

SiLC Newsletter

News update by the SiLC Champion

November 2009

Issue 1

Key Dates

- Application Dates—
application 4th January
2010, written test
February 2010.
- Training Day—April
2010—tbc
- SiLC Annual Forum—
May 2010—tbc

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SiLC Survey



In trying to establish how well known the SiLC scheme is in the sector, I carried out a straw poll with a number of professionals working across a range of services associated with land condition and development in order to gauge their understanding of SiLC registration scheme. The general response received was that it was “something to do with the Land Condition Record”. Whilst this is true; the scheme was initially designed as a qualification for the sign off of the Land Condition Record (LCR), it has continued to develop progressively, establishing an important role in improving quality and standards across the industry.

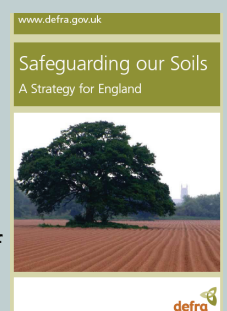
In responding to this, a questionnaire was issued by IEMA to registered SiLCs in order to obtain further perceptions of the scheme. The results concluded that practitioners applied to become SiLC because they see this overwhelmingly as progression of their professional development as well as being important to their work. Knowledge of the SiLC scheme was thought to be the highest amongst consultants, regulators and the legal profession. Few, SiLCs considered that the LCR is likely to be widely used, although many would like to see the implementation of other ‘sign off’ products for SiLCs (for the full report see - <http://www.silc.org.uk/news?aid=28009>).

The use of SiLCs is already cited in planning guidance, and a requirement for specific areas of project work for some government agencies, there is increasing occurrence for SiLC as a prerequisite for some commercial organisations and financial institutions.

"National Grid Property Holdings requires all of its term environmental consultants, advising on land contamination issues, to have SiLC registered personnel and values the confidence gained by having SiLCs included in its project teams."

Skills Development Framework

In order to ensure that the sector is continued to be served by highly skilled professionals, the SiLC body with support from the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) is currently producing a Skills Development Framework (SDF). The SDF is a capability based system which will complement existing institutional frameworks in supporting an individual’s career development; from graduate through to chartered and senior level membership status of a professional organisation, and eventually to SiLC registration. SiLC initiated the production of this framework in response to the shortage of diverse skills identified in the National Brownfield Strategy and this issue has also recently been acknowledged in Government policy with reference in the recently published DEFRA report – “Safeguarding our





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SILC CHAMPION

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Recent Liability Cases

It is 10 years ago since the Urban Task Force led by Lord Rogers published the report "Working Towards Renaissance", championing a holistic approach to urban regeneration, part of which recommended the introduction of a standardised documentation describing the condition of brownfield sites as part of any transaction process. Following consultation across a broad range of organisations, property developers and government, the Land Condition Report (LRC) was launched, supported by a quality assurance sign off system by an accredited professional. Thus the Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC) registration scheme was introduced; a qualification for experienced practitioners from a diverse range of professional bodies working in the brownfield assessment and regeneration sector.

Quite a lot has changed in this sector over the last 10 years, not least a significant expansion in the development of brownfield land, although more recently there have been many challenges resulting

from the severe economic downturn. When the market picks up, many clients may find that a number of changes have occurred, particularly for remedial activities.

The scrutiny that regulators are likely to apply to remediation schemes may have been heightened by the Corby Borough Council case, which gained national media coverage, having become the first local authority to be found liable for negligence in the control and management of remediation works. However, if regulatory authorities remain somewhat cautious following the Corby case, then they should be buoyed by the recent decision of Secretary of State to uphold the Part IIA liability served on Redland Minerals, the former owner of a chemical works; and Crest Nicholson, who in the 1980's purchased and developed the site for residential use. The land had been polluted by bromate/bromide, which had impacted the underlying chalk aquifer and created the largest known contamination plume in the UK. The ruling upheld the concept of polluter pays and each party,

both the polluter and the developer (who permitted pollution to continue), were apportioned a percentage of the costs of the liability.

Both these cases are retrospective in liability and represent a wake up call to the industry regarding the potential consequences of their actions. They are also a reminder to regulators of the importance of ensuring that robust pollution controls are put in place. These events have highlighted the need for, and importance of, experienced professionals (whether within public or private sector organisations) who have demonstrable expertise and who can offer authoritative advice to help deliver safe, sustainable and exacting solutions.

SILC Feedback

The appointment of a SiLC Champion clearly provides opportunity to undertake more promotional activity of the SiLC scheme. To date this includes a number of articles for a range of publications and professional institutions; presentations to the sector regarding on going initiatives; and focused meetings with target groups.

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

Regards

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Specialist in Land Condition

Setting the standard for land assessment professionals

The Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC) scheme exists to establish, promote and maintain professional standards in brownfield land assessment. SiLC is an accreditation for experienced individuals who have demonstrated a high level of competence in land assessment during their career and is gained through examination. It provides

- industry leadership
- higher standards for land assessment professionals
- career development
- a strong code of practice.

Find out more at www.silc.org.uk

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