UK, and are therefore not directly by the EU proposals, our Republic of Ireland member councils remain within the European Union and there are worries similar rules could be introduced in the UK.

The NFLA has recently co-sponsored a letter with our partners in CNFE (Cities for a Nuclear-Free Europe) to EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen calling for the abandonment of the proposals and more support for renewables.\(^{xxi}\)

**CNFE (Cities for a Nuclear-Free Europe)**

The NFLA Secretary had a recent online meeting with the Chair and Secretary of CNFE. CNFE is based in Vienna, Austria. They are willing to arrange a face-to-face meeting with Viennese city officials and to arrange a visit to renewable energy sites in the city for NFLA colleagues if any are travelling to the city in March 2022 (or later if postponed).

**Commercial and Statutory**

**EDF**

Investors in EDF, most especially the French state and taxpayer which owns 83%, have experienced a torrid time in recent weeks. Stock has fallen from a pre-Christmas peak of €13 per share down to near €8 (a 40% drop at the time of writing); something the French magazine Capital called ‘a descent into hell’.\(^{xxi}\)

Five out of EDF’s 56 reactors have been unexpectedly halted for checks and repairs related to corrosion and cracks on reactor pipes in a key safety system. Other plants are undergoing upgrade works to extend their operational lifetimes. Consequently, EDF’s nuclear output, which peaked at 430 terawatt-hours in 2005 will drop to between 300 and 330 terawatt-hours in 2022. Five out of EDF’s 56 reactors have been unexpectedly halted for checks and repairs related to corrosion and cracks on pipes in a key safety system. Other plants are undergoing upgrade works to extend their operational lifetimes.\(^{xxiii}\)
French electricity imports rose as high as 13 gigawatts, about 15% of peak demand, according to Enappsys. The British Isles has typically imported power from France through two huge cables running under the English Channel. This winter, the reverse has been true, with the U.K. often exporting to France at peak times. Electricity prices have risen four-fold because of the crisis.

Faced with re-election in April, on January 14, President Macron and the French Government announced the introduction of ‘exceptional measures’ intended to cushion French consumers from excessive electricity price rises at the expense of their energy supplier. As EDF is the supplier of a great many French consumers, it is estimated that the measures could adversely impact the company’s profits by up to €7.7 billion. In recent years, EDF has been hit by a series of disastrous financial setbacks, many related to the woeful failure of the EPR, and it is €41 billion in debt.xxiv

The Oiikilouto-3 EPR was commissioned by the Finns from contractor, Areva, for a fixed price of €3 billion, with the burden of cost overruns falling on the contractor. In 2018, TVO the operator received compensation of €450 million for delays and lost income from Areva after a six-year dispute taken through the International Court of Arbitration. The cost of Oiikilouto-3 is estimated to have risen four-fold to €11 Billion split between the constructor and operator.xxv As Areva was taken over as a subsidiary by EDF in 2015, becoming Framatome, this has hit the French company’s bottom line hard.

The budget for Flamaville-3 has also over the years risen exponentially. At commencement of the project, EDF estimated the cost at €3.3 billionxxvi, but the latest cost estimate had risen almost six-fold to €19.1 billion in July 2020, but that was based on a completion date for the end of 2022. xxviiThe commencement date is now one year later.

The big unknown is of course the financial ‘hit’ that Framatome, and therefore EDF, will ultimately take because of the Taishan-1 accident.

The British Government appears to be coming to the rescue of EDF over the finances of its UK operations as the passage of Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill will provide succour to the company.

**NDA**

The NDA has been restructured and new staff appointments made.

The NDA now has four so-called pillars: Sellafield, Magnox with Dounreay, a merged Nuclear Transport Services division (sea-rail-air) and a new merged waste division.

Jamie Reed has been appointed as the NDA’s first Director of Social Impact, tasked with taking forward the organisation’s social impact programme across all its sites. Mr Reed previously has served as Labour MP for Copeland and has also worked as Sellafield’s Director of Corporate Affairs. Dr. Samantha Harris has been appointed as the NDA’s Head of Government Relations. Jonathan Jenkin has taken up a 2-year secondment to work on nuclear policy for BEIS. He has been replaced by Simon Napper, who worked previously at RWM. Kelly Anderson has left the NDA to work for RWM with West Cumbrian authorities.
A hornets’ nest has been stirred up by the November publication of new ‘Good Practice Guidelines for Site Stakeholder Groups’ produced by the NYPF (Nuclear Young Professionals Forum) and published by the SDF (the Nuclear Industry Safety Directors’ Forum).

The NFLA was invited by the NDA to respond to a consultation on them. We responded by giving them a ‘cautious welcome’ as they addressed many of the improvements the NFLA had sought after publishing a critical report in 2017, but we also proposed more radical changes to democratise SSGs and make them more inclusive.

For their part, the NDA’s Head of Stakeholder Engagement, John McNamara, and the Chairs of the SSG Forums network rejected the NYPF proposals out of hand before the consultation had even ended.

This story has recently been covered by The Ferret and Scottish newspaper The National.

The NFLA is about to respond to the consultation called on the draft Business Plan published by the NDA. Our comments focus on our core concerns

- Safety when decommissioning sites and transporting, storing and managing nuclear waste.
- Using new technology, especially in the field of robotics, to improve efficiency and safety.
- Employing local people and contractors on decommissioning work to mitigate the loss of employment and income to a nuclear dependent community
- Establishing effective mechanisms to enable local elected members, interest groups, and the public to scrutinise and challenge decommissioning operations
- Sustainability in current and future operations, including using ‘de-designated’ land to generate on-site power using truly green renewable energy technologies, such as solar, wind, green hydrogen, and tidal.

**Nuleaf**

At its meeting in Dec, Nuleaf agreed to hold:

- An online annual meeting on nuclear Emergency Planning with elected members, Emergency Planning Officers from Nuleaf member authorities, representatives of the Local Authority Nuclear Working Group, which represents local authorities on nuclear emergency planning, the ONR, BEIS, NDA, Health and Safety Executive and the Ministry of Defence. NFLA Vice Chair and the Secretary also requested the participation of the Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

- Adhoc meetings on Regional Energy and Net Zero Plans for elected members and officers with invitations extended to BEIS, the Welsh Government, NDA, representatives of regional energy and infrastructure bodies such as Britain’s Energy Coast, North Wales Growth Deal, NW Nuclear Arc and Local Energy East, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and universities/colleges.

Nuleaf has also established a sub-group to examine the social value that can be derived from decommissioning activities. It will be interesting to see, and comment upon, the findings in due course.
Renewable technologies and climate emergency

ScotWind

In January 2022, an exercise conducted by the Crown Estate Scotland, which manages the country’s coastline and sea-beds, led to 17 leases being granted to commercial operators for offshore wind projects. Called ScotWind, this will release £700 million in fees for public spending in Scotland.

The capacity of the proposed facilities amounts to 25 GW. To put that figure into some sort of context, trade association RenewableUK says the U.K.’s operational capacity for offshore wind stands at just over 10.5 GW and the output of the Hinkley Point C facility (if finished) will be 3.2 GW.

Two interesting elements of the bids are that firstly much of the output will be from floating offshore wind turbines generating 15 GW, a first for the UK, and the second is that one of the bidders includes the community energy co-operative Energy4All as a partner.

Perpetuus Tidal Energy Centre, Isle of Wight

Planning permission has now been granted by the IOW Council for a sub-station to be constructed near Ventnor to support the development of England’s first multi-megawatt tidal stream power generation project. The project will deploy Orbital Marine Power’s O2 turbine. Onshore construction work is anticipated to commence in 2023, for completion by 2025. Tidal power received a (small) UK Government boost with an announcement in November 2021 that it will provide £20 million per year in funding through the next Contracts for Difference (CfD) round.

‘Gigafactory’ Car Battery Plant, Blyth

Britishvolt is to receive £100m of UK government finance to build an electric car battery ‘gigafactory’ near Blyth bringing up to 3,000 jobs to the North East by 2028.

The government’s Automotive Transformation Fund will invest alongside asset management company Abrdn and its majority-owned property investment arm, Tritax, to fund a sale and leaseback deal for the huge building that will house the electric car battery factory, near Blyth in Northumberland.

Mayors for Peace

At the forthcoming First Meeting of the States Parties, it is hoped that a Board Meeting of the new European Chapter can be convened, at which lead cities in Europe, including Manchester, which holds a Vice-Presidency in Mayors for Peace, can sign a Founding Document. There are also plans for the Mayor of Hiroshima to host an Executive Committee meeting of lead cities in Vienna.

The Mayors for Peace Secretariat has plans to hold a General Conference for members of Mayors for Peace in Hiroshima, Japan in August 2022. As host to the secretariat of the UK / Ireland Chapter, and as a Vice-Presidential and Executive city, it has been customary for Manchester to attend these in person.
This conference has been held over since 2020, when the original intention was to host this on the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The 2022 conference will mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Mayors for Peace.

The Secretary of the UK / Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter was one of the speakers at the Peace, Climate Action and Nuclear Abolition Intergeneration Forum organised by PNND as part of the Basel Peace Forum on 19 January 2022. The secretary represented the European Chapter of Mayors for Peace and answered questions about the prospects for nuclear disarmament.

**Nuclear weapons**

**TPNW**

Nuclear campaigners around the world have been celebrating the first 'banniversary' of the TPNW (UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons) entering international law (22nd Jan 2021). To date, 86 states have signed the treaty and 59 have so far gone on to ratify their acceptance of it. Vienna will host the First Meeting of the States Parties to the treaty between 22-24 March (but this may yet be postponed because of COVID-19).

ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) is organising a series of events in Vienna for partner organisations around the conference.

The Secretary has been working with CND and Medact to create a database of Councils where groups or individuals are currently working with elected members on passing the Nuclear Ban Communities resolution in favour of the UK Government signing the TPNW. This will enable different groups to work together co-operatively to advance the campaign.

Twenty-four Councils at all levels, from parish upwards, have so far carried the resolution; a significant number are Mayors for Peace / NFLA members. The latest tally can be found at [https://cities.icanw.org/list_of_cities](https://cities.icanw.org/list_of_cities)

One of the ways the treaty is having an impact is by forcing the financial sector realise that investing in the companies behind nuclear weapons is not only bad business, but as an activity prohibited under international law.

In the Pax-ICAN report ‘Rejecting Risk: 101 policies against nuclear weapons’ published in January great progress is reported in international divestment from nuclear weapons. 59 global financial institutions representing $14,242 billion (or over £14 Trillion) have chosen to adopt policies preventing investment in nuclear weapons. These institutions are from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and the United States. 34
NPT

On January 3, the five nuclear weapons powers that are signatories to the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) – China, France, Russia, the UK and the USA – issued a joint statement in which they reaffirmed their conviction that ‘a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.’

This was on the eve of the Tenth Review Conference of states parties to the NPT which once again has been postponed on the grounds of COVID-19 from 4 - 28 January to 1 - 26 August.

CND (the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) has lodged a formal complaint to the UN over an alleged breach of the NPT by the UK. A legal opinion sought by CND confirms that the UK government’s decision announced in 2021 to increase the number of warheads in Britain’s nuclear arsenal by 40% represents a breach in law of the NPT and certainly breaches the commitment made to nuclear disarmament under Article VI. The complaint was backed by many thousands of signatories from UK citizens (including mine).

The UK appears to have further compounded its non-compliance with the NPT by agreeing under the AUKUS Pact to supply weapons-grade plutonium to Australia to power a new fleet of nuclear submarines. As the fuel supplied will clearly be for a military purpose, rather than a peaceful civilian use, this would appear a prime-facie breach of the international treaty.

Doomsday Clock

On 20 January, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists made their latest adjustment to the Doomsday Clock – it remained at 100 seconds to midnight – a situation described as ‘at doom’s doorstep’.

In reference to the two existential threats to our planet and humanity, the threat of nuclear annihilation and climate change stood out.

‘A more moderate and predictable approach...in US leadership alone was not enough to reverse negative international security trends that had been long in developing and continued across the threat horizon in 2021.

US relations with Russia and China remain tense, with all three countries engaged in an array of nuclear modernization and expansion efforts—including China’s apparent large-scale program to increase its deployment of silo-based long-range nuclear missiles; the push by Russia, China, and the United States to develop hypersonic missiles; and the continued testing of anti-satellite weapons by many nations. If not restrained, these efforts could mark the start of a dangerous new nuclear arms race.

Other nuclear concerns, including North Korea’s unconstrained nuclear and missile expansion and the (as yet) unsuccessful attempts to revive the Iran nuclear deal contribute to growing dangers. Ukraine remains a potential flashpoint, and Russian troop deployments to the Ukrainian border heighten day-to-day tensions.’
‘For many countries, a huge gap still exists between long-term greenhouse gas-reduction pledges and the near- and medium-term emission-reduction actions needed to achieve those goals. Although the new US administration’s quick return to the Paris Agreement speaks the right words, it has yet to be matched with actionable policies.’

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Comments and questions on the progress report were received from members as follows:

**New Nuclear**
Cllr Galsworthy – Ynys Mon Council Leader Medi in seeking nuclear for Anglesey is out of touch with policy of her party Plaid Cymru, which pledges to create a Welsh Energy Company dedicated to supplying the nation’s energy needs with 100% renewables not nuclear. An article quoting Cllr Galsworthy and referencing the NFLA view was recently featured in the North West Chronicle

Cllr Akker – The future position at Bradwell is unclear after the loss of Chinese investment. Maldon Council has started to push for an SMR from Rolls Royce and has some momentum. NFLA needs to counter this with a local event.

Pete Roche – Rolls Royce has written to Regional Development Agencies and Welsh Government for support to host new factory.

**Space**
Cllr Blackburn – We shall also be contacting the Deputy Mayor of Leicester.
Cllr Akker - recommended contacting the UCU at Leicester University for support.

**GDF**
Cllr Blackburn – Recommended speaking with Cllr Chaytor about event in East Yorkshire.

**Existing Nuclear**
Pete Roche – Finnish reactor start up further delayed until end of February. On the Hunterston closure, although the transfer of 480 jobs to decommissioning work has been highlighted there is no mention of the fate of the 250 contractors

*Agreed: The report was noted with thanks and the Secretary will take up any actions.*

5. **Forthcoming Events**
The Secretary reminded members about two events

Sat 19 Feb all day – ‘The 70-year hurricane: time to end the storm’ – An event featuring British nuclear test veterans in Manchester, organised by LABRATS. Speakers include Mayors for Peace Chapter Secretary.

The event can be attended in person by pre-booking or on line
https://www.labrats.international/2022seminar

Thursday 3 March 6.30-7.30pm – A joint webinar organized by NFLA, CND and Nukewatch, ‘Nuclear convoys: did you know that nuclear warheads could be driving through your town?’ Speakers include the NFLA Steering Committee Chair.

The link to register is here:
https://cnduk.org/events/nuclear-convoys-did-you-know-that-nuclear-warheads-could-be-driving-through-your-town/
Other events are being organised at this time.

Agreed: Members were urged to register for and attend the events and promote them.

6. Any Other Business
Cllr Newman asked for the Power Point presentation to be circulated to members.

Agreed: Secretary to incorporate Pete’s corrections and circulate.

4. Date of next Steering Committee meeting
After discussion it was agreed that the next meeting should be after the elections in late May.

Agreed: Secretary to canvass members to establish the most popular date.

The meeting ended at 11.45am.

The steering committee was immediately followed by the AGM

Key points from the NFLA Annual General Meeting:

- The NFLA AGM re-elected Councillor David Blackburn to be its Chair until its next AGM.
- The following documents were approved:
  - NFLA Secretary’s Annual Report.
  - NFLA Secretary’s Service Plan.
  - NFLA Secretary’s Work Plan.
  The Annual Report and Service Plan will be posted to the website.
- The NFLA Financial Report was postponed until all subscriptions were in and an end-of-year budget could be compiled. It was agreed not to increase membership fees.
- The Constitution and Individual Membership arrangements were reaffirmed.
- It was agreed that the 2022/3 AGM be held in December 2022.

Richard Outram,
NFLA Secretary
13/2/22