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1.0 New Nuclear Monitor

1.1 At his 11th October press conference, Tony Blair called for an "open-minded" debate on nuclear power. He said concerns over possible fossil fuel shortages and global warming were "too strong for anybody reasonably to ignore". But the UK's targets for using more renewable sources, such as wind and wave power, were "very ambitious".¹ Earlier he told the Labour Conference the Government would publish proposals on energy policy in 2006. He said all options, including nuclear power, would be assessed for their contribution to tackling global warming and providing security of supply.² According to *The Business* newspaper (9th October) Blair has already made up his mind and expects the energy review to conclude that more nuclear energy is the only practical way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

1.2 The Cabinet committee on energy and environment, chaired by Blair, is believed to have met for the first time in September. The committee includes Margaret Beckett, Gordon Brown, thought to be worried about the high cost of nuclear technology, Alan Johnson, Jack Straw, Cabinet Office minister John Hutton, and Energy Minister Malcolm Wicks. The committee will set the framework for a review on whether new nuclear power stations are needed and decide whether a white paper on nuclear is required or simply one on energy in general.

1.3 According to *The Guardian* there are increasing signals that key cabinet ministers are determined to go ahead with nuclear power station construction. What is vital is that the government does not say it is consulting when it has already made up its mind.³

1.4 Trade Secretary, Alan Johnson, insisted at the Labour Conference that new stations are "not inevitable". The concerns about nuclear power when the 2003 energy White Paper was issued remain, he said, particularly in relation to waste disposal and economics. According to Jeremy Warner in *The Independent* the DTI has been ordered by Number 10 to conduct a fresh review of energy policy against its better judgement. The ink has barely dried on the previous White Paper, and Johnson fears that a new build programme will kill the Government's commitment to renewables at birth. Nobody would want to invest in renewables if they thought there was a new generation of nukes in the pipeline. Warner says the only way he can see of providing an incentive to the private sector to build new nuclear plants is to impose a further carbon-free

¹ BBC 11th October 2005 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4332176.stm

Blair's monthly press conference, 11 October 2005 <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page8294.asp>

² BBC 27th September 2005 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4287370.stm

³ Guardian Leader 1st October 2005

<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/green/comment/0,9236,1582571,00.html>

obligation on top of the renewables obligation.⁴ A 2002 Downing Street report said new nuclear stations yet not been financed anywhere with a liberalised electricity market. It is hard to resist the conclusion that funding new nuclear plants in the UK will require a partial reversal of liberalisation. This has already been done to encourage renewable energy, but would Blair ever dare rig the market in the same way for the nuclear industry?⁵

1.5 Energy Minister, Malcolm Wicks, said at a fringe meeting at the Labour conference organised by the nuclear industry that: "In principle, we can meet our climate-change targets without going down the nuclear road, although obviously it's more difficult." He said nuclear power "...would help us tackle our challenge of climate change, all things being equal. But there is no silver bullet."⁶ Some of his scheduled trips and interests seem to hint at which way the government is leaning. This month Mr Wicks will visit the US radioactive waste disposal facility at Yucca Mountain. He also says we can learn from France and Finland about the way public opinion has been engaged.⁷

1.6 The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee added fuel to the fire with its latest report which says that even if we reach renewable energy targets, the Government will need to encourage investment in other low carbon generating capacity, and in particular nuclear, to stand any chance of meeting its overall emissions target.⁸

1.7 The Liberal Democrats, on the other hand, say climate change targets can be met without resorting to nuclear power. Environment spokesman Norman Baker told the party's annual conference in Blackpool that carbon emissions could be cut by 60 per cent by 2050 using increased energy efficiency, renewables and a "limited" amount of clean coal technology.⁹ Environment Minister Elliot Morley also says clean coal may be a cheaper way of reducing emissions than nuclear power which has problems which "are not really resolved yet."¹⁰

1.8 Blair could face a backbench rebellion on new nuclear power stations, according to a survey by MORI, which surveyed MPs from all parties on behalf of the nuclear industry. 45 per cent of the parliamentary Labour Party is against the construction of new nuclear plants. The research also found that 45 per cent of MPs are in favour of new plants, and 41 per cent are opposed. MORI quizzed nearly 100 MPs, including ministers, members of the shadow cabinet and the new intake over the summer.¹¹ Yet only 41 Labour MPs have signed Early Day Motion No.57 on Climate Policy and which opposes new nuclear stations.

⁴ Jeremy Warner's Outlook Independent 13th October 2005

<http://news.independent.co.uk/business/comment/article319184.ece>

⁵ FT Editorial 29th September 2005

<http://news.ft.com/cms/s/8bb5c11a-3086-11da-ba9f-00000e2511c8.html>

⁶ Minister gives strong hint in favour of nuclear power, Scotsman 28th September 2005.

<http://news.scotsman.com/politics.cfm?id=2004562005>

⁷ Energy Minister gets ready to feel the heat, FT 5th September 2005

<http://news.ft.com/cms/s/865e9f56-1da9-11da-b40b-00000e2511c8.html>

⁸ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmpubacc/413/41302.htm>

⁹ Nuclear Power5 building must end, BBC 21st September 2005,

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4267306.stm

¹⁰ U.K. Favors 'Clean' Fossil Fuel Over Nuclear Power, Morley Says, Bloomberg 26th September 2005

http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000102&sid=aEjbn_EDKdMs&refer=uk%20

¹¹ ePoilitix 5th October 2005

<http://www.epoilitix.com/EN/News/200510/d9ddb9bf-61cf-4ea9-8589-1894f2bc98b0.htm>

FT 5th October 2005

<http://news.ft.com/cms/s/07e7fb16-353e-11da-9e12-00000e2511c8.html>

1.9 Malcolm Wicks says if more nuclear stations are built, they will have to do without direct government subsidy.¹² But since the summer, meetings have taken place between Britain's Department of Trade & Industry and some of Europe's largest energy companies about a new nuclear build programme. Those involved include Electricité de France (EdF) and Germany's Eon and RWE, which already trade in the UK electricity markets as Powergen and npower. E.ON is also considering buying Scottish Power. The nuclear industry is willing to proceed without any government money on three conditions: that it is supported with planning applications; helped with nuclear waste disposal; and offered protection against an energy price crash. Research conducted by the DTI has identified three potential sites to host the first new nuclear reactor: Hinkley in Somerset, Sizewell in Suffolk and Hunterston.¹³ Scottish and Southern has also been mentioned as making attempts to create a consortium of UK utility companies that could pool together to finance new nuclear plants.¹⁴

1.10 British Energy (BE) Chief Executive, Bill Coley, says Blair must give the go-ahead for new nuclear stations by the end of next year if the Government is to meet its climate-change targets. BE wants to earn the right to be involved in building new stations. This is despite the fact that Coley said in July he was trying "not to be distracted" by possible government plans for new nuclear power stations, and would instead focus on extending the lifespan of existing plants. Coley insisted he was not even lobbying the government to make a decision.¹⁵

1.11 John McTernan, Blair's director of political operations, caused a storm when it was revealed that he had told Labour officials at a secret meeting at the Scottish Executive headquarters that building a new nuclear power station at Dounreay would be the ideal way of undermining their Liberal Democrat coalition colleagues in the run-up to the 2007 Holyrood elections. He later claimed it was a joke.¹⁶ The row forced the First Minister to say the option of more nuclear plants should be left open, but Jack McConnell reiterated that there could be no approval until the problems of disposing of nuclear waste are solved, and even then, the question of locating new plants in Scotland would be open to mature debate.¹⁷

1.12 Sir Digby Jones of the CBI has been expressing fears that power supplies to industry could be disrupted this winter. There are predictions of a severe winter and stores in the UK only contain sufficient supplies for 11 days. Ministers contest the CBI's assessment, and this problem will be overcome within a couple of years. New nuclear stations can be no help with this short-term problem. It would take until at least around 2018-2020 before new nuclear capacity could come on stream. But as existing nuclear power stations close down, much of the UK's coal capacity will also have to close down, partly because of age and partly because of EC Directives. By 2020 the UK may be much more reliant on imported gas. This need not be a problem. (See New Nuclear Monitor No. 8 page 6). As some commentators have pointed out, we should be

¹² A Nuclear future fuelled by government subsidy ruled out, FT, 29th September 2005, <http://news.ft.com/cms/s/3899ad7e-3087-11da-ba9f-00000e2511c8.html>

¹³ Evening Standard 7th October 2005
http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/news/article.html?in_article_id=404183&in_page_id=2
Scotsman 8th October 2005
<http://business.scotsman.com/utilities.cfm?id=2057502005>

The Business 9th October 2005

¹⁴ Scotland on Sunday 2nd October 2005 <http://business.scotsman.com/utilities.cfm?id=2024132005>

¹⁵ See <http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/>

¹⁶ Sunday Herald 2nd October 2005

<http://www.sundayherald.com/52110>

Aberdeen Press & Journal 3rd October 2005

<http://www.thisisnorthscotland.co.uk/displayNode.jsp?nodeId=149664&command=displayContent&sourceNode=149490&contentPK=13255156>

¹⁷ BBC 3rd October 2005 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/4305690.stm>

looking at the problem from the other end and rather than assuming supplies of energy have to increase to meet demand we should be aiming to dramatically improve energy efficiency.

1.13 According to one letter in the Scotsman, by the time Hunterston B (1,190 MW) closes in 2011 there will be almost 1,900 MW of additional power capacity available in Scotland. The modernised Peterhead gas/oil-fired power station has a further 821MW that could be made available if the east-coast grid was strengthened. A 350MW prototype carbon-free hydrogen-fired power station at Peterhead is planned to be operational by 2009. There will also be a further 400 MW gas-fired station at Westfield, Fife, an upgraded 120 MW gas-fired station in Fife became operational in December 2004, and an additional 120 MW hydro capacity will be available by the winter of 2008, and we now have 50 MW of biomass and waste-fuelled power plants available.¹⁸

1.14 Apart from economics, the nuclear waste problem is also a major hurdle to a nuclear renaissance. Several pro-nuclear commentators, and the Government's Council for Science and Technology have mentioned recently that ten new nuclear plants would only add around 10% to the UK's volume of existing radioactive waste over a 60-year operating lifetime.¹⁹ Actually the volume of nuclear waste is less important than the level of hazard, so perhaps we should be looking at just the higher-level waste produced by a new reactor programme. From CoRWM's latest Radioactive Waste Inventory we can see that from existing reactors we'll get a total of 9,900m³ of packaged high level waste and spent fuel. But ten AP1000 reactors would leave us with a legacy of 31,900 m³ – an increase of over 300%.

1.15 The Irish Minister for the Environment, Dick Roche, has pledged that the Government will oppose any British proposals to build new nuclear power stations.²⁰

2.0 Sellafeld News

2.1 The Board of British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) has agreed to sell its decommissioning and clean-up subsidiary British Nuclear Group (BNG). This means that once Westinghouse has been sold, BNFL will more or less cease to exist.²¹ Around half the 8,000 workers at BNG are expected to lose their jobs when the company is sold. BNG wants to reopen THORP, but a new owner of the company may not want to take on the potential liabilities that might arise from another accident.

2.2 The Financial Times reported that the privatisation could face potentially insurmountable opposition. Brussels has yet to rule on whether the transfer of BNFL's liabilities to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority broke EU state aid rules. The government is optimistic the deal will be cleared. But an adverse ruling would scupper the BNG sale and raise a question mark over the government's nuclear strategy, which centres on ring-fencing historic liabilities to pave the way for the potential building of new nuclear stations. The NDA and NII are also understood to have warned the government the sale should not be finalised until the future of THORP has been resolved next year.²²

¹⁸ Bill Robertson Scotsman letters 25th October 2005

<http://thescotsmanscotsmans.com/letters.cfm?id=2140472005>

¹⁹ Guardian 1st October 2005

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/nuclear/article/0,2763,1582561,00.html?gusrc=rss>

Centre for Policy Studies, September 2005 <http://www.cps.org.uk/pdf/art/43.pdf>

Letter to FT 5th October 2005

<http://news.ft.com/cms/s/d21c78dc-353c-11da-9e12-00000e2511c8.html>

An Electricity Supply Strategy for the UK, CST, May 2005, page 7 para 26.

<http://www.cst.gov.uk/cst/reports/files/energy/report.pdf>

²⁰ RTE Online 19th October 2005 <http://www.rte.ie/news/2005/1019/sellafeld.html>

²¹ BNFL Board opts for sale of nuclear clean-up company, Times 30th September 2005

<http://business.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,9078-1804791,00.html>

²² FT 19th October 2005 <http://news.ft.com/cms/s/da204552-400b-11da-8394-00000e2511c8.html>

2.3 A freezer at Sellafield is packed with an expanding mountain of radioactive gulls. And no one has a clue what to do with them. BNFL employs sharpshooters to kill birds which land at Sellafield. The carcasses are designated low-level waste but can't be dumped at Drigg because they are putrescent. BNFL says they are in talks with the Environment Agency and NII about what to do with the frozen birds.²³

2.4 The Irish Parliament's Environment Committee visited Sellafield in September. The group includes Green Party TD Ciaran Cuffe who has called for the closure of the Sellafield. Meanwhile Local authorities from both sides of the Irish Border have established an all-Ireland forum of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities Network. Louth county councillor Michael O'Dowd said councils had a duty to protect their citizens. "We must lobby central Government to ensure robust emergency planning arrangements are in place to protect Ireland in the event of a nuclear accident overseas." Represented at the inaugural meeting were Louth County Council, Dundalk Town Council, South Dublin County Council, Dublin Regional Authority, Newry & Mourne District Council and Down District Council.

2.5 Up to a third of drums of vitrified high-level nuclear waste are not safe enough to go into a dump or be returned to their foreign owners, according to internal BNFL documents. The drums of glassified waste are produced in the Sellafield Vitrification Plant. As of January 2002, 519 drums had each been filled with about 400 kgs of waste glass for overseas customers. Out of 171 drums audited, 52 were found to be "non-compliant with the process specification."²⁴

2.6 A devastating "catalogue of dubious practices", including sabotage and safety measures based on "guesswork", at the Waste Vitrification Plant (WVP) is revealed in an internal report seen by *The Independent on Sunday*. The whistleblowing document says that the plant is "potentially dangerous" and is "becoming difficult to operate properly". The document is a shocking indictment of the £250m WVP. The report, recently compiled by a manager, says the problems at the plant are so great that the Government forced BNFL to call in its major competitor, the French firm Cogema, "to help address serious concerns about how WVP is run".²⁵

2.7 THORP has no chance of re-opening before March 2006. It was closed last April after the discovery of a spillage of 22 tonnes of radioactive liquor into a contained cell. BNG had said it hoped the plant would be running again by Christmas, but documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, show it is likely to stay shut until March at least. The plan for restarting reprocessing was to seal off one of a pair of tanks, with the faulty pipe, and just use the other tank. But the NII, which is due to complete a report into the accident later this month, is unlikely to approve this. The other option is to fully repair the fault, but this would take longer.²⁶

2.8 Irish Minister for the Environment, Dick Roche, says he received assurances from UK Trade Secretary Alan Johnson on a recent trip to London that Thorp would close by 2010.²⁷

²³ Independent on Sunday 11th September 2005 & Carlisle News and Star 12th September 2005
<http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/viewarticle.aspx?id=281383>

²⁴ Whitehaven News 15 September 2005
<http://www.whitehaven-news.co.uk/news/viewarticle.aspx?id=282142>

²⁵ Independent on Sunday 2nd October 2005
Sunday Sun (Newcastle) 9th October 2005
http://icnewcastle.icnetwork.co.uk/sundaysun/news/tm_objectid=16227496%26method=full%26siteid=50081%26headline=sellafield%2dbosses%2dslammed-name_page.html

²⁶ Whitehaven News, 6 October 2005
<http://www.whitehaven-news.co.uk/news/viewarticle.aspx?id=288883>

Independent on Sunday 16th October 2005

²⁷ Irish Examiner 20th October 2005 <http://www.online.ie/news/viewer.adp?article=3286802>

3.0 The Terrorism Threat

3.1 Detailed plans of Britain's most sensitive nuclear sites have been found in a car linked to one of the London bombers. The discovery raises the chilling prospect that terrorists were planning a terror attack on a major nuclear target. Photographs, slides, maps and detailed information about types of radioactive materials and where they are stored on sites such as Sellafield, Dounreay, and Sizewell were found. Details of the find emerged when anti-terrorist Police officers visited one of Britain's top nuclear experts. They told him sensitive material bearing his name had been found in the car of a woman connected to the July atrocities.²⁸ Sellafield bosses are investigating.

3.2 Armed guards have now been introduced at UK civil nuclear power stations, having previously been confined to Sellafield, Dounreay and other UKAEA sites. At Sizewell a controversy has arisen over claims that armed police have been operating outside of the perimeter fence alarming visitors to the beach. The Civil Nuclear Constabulary has refused to say whether the force has a "shoot to kill" policy.

3.3 Meanwhile the Sunday Mirror claimed that its reporter has shown how easy it is to get close to Dounreay. It described this as "a shocking security lapse".²⁹

4.0 Dounreay

4.1 The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has taken action against Dounreay after a week-long audit in June, found 28 breaches of regulations relating to the authorisation to discharge gaseous radioactive waste. SEPA uncovered a series of problems in the plant's arrangements for discharging radioactive dust and gases. Pollution levels were higher than normal, because contamination that had built up inside ducts and chimneys became dislodged. The agency also reported problems with early warning monitoring equipment that assesses the environmental impact of the radioactive waste. Enforcement action also has been taken in connection with particles leaking on to the foreshore and the failure of sampling equipment after maintenance.³⁰

4.2 The Dounreay cementation plant was closed after a batch of hazardous dissolved spent fuel spilled on to a floor in September. The incident was contained within the cell and no one had been harmed or exposed to radioactive material. But the leak was a "setback" to the decommissioning of Dounreay, for which the cementation plant plays a key role.³¹

4.3 Later in September there was a second accident and fears that eight workers may have inhaled plutonium. They were dismantling a laboratory which is being decommissioned. Colin Punler said: "The more you take it apart, the greater the hazard becomes. It is proving to be a difficult job and a dirty job."³²

4.4 Work could start within the next year to deal with the notorious Dounreay shaft. The shaft was used to dispose of a cocktail of radioactive and other material from the 1950s until an explosion

²⁸ Sunday Mirror 16th October 2005

http://www.sundaymirror.co.uk/news/tm_objectid=16254342%26method=full%26siteid=62484%26headline=nuke%2dbomb%2d%2dplot%2d-name_page.html

²⁹ Sunday Mirror 16th October 2005

http://www.sundaymirror.co.uk/news/tm_objectid=16254346%26method=full%26siteid=62484%26headline=exclusive%2d%2dwe%2dget%2dwithin%2d100ft%2dof%2da%2ddeadly%2dreactor-name_page.html

³⁰ Scotsman 24th September 2005 <http://thescotsmen.scotsmen.com/index.cfm?id=1985762005>

Sunday Herald 25th September 2005 <http://www.sundayherald.com/51884>

³¹ Times 27th September 2005 <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/newspaper/0,,171-1798972,00.html>

³² BBC 17th October 2005 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/4350386.stm>

blew the concrete lid off it in 1977. UKAEA has applied for planning permission to hydraulically isolate the waste shaft. The application to Highland Council seeks consent to isolate the contents of the shaft from the surrounding environment by physically restricting water movement to and from the shaft by means of a grout curtain.³³

4.5 According to *The Observer*, the government will soon announce plans to sell-off of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, or introduce private contractors in a partnership deal. Companies including Amec and Bechtel and Jacobs, are likely to be involved.³⁴

5.0 Nuclear Waste

5.1 BNG may have to stop dumping low-level waste at Drigg sooner rather than later. Cumbria County Council is worried that rising sea levels could wash the site away – perhaps within 500 years. And it says nobody is sure what radioactive material has been buried there. A report from the council's environmental planning manager, John Hetherington asks councillors to block any planning applications to expand Drigg until these concerns are satisfied. BNG wants to open a new storage vault to increase capacity in 2007. It argues the threat from rising sea levels has been over stated, and wants to continue using Drigg until 2050.³⁵

5.2 The possibility of non-Dounreay waste being stored in the new low-level waste facility has been raised by SEPA in its response to the NDA's Draft Strategy consultation. SEPA calls for "early clarification" on whether the facility will be either a strategic facility for several sites or solely for waste arising from Dounreay. SEPA also believes reducing costs and nuclear safety appear to be given greater importance than the environment in the draft strategy. It would like further clarification on how NDA ensures environmental priorities are considered within its decision-making processes.³⁶

5.3 The Scottish Executive has finally started a consultation on guidance to SEPA on implementing the UK's commitment under the international OSPAR convention's strategy on reducing radioactive discharges. It runs until 17th January 2006. The executive guidance stresses that it does not want to reduce discharges by slowing down decommissioning work on any site, including Dounreay.³⁷

5.4 From 1st October, under new European legislation, energy companies must notify their customers, at least once a year, of the environmental impact of their electricity. The companies are legally required to show levels of CO2 emissions and radioactive waste generated during electricity production. But an investigation by the Sunday Herald revealed that companies are systematically underestimating the proportion of nuclear electricity they supply to households. Although around half of the electricity generated in Scotland is from nuclear power, and 21% throughout the UK as a whole, the highest proportion the industry says is supplied to domestic consumers is 16% by Scottish Gas. Scottish Power and Scottish Hydro Electric, are telling their consumers that only 4% of their electricity is from nuclear power. In England, EDF Energy says 14% of its electricity is nuclear, Npower says 13% and Powergen says 8%.³⁸

³³ Dundee Courier 13th October 2005

<http://www.thecourier.co.uk/output/2005/10/13/newsstory7634026t0.asp>

³⁴ Observer 16th October 2005 <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/business/story/0,6903,1592946,00.html>

³⁵ Carlisle News and Star 22nd September 2005

<http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/viewarticle.aspx?id=284467>

³⁶ www.sepa.org.uk/board/agenmcy/index.htm

³⁷ www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/10/18103157/31578

³⁸ Sunday Herald 2nd October 2005

<http://www.sundayherald.com/52049>

6.0 Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

6.1 Support for the NDA's plans to dismantle Magnox power stations in 25 years rather than 80-100 years has been expressed by green groups around the country, despite public concerns about accelerated decommissioning. The plans are outlined in the NDA's Draft Strategy which has been issued for consultation. The deadline for comments is 11th November 2005. (see Radioactive Waste Policy Briefing No.13 September 2005). However, the NDA appears to make the implementation of the 25-year strategy dependent on the introduction of a centralised storage or 'disposal' policy for Intermediate Level Waste. The NDA says it has made clear to CoRWM its preference for a deep geological repository. Green groups will be making clear that they see no reason to make the 25-year strategy dependent on a policy of building an ILW dump.

7.0 Chernobyl

7.1 The number of people killed by radiation as a result of the Chernobyl disaster is so far only 56 according to a report compiled by the Chernobyl Forum - eight UN agencies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) – and the final death toll is expected to reach about 4,000 - much lower than previous estimates.³⁹ Greenpeace accused IAEA of deliberately trying to down play the death toll as part of the nuclear industry's continued attempt to portray itself as an acceptable future energy source.⁴⁰

7.2 The Chernobyl Children's Project said that since one of the primary functions of IAEA is to promote the use of nuclear power, it is not surprising that it should come out with statements which downplay the consequences of Chernobyl. The Swiss Medical Weekly published the findings of the Clinical Institute of Radiation Medicine in Minsk, which showed the cancer rate had risen in Belarus by 40% between 1990 and 2000. In the Gomel region, the most contaminated area, this figure is 55%. Many of these cancers are of the stomach, rectum or bladder, indicating food as the most significant contributory cause. Anyone who has visited hospitals in Gomel will have heard of the blood diseases found in young children which are normally associated with old age; the high level of heart disease; respiratory problems; and of the babies recently born with rare genetic disorders.⁴¹

8.0 Miscellaneous

8.1 The Scottish Information Commissioner, Kevin Dunion, is being taken to court by the NHS in an attempt to keep controversial cancer statistics secret. The NHS says it has taken the action to protect patient confidentiality. The case, to be heard at the Court of Session in Edinburgh, is unprecedented – it is the first time that the Scottish Executive's ground-breaking FOI legislation will be tested in court. In January, Chris Ballance, the Green MSP for the South of Scotland, asked the NHS Common Services Agency (CSA) to provide the annual incidence of childhood leukaemia in every Census ward in Dumfries and Galloway from 1990 to 2003. There have long been suspicions that clusters of the potentially fatal blood cancer could have been caused by radioactive pollution. Plutonium from the Sellafield nuclear plant washes up on the Solway coast, and depleted uranium shells have been tested at Dundrennan and Scotland's oldest nuclear station, which is now being decommissioned, is at Chapelcross, near Annan.⁴²

³⁹ Times 7th September 2005

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,13509-1768368,00.html>

⁴⁰ Greenpeace International Press Release 7th September 2005

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/releases/chernobylforumclosingday>

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/releases/whitewashing-chernobyl-s-impac>

⁴¹ Guardian 8th September 2005

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/letters/story/0,3604,1564707,00.html>

⁴² Sunday Herald 2nd October 2005 <http://www.sundayherald.com/52028>