

REPORT to WCSSG Meeting of 01 October 2009:

The Environmental Health Sub-Committee (EHSC) of West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group held a public meeting at Cleator Moor Civic Hall on 28th May 2009. The main points covered were as follows.

- Mr Tim Parker presented Sellafield Limited's preliminary assessment of radioactive discharges and measurements of radioactivity in the environment. In 2008, a greater volume of reprocessing produced increases in some aerial discharges while others declined. Members of the public most affected by radioactivity on land are estimated to have received a radiation dose of about 16 microsieverts, down from 23 microsieverts in 2007.
- The group of members of the public identified as having very high seafood intake received a dose of about 205 microsieverts compared with 180 microsieverts in 2007. The increase is attributed to remobilisation of americium and plutonium deposited on the sea bed decades ago when discharges of those elements were much higher.
- All estimates of dose to members of the public in 2008 were small compared with the UK average dose from natural sources which is about 2,100 microsieverts.
- Professor Steve Jones reported the results of the 3rd Analysis of the National Registry for Radiation Workers, recently published in the British Journal of Cancer. The analysis used dose and health records of 175,000 radiation workers to estimate risks of radiation exposure. It's important findings provide independent support for the standard risk estimates used to frame legal controls for radiation exposure. The standard risk estimates are based mainly on studies of atomic bomb survivors.
- Mr Tim Parker presented an update on Sellafield Limited's beach monitoring programme. The 2008/09 programme of monitoring at Sellafield and Braystones was completed successfully. The number of particles found per hectare was generally lower than in the previous year. On the basis of the earlier higher frequency of finds, the Health Protection Agency considered that no special precautionary actions were necessary regarding access to or use of these beaches and this advice still stands.
- The beach monitoring programme for 2009/10 plans to cover 250 hectares of beaches at St Bees, Braystones, Sellafield, Seascale, Drigg and Silecroft, focussing on finds which are rich in alpha particle emissions (as these are more significant from a health standpoint). The ability of detection equipment to find alpha-rich emitters is to be upgraded. As details of finds become available, they are posted at <http://www.sellafieldsites.com/page/what-we-do/case-studies/beach-monitoring>
- Professor John Haywood reported comment of the Chairman of The Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) on a German study (KiKK) which found that childhood leukaemia risk close to German nuclear power stations was higher than further away. A reanalysis of the much larger UK childhood cancer database of COMARE's 10th report did not support the German finding. [COMARE has since formed a subgroup to consider the KiKK study further].

Professor John Haywood, Chairman