

SiLC Newsletter

News update by the SiLC Champion

July 2011

Issue 5

Key Dates

- 2011 Application Dates Round 2—application 25th July, written test September.
- Induction Training Day— Manchester— 13th September 2011

Events

- [Geological Society](#)
- [RSC](#)
- [ICE](#)
- [CIWEM](#)
- [IEMA](#)
- [RICS](#)
- [CIEH](#)
- [REHIS](#)
- [AGS](#)

Click on the organisation to go to their events website page

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Along the New SiLC Road

A number of developments have occurred recently to the SiLC scheme. In April this year, the SiLC Register became an incorporated company and will be operating under the company name of Specialist in Land Condition Register Limited. Formalising the organisation will not affect the way the scheme works and SiLC continues to benefit from the direct support of eight of the Professional Bodies, all of whom are now members of the Company. At the same time, CIRIA has been appointed to provide Secretariat services to the SiLC Register.

Phil Crowcroft chair of the SiLC PTP said “*SiLC has established an important role in improving quality and standards across the industry and these changes represent another chapter in its on going development as we continue to explore new opportunities for the SiLC register*”

Over the next few months SiLC will have a new website up and running with more frequent news updates and a members area.

The PTP welcomes any ideas from members of the register for the ongoing development and expansion of the SiLC register. Contact details for CIRIA are appended at the end of the newsletter or contact the [SiLC Champion](#). The next annual forum and assessors meeting is planned for October.

Part 2A Consultation

On behalf of the SiLC register, the PTP submitted a response to the recent consultation on Part 2A. SiLC raised the point that there is a lack of clarity between the legal and technical definitions of land contamination and this has resulted in some significant problems. In particular SiLC agreed with points raised in the consultation that there has been an inconsistency in the application of the requirements of the regime with a consequence that much time, effort and resources have been spent on sites that do not represent a major risk. SiLC considered that there has also been a knock on effect to the planning regime where by the uncertainty has had a detrimental effect on confidence for the development community and the associated stakeholders. Given that the policy of Part 2A is to encourage voluntary remediation and/ or remediation as a part of redevelopment, regulated through the planning system, SiLC raised concerns over the current proposal to replace the current series of Planning Policy Statements (including PPS23) with a single and shorter policy document.

The proposal for shorter guidance and clarity of some of the legal issues in the new Statutory Guidance is welcome by the industry. However, one of the main areas that SiLC considers that more guidance is needed is greater clarity of the regime and certainty in the definition of “Contaminated Land” (i.e. the definition of SPOSH). SiLC considers that the root cause of the majority of difficulties in the Statutory Guidance is not the complexity with regard to the determination of sites as Contaminated Land but the lack of authoritative guidance on the evaluation of the significance of risk.

The proposed Statutory Guidance makes several references to “expert”. Whilst SiLC suggests this be replaced by the term “experienced practitioner” (or similar) it does raise the opportunity for SiLC to continue to push for higher standards in the industry and hopefully through the SiLC registration scheme.

SiLC Applications

The numbers of candidates applying for SiLC registration have increased slightly in the last year, although the number of candidates applying are still modest.

Registration demonstrates commitment, expertise and professionalism in your chosen field. Are you and your colleagues ready to take the next step?

Applications for the next round of exams is 25th July with the test set for September. The next training day is in Manchester on 13th September. Details are on the SiLC website



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Secretariat
The SiLC Register
c/o CIRIA
Classic House
174-180 Old Street
London EC1V 9BP

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7549 3300
E-mail: enquiries@ciria.org

SiLC Champion Feedback

Do you have something to say about SiLC or any other topics? We would welcome contributions to the Newsletter

Marketing and presentation materials about SiLC are available - contact the secretariat

Regards

Kevin Eaton
SiLC Champion

Supporting Organisations



Friend or Foe?

Earlier this year the UK register of [Ground Engineering Professionals](#) (RoGEP) was launched and also CL:AIRE announced their intention to set up the [CL:AIRE Qualifications Board](#) (CL:QB). Are these schemes a direct challenge to SiLC and could they indeed lead to the demise of SiLC?

The RoGEP scheme has many similarities to the SiLC scheme, for a start it is supported by two of the professional institutions that also support SiLC; the Geological Society and the Institution of Civil Engineers, together with a third institution, the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining. The aim of RoGEP is stated as to provide "...external stakeholders, including clients and other professionals, with a means to identify individuals who are suitably qualified and competent in ground engineering – be they from the background of consultants, contractors, public bodies or academia...". The practitioners who apply for RoGEP will need to be chartered with one of the supporting institutions, be involved with disciplines and projects that fall within the broad heading of ground engineering, and have an appreciation of how ground engineering interacts with other disciplines and professionals. If this

format sounds very familiar and the aims of RoGEP mirror those of SiLC, then this demonstrate how senior practitioners are judged by their professional institutions, their peers and the wider sector.

The RoGEP scheme has three grades; Ground Engineering Professional, Specialist and Advisor. Entry at Professional grade can be made at the same time as the application for chartered status. It is suggested that for the Advisor grade this would require five years proactive as a Registered Ground Engineering Specialist.

CL:AIRE has created the CL:QB which will be able to assess candidates in relevant contaminated land subjects and grant qualifications. Initial qualifications that are being developed include Contaminated Land Site Management, Process Engineering for Remediation Methods, and Spill Response. It is intended that any industry training provider will be able to develop and offer courses and indeed if candidates believe they know the syllabus they will be able to register with the CL:QB and take the assessments without the need to attend any training courses. The intention is that practitioners can benchmark their

knowledge of key sector subjects and plot their career progression in conjunction with the [Skills Development Framework](#).

So are these schemes a direct challenge to SiLC or is SiLC distinctive? The RoGEP scheme is primarily associated with engineering practice where as SiLC originated from the Land Condition Record associated with land transactions and so is focused more along the lines of contaminated land issues and the interaction practitioners have with the legal profession, land agents, developers, land owners and regulators. SiLCs certainly have many technical skills but no one discipline is mandatory for entry to the scheme although a sound understanding of the framework for the assessment of contaminated land is necessary. It may be that some aspects of the qualifications that will be offered by CL:QB will contribute to the basic skills and knowledge expected of a practitioners, however, the RoGEP and SiLC schemes have established themselves as a registers of professionals who, in addition to being chartered or of similar status through a professional institution need to be able to demonstrate their experience, which in the case of SiLC is often across a broader range of disciplines and is assessed through examination and interview. Consequently qualification to become a registered SiLC can be exacting.

There is a role for many professionals working in both the public and private sector to ensure higher quality standards are delivered and this can be achieved by actively supporting a range of professional qualifications and registration schemes.

London Calling!

London Earth is the systematic high-density geochemical soil survey of the Greater London Area aiming to give insight into the environmental impacts of urbanisation and industrialisation. The British Geological Survey (BGS) has just been completed the largest environmental survey of London's soils testing over 6000 soil samples and has published a set of ten geochemical maps and short interpretations for a selection of environmentally sensitive elements (As, Cd, Cr, Cu, Ca, Fe, Pb, Se, Ni and Zn). The documents are available for download from the [BGS website](#)

The maps generally show higher concentrations of the metals in central London and decreasing in concentration in the soils samples taken progressively towards the outer parts of London, demonstrating a notable correlation between the elevated concentration of certain metals and the oldest and most intensely urbanised and industrial areas. Geological control on the data sets tends to be more noticeable in the outer parts of London where anthropogenic modification is less likely.

The data has been assed both in land use classes and generalised geological groupings. Domestic gardens are one of the land use classes. It would appear from the data that most of the 1500+ samples take from domestic gardens recorded concentrations of metals below soil guideline values and generic assessment criteria which is reassuring although there are clearly exceptions to this. For certain metals identified in the London Earth survey, if the concentration measured were not accepted as being 'normal' than large swaths of London and no doubt other major cities could potentially be regarded as contaminated land. The issue regarding 'normal' levels of anthropogenic contamination has been raised in the recent consultation on Part 2A.