

**Environmental Health Subcommittee of West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group**  
**75<sup>th</sup> Meeting 26 May 2011, Civic Hall, Cleator Moor**  
**Press Release**

The Environmental Health Sub-Committee (EHSC) of West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group held its 75<sup>th</sup> meeting in public at Cleator Moor Civic Hall on 26th May 2011.

Mr Jim Desmond (Sellafield Limited) presented SL's preliminary assessment of radioactive discharges and measurements of radioactivity in the environment for calendar year 2010. The SL monitoring programme indicated a radiation dose of about 9 microsieverts for members of the public (infants) most affected by radioactivity on land. The comparable estimate for 2009 was 11 microsieverts. Both of these estimates are subject to a further small contribution based on Food Standards Agency measurements which are not part of the SL programme.

The dose received by a group of members of the public having very high seafood intake is estimated as about 168 microsieverts compared with 158 microsieverts in 2009. The increase was driven by activities of actinides in winkles and mussels which can arise from redistribution of sediments.

All doses to members of the public in 2010 were small compared with the UK average dose from natural sources which is about 2,100 microsieverts.

Professor Steve Jones summarised the recently published report of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE): *Further consideration of the incidence of childhood leukaemia around nuclear power plants in Great Britain*. COMARE found no reason to change its previous advice that there is no evidence to support the view that there is an increased risk of childhood leukaemia and other cancers in the vicinity of nuclear power plants due to radiation effects. The exclusion of Calder Hall from the nuclear power plants studied by the report has been criticised. However, COMARE stated clearly the reasons for this exclusion and a further update is planned on the known excess of childhood leukaemia near the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing site (adjacent to Calder Hall).

The Chairman gave a brief appreciation of studies of leukaemia near German nuclear power plants including the KiKK study which prompted COMARE's report. It appears that the incidence of leukaemia in under-fives near specific locations in Germany has been higher than expected. Some of these locations were nuclear power plants (NPPs) and some were not. The latter observation weakens the theory that observed rates of childhood leukaemia arise from low level radiation and strengthens some of the theories in which infection plays a role. The KiKK study is not effective in discriminating among the different theories because it considered only the nuclear power plant locations.

Mr Jim Desmond presented an update on Sellafield Limited's beach monitoring programme. 319 hectares of beach were monitored, finding 348 particles and 35 stones (larger than 2mm), mostly on Sellafield and Braystones beaches. The Health Protection Agency have published a comprehensive risk assessment at

[www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb\\_C/1296685585268](http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1296685585268)

and HPA has renewed its advice that no special precautionary actions are necessary regarding access to, or use of these beaches. As details of finds become available, they are posted at

[www.sellafieldsites.com/UserFiles/File/ehsq/Beach%20Monitoring%20Summary%202014-06-2010.pdf](http://www.sellafieldsites.com/UserFiles/File/ehsq/Beach%20Monitoring%20Summary%202014-06-2010.pdf)

**John Haywood, Chairman**

**Engaging with the Community**

**Chairman Cllr. David Moore Vice Chairman Cllr. Elaine Woodburn**  
**Secretary Shirley Williams**



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### **Note to Editors**

The Environmental Health Sub-Committee (EHSC) of the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group pays particular attention to the potential impact on human health of Sellafield and the National Low-Level Waste Site near Drigg.

EHSC receives reports relating to the effects on the environment of operations on those sites and evaluates any implications for the community.

Independent experts on EHSC cross-reference the Site Operator's environmental monitoring results with those of other sources in order to ensure that possible risks are not overlooked. Moreover, they can pursue enquiries directly with the Site Operator and Government bodies in a highly informed way. As a consequence, the concerns of the community are always taken to the right people. EHSC continues its enquiries until a resolution is secured.

Meetings are generally scheduled for the last Thursdays in May and November.  
Minutes are placed on the website at

[www.wcssg.co.uk/subcommittees/environmental-health-subcommittee](http://www.wcssg.co.uk/subcommittees/environmental-health-subcommittee)

## **Engaging with the Community**

**Chairman** Cllr. David Moore **Vice Chairman** Cllr. Elaine Woodburn  
**Secretary** Shirley Williams