



SPECIALIST IN LAND CONDITION

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Defra National Expert Panel membership

The composition of the National Expert Panel set up by Defra to support Local Authorities in making decisions about potential Part 2A sites was announced recently. The panel is made up of twelve experts from the public, private and academic sectors, and five are registered SiLCs. The SiLC Register is active in promoting good standards in the industry and anticipates that the Panel will be able to contribute effectively to improving the consistency of Part 2A decisions, helping Local Authorities by providing case studies that will be sent to the wider sector as evidence of best practice, helping to promote consistency in decision-making.

Defra faces challenges around the set up and operation of the Panel, and SiLC members will be active in helping to resolve these.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The SiLC Register is active in promoting good practice in the brownfield industry, and believe that the SiLC Registration is a valuable demonstration of competence to support public and private sector in ensuring projects are delivered to the highest standards.

The SiLC Register has previously promoted the idea of setting up an audit process in relation to brownfield sites. The advantages of such a scheme include:

- A simpler and more effective process to get previously developed land back into beneficial use: agreement on risk assessment and remediation can be established for each project by an audit or review by an acknowledged competent person;
- Lessened risk of land being developed in a way that has legal come-back in the future or impacts on human health;
- A reduction in the risk to developers who wish to develop brownfield sites – ‘cowboy operators’ and less experienced contractors will find it increasingly difficult to undertake work of an inadequate quality;
- The scheme could be voluntary – developers could seek the ‘comfort’ of being audited and the de-risking of their projects – or it could be compulsory – all developments being audited so that there is a significant reduction in badly executed developments;
- A Register of professionals who are suitably vetted and ‘accredited’ by a scheme supported by the key professional bodies in the sector;

- The SiLC scheme has been in place for twelve years and is viable; with Government policy support for the scheme, it has the potential to manage the required level of support for an auditing scheme in the UK;
- Future European Legislation – most notably a Soil Framework Directive – will require a ‘competent person’ to assess soil quality and the SiLC scheme would meet that requirement – there will be no need to consider the additional costs and bureaucracy of a new scheme for competent persons;
- This proposal would lead to a reduced burden on public sector regulators who can focus limited resources on overseeing higher risk sites and other areas of legislation such as Part 2A of the EPA (1990) and allow a much lighter touch on the brownfield redevelopment process.

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About SiLC

1. SiLC (the Specialist in Land Condition Register Ltd) is a scheme established in 2000 which supports professionals involved in remediation of brownfield sites. SiLC maintain a Register of professionals who have considerable experience and skill in assessing and remediating land so that it can be used for later development.

2. The partner organisations in SiLC are:

The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management;
The Institution of Civil Engineers;
The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment;
Chartered Institution of Environmental Health;
Royal Society of Chemistry;
The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland;
The Association of Geoenvironmental and Geotechnical Specialists;
The Geological Society.