

PRESS RELEASE:

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.

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. The number of particles found per hectare was generally lower than 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 comments of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) on a study which found raised rates of childhood leukaemia in the vicinity of German nuclear power stations. A reanalysis of the much larger UK childhood cancer database of COMARE's 10th report did not support the German finding.

Professor John Haywood, Chairman

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 <http://www.wcssg.co.uk/ehsc.htm>