



# Skills, Sign-off and SiLC

## Kevin Eaton – SiLC Champion





## SiLC History

- Over 10 years ago since the Urban Task Force published the report “Working Towards Renaissance”
- Holistic approach to urban regeneration
- Recommended the introduction of a standardised documentation for land transactions (land condition)
- Consultation carried out across a broad range of organisations inc government
- Land Condition Record (LCR) was launched, supported by a quality assurance sign off scheme - ‘SiLC’ registration





## SiLC Scheme

- A registration scheme for experienced practitioners from a diverse range of professional bodies working in the land condition and Brownfield regeneration sector
- What constitutes a SiLC
  - A land condition background or specialism (e.g. geology, chemistry, surveyor etc)
  - An understanding of the land assessment process (planning-PPS23, Part IIA, CLR11)
  - Relevant experience and Chartered Status or similar
  - The ability to provide a high standard of interpretation and good communication skills
  - Ability to complete a LRC
  - A professional approach (Code of Practice)



SPECIALIST IN LAND CONDITION





## SiLC Exam

- SiLC Exam/interview
  - Based on a extracts of reports and typical scenarios (sale, change of use, permitting)
  - Open book – no ‘tricks’
  - To test individual’s knowledge gained from their professional experience
  - Understanding of LCR, links to other professions, Code of Conduct
- Why test with LCR?
  - LRC has to be signed off by a register SiLC
  - Test ability to compile a factual report, relevant information, cross reference, quality control, assess gaps, caveats,
- Examiners are SiLCs, a range of backgrounds and professions, active in the sector



## What is SiLC?

- What is SiLC?
  - Straw poll – ‘something to do with the LRC’
  - True; the scheme was initially designed as a qualification for the sign off of the LCR
  - continued to develop progressively, establishing an important role in improving quality and standards across the sector
  - SiLC is now regarded as a scheme which demonstrates a high degree of experience, competence and wide ranging skills
  - Professional & Technical Panel (PTP) – 8 professional organisations
- Who wants SiLC?
  - Cited in planning and other guidance - PPS23, CEEQUAL, referenced in Part 2A consultation
  - Requested by key organisations – MoD, National Grid, British Waterways
  - Contract pre-qual – in commercial organisation, financial institutions and legal appointments
  - *“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.”*

## Regulatory Drivers

- Land Planning System needs competent people to oversee redevelopment of sites and deliver suitability for use
- Dealing with waste on sites requires Qualified Persons (CL:AIRE CoP)
- Setting up Environmental Permits requires competent advice
- Agencies (EA, CLG) are reviewing the concept of devolving more sites to “competent” individuals, for example to oversee assessment and remediation and approvals process
- Litigation requires “experts”







## How would SiLC fit in?

- More legislation/regulation has led to an increase administration for regulators – actually detract from the intended strategic aim
- To continue to uphold standards
  - there is a need to develop a robust way of regulating - which ensures that projects are carried out to high quality and safety standards
  - with all parties being aware of their legal responsibilities; and
  - taking responsibility for their actions.
- It should be possible to achieve this without the need for automatic regulatory intervention and detailed oversight
- This needs a balance that:
  - allows regulatory resources to be deployed on the basis of risk,
  - concentrated on scrutinising those activities that have the greatest potential for harming our environment



## ‘Sign-off’ Products

- Possible applications
  - Existing - CL:AIRE waste CoP – QP model
  - EA Guiding Principles – sign off low risk sites?
  - HBF proposal to Remediation Licensing Task Force - self-certification by use of licensed professionals
  - Possibility of a permitting/approvals process – CLG reviewing
  - Preparation of reports – in support of planning applications, QRA, options appraisal, validation, Reference in revised statutory guidance ?
- Soil Framework Directive
  - Soil Status Report is referred to in the proposed European SFD
  - for land transactions where polluting activities have taken place
  - Importantly the Directive also raises the point of who is capable of providing such reports
  - clearly synergy with the existing LCR and SiLC scheme.





## ‘Sign-off’ Products - Procedures

- Registered SiLC is not necessarily a technical expert in all disciplines
- The SiLC ensures that relevant quality control and assurance procedures are appropriately applied throughout the assessment
- This assurance would require that
  - only competent practitioners who have the appropriate skills and experience are involved in undertaking these assessment;
  - that the documents have undergone peer review (technical and by SiLC)
  - conclusions / recommendations are reasonable, supported by accurate factual data.
- Such responsibility would need to be regulated
  - Under a formal auditing systems of registration process
  - Accountable to the Regulatory Authorities,
  - SiLC PTP - robust procedure for assessing complaints and disciplinary actions,
- The importance of the SiLC scheme and the credibility to deliver such ‘sign off’ products comes through the strong ethical code of conduct to which all SiLCs must abide



## Registered Practitioners – Existing Models

- US – 1993 - Licensed Site Professionals (LSPs), 1995 - licensed environmental professional (LEP), 2009 - Licensed Site Remediation Professionals (LSRP) - to oversee the investigation and to verify site remediation in accordance with the State Remediation Regulations
- Australia - “Environmental auditor” (for contaminated land)
- Belgium, Flanders – 1995 - Type 1 – investigation - experience in assessment and risk modelling, Type 2 - remediation/contracting law
- Canada - Contaminated Sites Approved Professionals Society incorporated in March 2007 to be a self regulating professional society
- Basque Government (law in 2006) – need to be accredited perform investigation of contaminated soils/groundwater, risk assessments and remediation projects – also similar scheme in Catalonia
- Nothing to stop anyone in the UK providing services to the sector – only accreditation is Wamitab – waste and operations not assessing or indeed designing risk or remediation



## Licensed Site Remediation Professional

- New Jersey – Site Remediation Reform Act 2009 - changes the process but to ensures the same stringent standards program for the licensing of Licensed Site Remediation Professionals (LSRP)
- NJDEP ‘approval’ not required, but retains significant authority over the remediation and ensure that LSRPs comply with regulations
- LSRP will have responsibility for oversight of investigation and cleanup.
- Strict Code of ethics – violation will result in penalties as well as revoking licence
  - bachelor's degree or higher – science, engineering, remediation related
  - 10 years full-time professional experience, in site remediation (5 in NJ)
  - completed the environmental health and safety training
  - attended and completed a course on the State's rules and regulations concerning the technical requirements for site remediation
  - has not been convicted/guilty to an environmental crime (and other criminal offences)
  - has not had a professional license revoked by any state licensing board or any other professional licensing agency within the previous 10 years.





## Skills Development Framework

- A shortage of diverse skills was recognised in the National Brownfield Strategy/Safeguarding our Soils
- “working with a range of partners the SiLC registration scheme develops and trials a Land Condition Skills Development Framework (LCSDF)....”
- Address critical skills shortages in the UK industry – focus on planning for the future
- There is a need to develop and demonstrate knowledge and experience for all those practising in this area
- In continuing to address the needs of the industry and to promote SiLC, SiLC PTP with HCA funding, producing a LCSDF





## Aims and Aspirations

- The LCSDF is a capability based system which
  - Will complement existing institutional frameworks
  - Framework for defining levels of capability and measuring progression
  - Support an individual's career development; from graduate through to chartered/senior level membership status of a professional organisation
  - Encompass generic and technical skills
  - Acceptable to industry, public sector and professional institutions
- Capable of expansion and applicable in both public and private sectors
- Ideally leading to professional qualification and hopefully SiLC registration



## Capabilities

- Apply SDF in developing a tiered assessment and/or to consistently measure ability of professionals throughout the stages in their careers
- Capabilities are high level descriptions of key behaviour, skills and knowledge that an individual needs to be able to do their job effectively
- Combination of knowledge and experience
- Each capability can be broken down into:
  - Levels (reflecting the depth of knowledge/skill required)
  - Activities (describing specific fields of application)
- Any job can be describe in terms of the specific set and level of capabilities





## Inventory – Capabilities

### ■ Generic Categories

- Management and leadership
- Data and information management
- Finance and commercialism
- Personal effectiveness
- Communication and interpersonal effectiveness
- Project management
- Health and safety

### ■ Technical Categories

- Environmental Management
- Legislation and Regulation
- Site Investigation
- Risk Assessment
- Options Appraisal and Design
- Remediation

## Example Capability

- Each category (capability) is divided into sub-sets of ‘activities’
- Example: Capability – Risk Assessment
- Activities/sub-sets
  - Chemical assessments (HH, waters, habitats...)
  - Radiological assessment
  - Physical assessment (geotech – slopes, subsidence)
  - Numerical modelling (model specific)
  - Toxicology (HCVs)





## Levels

- L1. Aware – an appreciation of an issue
- L2. Basic – sufficient knowledge to perform task on a supervised basis – gaining practical experience
- L3. Proficient – sufficient knowledge to perform tasks on an unsupervised basis
- L4. Accomplished – sufficient knowledge to be able to direct and critical review tasks
- L5. Expert – sufficient knowledge and experience to be able to innovate, design tools and systems





## Measuring Progress

- Activities – define what an individual would be expected to do for each capability
- Indicators – define what evidence you might need to demonstrate capability:
  - Examinations / qualifications / reviews (knowledge) – generally address Levels L1-L2
  - Work experience (application) inc coaching & mentoring – generally address Levels L1 through to L5
- Options are flexible - often designed by employer in partnership with individual assisted by framework



## Potential Benefits

- define the required capabilities of staff at recruitment and for progression
- apply the same for service providers / consultants / contractors etc...
- benchmark existing staff and set out career development plans
- identify skills deficits, ensure team resilience and plan ahead financially



## Why Professional Status?

- Chartered / professional Status – through supporting institutions
  - Demonstrates that your competencies have been impartially assessed by other professionals in your field – valued by employers and clients
  - Supported by an institution of your fellow professionals with an ethical code
  - Nationally/internationally recognised and respected
- SiLC
  - Specifically focused on land condition
  - Developed and administered by professionals in the sector
  - SiLC scheme is about setting higher standards in the industry - Recognised and respected
- Supporting accredited professionals who can offer independent and authoritative advice
  - Employers should recognise the effort and dedication to become chartered/ registered
  - Clients should ask more of their professional advisors and their professional status
  - Regulators should start requiring authors and reviewers of reports to hold professional status



**Looking for expert  
advice on land  
condition?**



Who can you rely on?





[www.silc.org.uk](http://www.silc.org.uk)

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