SiLC Newsletter

SPECIALIST IN LAND CONDITION

News update by the SiLC Champion

July 2010 Issue 3

Key Dates

- Application Dates—application 26th July 2010, written test September 2010.
- Induction Training Day—Oct 2010— NW
- SiLC Annual Forum —Oct 2010—tbc
- Details of dates and venues can be found on the web -site

Consultations

- Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice Version 2
- Statutory Guidance under Part IIa

In this issue:

Environment Agency—Guiding Principles

In March this year, the EA released their set of new documents - *Guiding Principles for Land Contamination.* Their stated aims are:

- To help clarify roles and responsibilities.
- To encourage good practice (promote compliance with regulatory requirements, or avoid the need for regulation).
- To provide a guide to authoritative guidance and advice in other documents (there are many hyperlinks that exist throughout the documents that link to the wider available advice).

Given that these documents are produced by the EA, their focus is primarily relating to the protection of water and to waste issues. It is recognised in the documents that local authorities lead on most land contamination matters and that they have their own requirements and guidance. There is also the recognition for the need of using expert consultants and advisors and encouragingly SiLC is referenced, along with a link to our website.

The documents provide a succinct overview of the land management process, and manage to appeal at multiple levels and as such are useful for those involved in the strategic aspects of managing land contamination (e.g. land owners and developers), as well as by technical advisors (e.g. consultants and contaminated land officers), assisted by the use of many hyperlinks in the text which highlights how much relevant guidance there is available.

GPLC1 explains the purpose of the Guiding Principles and contains a reminder of the key stages in the Model Procedures.

GPLC2 addresses the technical information and contains detailed advice. It provides a good summary of key regimes affecting contaminated land through a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Key points of advice are highlighted throughout, which are brief and a good reminder to even the most experienced professional.

GPLC3 presents good practice reporting as a series of checklists which identify the keys stages in the assessment and management of contaminated land.

Definition of Waste—Consultation

CL:AIRE published The Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice in September 2008. During 2009, the number of declarations submitted by Qualified Person was modest, less than 20, but the scheme has continued to develop and a further 50 declarations have since been submitted. The declarations submitted in 2009 have been audited by the Environment Agency, and with continued success of the scheme, CL:AIRE have release their draft Version '2' for consultation. The aims of the new version are to cover the first simple scenarios of 'site to site' transfer of natural 'unpolluted' excavated materials and to clarify the role of Soil Treatment Facilities within Cluster projects.

The SiLC PTP are collating responses to this consultation and comments should be sent to t.benson@iema.net before 6th August.

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SiLC Champion Feedback

The role of SiLC Champion is to promote the SiLC scheme through articles, presentations and discussions with a range of organisations associated with the land condition sector.

There clearly remains many more opportunities to promote the SiLC scheme, and therefore I would welcome any suggestions and opportunities

A copy of a presentation about the SiLC scheme will be placed on the web site for interest and use.

Regards

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Green and Sustainable Remediation

It has been estimated that there are over 250,000 contaminated sites across European member states that require remediation of soil and groundwater. This is the legacy of our industrial heritage and how we continue to treat such sites to address our current environmental protection needs should not compromise the needs of future generations. Remedial techniques traditionally tend to have resulted in the transfer of contaminants from the contaminated media to another location, rather than their destruction or immobilisation.

The key drivers for the remediation of contaminated land are through legislation, government policy, and the protection of the human health and environment, although in more densely populated countries there is also a demand for developable land and inevitably this involves bringing contaminated sites to productive use. For example, as part of the broader sustainability objectives the Olympic development site, construction not only regenerated Brownfield land but techniques applied ensured the reuse of most of the excavated soils. Where the wider social, economic and environmental impacts can be considered in the early stages of planning, such large projects can be key examples of 'sustainable remediation'

In recent years there has been the release of much advice regarding implementing sustainable practices. For example the UK Defra published the document Safeguarding our Soils – A Soil Strategy for England which a addresses a broad range of soil issues from assessing the potential impacts of climate change to implementing sustainable remedial solutions.

However, governments are not the only key players setting the agenda. Ideas for sustainable remediation have also been championed by through a network of Sustainable Remediation Forums (SuRF US, UK, Netherlands etc), and through organisations such as NICOLE, CL:AIRE and EURODEMO The subject features at many European contaminated land conferences such as ConSoil, where it will once again be a topic in Salzburg in autumn 2010.

In the UK, contaminated land is largely dealt with through the planning system, as the development of land provides the opportunity, resources and regulatory controls to ensure that standards applied deliver a site which is suitable for use. This focus on planning policy has perhaps influenced how SuRF UK approached the subject in its published framework document setting out two main stages where making decisions for sustainable solutions is applied: firstly during the planning design stage, and secondly during the selection of remediation technology.

In a number of European countries and in the USA, sustainability has centred on the selection of technology performance or 'green remediation' rather than considering the broader socio-economic factors of sustainable remediation. Focus is placed on minimising the environmental footprint by assessing the use of energy, water and materials during the remedial activity; for example calculating the carbon footprint and considering the use of renewable or alternative energy sources.

For the majority of those working directly on remediation projects it may not always be practicable or feasible to assess, or influence the wider and long-term sustainability benefits, although it is within the control of land owners and developers, regulators and service providers to develop a remedial strategy and implement techniques that minimise or eliminate pollutants at the source, reduce waste and emissions, consumes fewer natural resources, utilise energy efficient technologies and benefit stakeholders and wider community.

To deliver successful and sustainable remedial solutions, requires not only experienced professionals with a range engineering and scientific skills, but often requires an integrated approach to fully understand the impacts these activities may have on the broader issues such as those associated with land use and planning matters, social and environmental economics, or other technical considerations. The SiLC scheme has the capability to meet these aims as it brings together professionals from a broad background advising on land condition matters.

SILC LCSDF Update

Earlier this the SiLC PTP received responses to the consultation on the SiLC Land Condition Skills Development Framework. It is intended to publish this document in the autumn, although it is likely that it will remain a working document, with updates available through the SiLC website.

However, it would appear that the skills framework is already being used by one company; Ground Gas Solutions. John Naylor of GGS thought the framework was "reasonable and easy to follow", and as a relatively new company, they have adopted this for their Personnel Development Systems policy.