

Speech: PM speech at Wuhan University: 31 January 2018

Thank you very much everybody. And I'm very pleased to be able to be here today at Wuhan University on this, my first official financial visit to China. And as we build our golden era of UK-China relations, what we do between us as two peoples is so very important as a fundamental of that golden era. In fact, the first visit I made to a country outside the European Union when I became the British Prime Minister was to China. What I saw then was a very confident, a very forward-looking country, taking an increasing role on the world stage.

What I have seen today from the young students that I have met is an example of that confidence, that forward looking, that desire to take their country forward. And I can say from the students and young people I've met today that China is in good hands for the future.

Of course, later in my visit here in China, I will be meeting with President Xi and Premier Li, and discussing some of the mutual interests and challenges that we both share. One of them I will be looking at today here in Wuhan, which is how we develop a cleaner environment for the future. But as I said, what underpins our relations, and as we build our global strategic partnership, is the people-to-people links. And this Spirit of Youth festival is a very important example of that. And I would particularly like to thank Jiang Shuying for everything that she has been doing as the Spirit of Youth Ambassador, to encourage those links between young people in the United Kingdom and China.

And today I've met Chinese students who've studied in the UK, UK students who are studying here in China. We have more than 150,000 Chinese students in UK universities, and we have, as part of the visit I'm making here to China, a UK-China agreement on sharing knowledge of early years education. We look at university; sharing of university knowledge and expertise, but actually it's also good to share in the early years of education as well. We are seeing more Mandarin being taught in UK schools, and of course thousands of UK students here in Chinese universities.

And today I'm pleased to announce that we are extending the Shanghai maths teacher exchange which has been, I believe, a very good example of our people-to-people links and one of mutual benefit to both our countries.

So, by learning with each other and from each other we can continue to develop the bonds of friendship that we value, and the bonds of friendship on which our golden era and UK-China relations are built, bringing our people closer together not just now, but for years to come in the future. And I hope – I say to the young people here, you will be the future leaders of your country, and I hope that in future years you will continue to strengthen the ties between the United Kingdom and China.

Press release: Chemicals disposal investigation: findings published

Sellafield Ltd has today published the findings of an internal investigation into the disposal of potentially hazardous chemicals at our site last year.

In October 2017, a chemicals inventory check in our Analytical Services building identified potentially hazardous chemicals requiring safe disposal.

In line with industry best practice, we requested the assistance of the Army's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team to assist with these disposals.

The EOD disposed of the identified chemicals, along with other potentially hazardous chemicals subsequently identified, using the recognised safest method: controlled detonation on the Sellafield site.

Following the safe conclusion of these operations, we initiated an internal investigation to understand the root causes and recommend steps to improve our future handling of these substances.

The investigation has now concluded. It found the following:

There were 2 root causes:

1. Our approach to conventional (non-radiological) safety is not always tailored to the risks and hazards of individual facilities
2. Priority was not given to the disposal of redundant chemicals. This was because they were out of the conscious awareness of the majority of people within Analytical Services

Additional findings:

- All of the redundant chemicals involved were on our chemical inventory but there was a lack of recognition of the risk associated with their degradation
- A strong nuclear safety culture resulted in the risk being identified by employees

The investigation proposed recommendations:

1. A site-wide review of potentially hazardous chemicals identified as requiring non-immediate action following last year's inventory check. This will clarify who is responsible and will develop and implement a new approach for future chemical disposal.

2. An external benchmarking exercise to understand best practice for the management of complex chemical inventories.
3. A review of existing contracts to ensure specialist chemical advice and ongoing support is in place.
4. A new system for the oversight and control of chemical inventories.

Steve Bostock, Sellafield Ltd chief operating officer, said:

The Sellafield site is home to some of the oldest and most complex risks and hazards anywhere in the world.

It is our responsibility to make sure these hazards are managed in a way that protects our workforce, the local community and the environment.

We take this responsibility very seriously, which is why I initiated an investigation into last year's chemicals disposal event at the earliest opportunity.

I'm confident we now have a full understanding of the circumstances and an improved approach to the management of chemicals, which will also inform our approach to other potential hazards on our site.

PDF, 28.4KB, 3 pages

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[News story: Near miss with track workers at Clapham Junction](#)

Forward facing CCTV image showing position of workers prior to near miss (image courtesy of South Western Railway)

At around 05:51 hrs on 17 January 2018, an empty coaching stock train was involved in a near miss with three Network Rail workers near Clapham Junction station. Nobody was injured, although the driver and the staff were shaken by the incident.

We have undertaken a [preliminary examination](#) into the circumstances surrounding this incident. Having assessed the evidence which has been gathered to date, we have decided to publish a [safety digest](#).

The safety digest will be made available on our website in the next few weeks.

[News story: Autonomous vehicle trial announced by HumanDrive](#)



Mike Wilson, Executive Director for Safety, Engineering and Standards, Highways England

Highways England is part of the consortium working alongside Nissan, who are leading the [HumanDrive](#) project.

Mike Wilson, Executive Director for Safety, Engineering and Standards at Highways England welcomed the announcement:

Highways England sees the potential benefits of greater automation of vehicles to deliver improved safety and increased mobility.

We will be working closely with our HumanDrive partners on the plans for the on-road testing. We will be taking the research and development of the Nissan vehicle to map how the introduction of such an autonomous vehicle can shape the future of our roads, in terms of safety, emissions, journey times and capacity.

[Press release: Suspended jail term for landowner over illegal landfill site](#)

The Environment Agency has successfully prosecuted a landowner and two men who blighted 19 acres of Cheshire farm land by dumping and landfilling tens of thousands of tonnes of waste.

Mr Eric Hale of Bank Top Farm near Frodsham was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment suspended for two years, disqualified from driving for 12 months ordered to work 200 hours unpaid and have a curfew of 8pm to 6am for three months after pleading guilty to operating an illegal waste site without an environmental permit and dumping and landfilling controlled waste on the land.

Mr Hale also paid £100,000 in contributions towards the Environment Agency's costs. Mr Dennis Whiting and Mr Stefan Street each received a Conditional Discharge for two years after pleading guilty to dumping and landfilling controlled waste.

The Environment Agency brought the case against Mr Eric Hale, Mr Dennis Whiting and Mr Stefan Street after a lengthy investigation. The investigation identified that significant amounts of waste were being brought on to the farm, which did not have an environmental permit.

The Environment Agency identified that the operation of the illegal site was closely connected with a waste company Eric Hale Skip Hire Ltd. The prosecution for the Environment Agency stated that the majority of waste collected by the company was illegally dumped and landfilled at Bank Top Farm instead of being taken to a legitimate waste site.

Tracey Rimmer, Area Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

This operation demonstrates how the Environment Agency works in partnership to tackle serious waste crime. We have worked closely with the police and local authorities to pursue these criminals and bring them to justice. Waste crime is a serious issue diverting as much as £1 billion per year from legitimate business and the treasury.

During the course of the investigation Eric Hale, Steffan Street and Dennis Whiting were seen driving large waste vehicles which delivered, deposited and disposed of mixed waste, demolition waste including plasterboard and other

waste including carpets and mattresses.

Trommel fines, which are a by-product produced during the recycling process and consist of materials such as wood, aggregate, glass, ceramics and organics, were also dumped at Bank Top Farm. The unregulated deposit of waste has the potential to cause harm to the environment.

The Judge on sentencing said:

Eric Hale was driven by greed to continue the illegal operation.

Also the court did not accept any of the mitigation of the offending put forward but Eric Hale's substantial personal mitigating circumstances were acknowledged by the court.

If you see waste crime report it by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Waste crime can cause serious pollution to the environment put communities at risk and undermines legitimate business and the investment and economic growth that go with it. You can call the Environment Agency on 0370 850 6506 to find out how to responsibly manage any waste your business produces or visit www.gov.uk/managing-your-waste-an-overview/overview.