



SPECIALIST IN LAND CONDITION

# SiLC Newsletter

News update by the SiLC Champion

March 2014

Issue 12

## SiLC news update

SiLC has updated the Land Condition Skills Development Framework (LCSDF) document which will be made available for download from the SiLC website. At a recent Land Forum meeting there was support for considering the application of the LCSDF in developing a protocol for the sector and to develop a framework for practitioner accreditation driven by industry and regulators. SiLC continues to work on a development scheme and the revised SiLC LCSDF provides an important step forward to connect with and support a proposed development scheme.

## SiLC development scheme

At the 2013 SiLC Annual forum it was announced that it is intended to set up a SiLC Trainee Network. One of the aims set out in the SiLC Code of Practice is to “... give reasonable assistance to candidates wishing to join the profession...”. This proposed development scheme is currently being formulated although with the publication of the updated SiLC LCSDF this provides an important step forward to connect with the application of the development scheme. SiLC wish to support individuals working towards full membership and Chartered Status with their professional institutions and with the potential to become registered SiLCs. The development scheme will provide an entry level membership scheme set at a three tier development programme starting at graduate entry level, a level for those working towards chartership and a post chartership level for those working towards SiLC registration. Sitting alongside the different entry levels will be the capability levels set out in the LCSDF and it is intended to develop Advisor and Mentor roles to assist in career progression process for individuals through a development scheme. An Advisor’s role will be to provide guidance to a candidate on the requirements necessary for gaining a professional qualification with their relevant Professional Organisation and a Mentor’s role will be to offer specific guidance on the requirements for SiLC registration beyond attaining Chartership with the host Professional Organisation. Applicants to the scheme need to be a member (or the equivalent) of one of the SiLC qualifying

Professional Organisations, have a genuine interest in working in land condition and the brownfield land sector, aiming to become a full member of a qualifying Professional Organisation and a qualified SiLC.

## Annual Forum

The SiLC Annual Forum is on the 13 May 2014 at the Royal Society of Chemistry. Speakers include the following:-

- Update on Defra work in Land Quality – David Middleton, Defra
- The work of the Part 2A Expert Panel – Andrew Wiseman, Harrison Grant
- The screening value debate – an interactive session – Hugh Mallett, Buro Happold
- Radon risk in the development process – Jane Smithard, Public Health England
- Flood risk and land contamination – Matt Whitehead, Environment Agency.

Further details will be published on the [SiLC website](#).

## New SiLCs

The SiLC Professional and Technical Panel would like to congratulate the following people on their successful applications to become registered SiLCs:

- Nicola Brookfield, RPS – FGS, C.Geol
- Elizabeth Walker, Atkins Ltd – FGS, C.Geol

### Key Dates for 2014

#### SiLC Introduction Day

- 9 April 2014, RSK office, Cheshire
- 16 October 2014, ERM office, London

#### Exam dates

Round 1 - 3 February 2014

Round 2 - 31 July 2014

### Events - follow the link

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

### In this issue:

SiLC news update	1
SiLC development scheme	1
Annual forum	1
New SiLCs	1
Profile of a SiLC	2
Revised SiLC LCSDF	3
Contaminated Land Capital Grants funding slashed	4
Have your say	4



**“...whilst working on the old Maidstone gasworks site the drillers called me out to examine the multi-coloured and ‘smelly’ soils they were bringing up in boreholes...”**

## Profile of a SiLC

There are registered SiLCs in senior positions across many organisations in the sector and SiLC is well represented on the Land Forum, the National Expert Panel and the C4SL steering group and stakeholder group. There are registered SiLCs on the committees of AGS, SAGTA, SoBRA and EIC. Mike Summersgill holds currently the position of President of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM). Mike has been involved with SiLC since its inception and he is an advocate of practitioners gaining professional qualifications.

Mike began his career training as a water and drainage civil engineer in his home county of Yorkshire and then in the 1980s working in the Middle East and on returning to the UK he has worked for a number of companies including Technical Director at the consultancy Weeks, Head of GeoEnvironmental Engineering at WS Atkins and General Manager at VHE Technology (remediation contractor) to name but a few. He recalls his early foray into ‘Land Condition’ work *“...It was whilst at Weeks that I first encountered ‘Land Condition’ issues, when back in 1990 whilst working on the old Maidstone gasworks site the drillers called me out to examine the multi-coloured and ‘smelly’ soils they were bringing up in boreholes that were being drilled right next to the river wall for my piling design work ...thus began a search for my chemistry school notes and of relevant publications which led me to George Fleming’s publication entitled ‘Recycling Derelict Land’, which was a new edition at ICE Library...”*

Mike realised that this area of work could be an interesting topic and *“...something to get me away from estate road design and flood risk assessments...”* and by 1992 he was project managing work on behalf of the National Rivers Authority (the forerunner to the Environment Agency) at the Wheal Jane Tin Mine in Cornwall following a burst adit which resulted in the pollution of the nearby estuary by metal-laden acidic mine water. From this major incident Mike not only gained a greater understanding of pollution from acid mine drainage but an appreciation of the affects of groundwater and within the next five years he became fully engrossed in the land remediation field, implementing new and innovative remediation technologies and taking on evening studies to broaden his knowledge and understanding of geochemistry and biochemistry whilst continuing his civil engineer day job.

Working on projects at the Woolwich Arsenal, the Strood/Rochester Riverside regeneration and Cambridge gasworks, Mike knew the importance of undertaking sound desk study research of the history of the development of the site would be crucial to understanding key contamination issues and he considered that there was a need for a ‘proper’ Land Condition Record prepared by an appropriately experienced person. At the Woolwich Arsenal site, the preponderance of using asbestos dust to damp down the floors around the furnaces as standard practice in previous centuries wouldn’t have been fully understood without adequate historical document research, the ‘missing’ third gasometer at the Cambridge Gasworks wouldn’t have emerged without the archive newspaper files which documented that it had caught fire in the 1870s, so it was built, burnt down and then had cast iron gas mains laid over it, all during the period between the 2nd & 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey maps and so not recorded on these maps, and at Strood, the Rochester Bridge Trust records indicated the four quay walls had been there over five centuries something which led to changing the anchorage design for the 21st century 5th wall.

When SiLC was started, Mike was one of the six ‘grandparents’ of the scheme, representing CIWEM on the initial discussions in 2001 and he became registered SiLC No. 003. Mike says that *“...creating the first examinations was an interesting step; not so interesting when grandparent SiLCs had to take an exam themselves after 3 years (my first LCR effort was not deemed of sufficient standard)...”*. Mike acknowledges that the relevance of an LCR as an agreed record of the land condition at the site/property is in declined although he states that being a registered SiLC *“...became more of a personal ‘badge’ of competence and recognition by one’s peers of achieving a high standard and achieved through examination, not just by dint of sufficient years’ experience...”*. Mike considers that SiLC is still held in high regard by those working in the sector *“...as a stamp of personal quality and integrity...”*, and he has noticed that it has become something which is specified more by Clients and *“...after all, SiLC remains a portable badge of competence that can set you apart when seeking a career move...”*

Mike is the Managing Partner at SEnSe Associates, he is a Fellow and Trustee of CIWEM and the current President at CIWEM, he has been a Member of Institute of Civil Engineering since 1979 and is a Chartered Engineer.

## Revised SiLC LCSDF

SiLC has updated the Land Condition Skills Development Framework (LCSDF) document which will be made available for download on the SiLC website. The LCSDF is a capability based system intended to complement existing institutional frameworks in supporting an individual's career development. It is a framework for defining levels of capability and measuring progression, it encompasses generic and technical skills set out as a tiered assessment which can be applied to measure consistently the ability of practitioners throughout all stages in their careers.

The capabilities set out in the LCSDF are high level descriptions of key behaviour and skills and a combination of knowledge and experience that an individual needs to be able to do their job effectively. Each capability can be broken down into Levels (reflecting the depth of knowledge and skill required) and Activities (describing specific fields of application) and therefore any job can be described in terms of the specific set and level of capabilities. The capabilities or categories comprise:-

- Generic Categories - Management and leadership, Data and information management, Finance and commercialism, Personal effectiveness, Communication and interpersonal effectiveness, Project management and Health and safety.
- Technical Categories - Environmental Management, Legislation and Regulation, Site Investigation, Risk Assessment, Options Appraisal and Design and Remediation

Each capability is divided into sub-sets of 'activities'. So for example for the capability of Risk Assessment the sub-sets of activities are chemical assessments (e.g. human health risk assessment, hydrogeological risk assessment, ecological risk assessment), particular specialist activities (e.g. radiological assessment or physical assessment for example geotechnical stability risk assessment or flood risk assessment), numerical modelling (e.g. experience of using chemical exposure models) and toxicology (e.g. deriving health criteria values). There are five capability levels set out in the LCSDF which are summarised below:-

L1. Aware – a basic knowledge of key principles.

L2. Basic – a basic level of knowledge that allows a contribution in this area and requires some supervision

L3. Proficient – a level of knowledge and capability

that allows delivery on routine tasks without supervision but may need assistance with more complex task.

L4. Accomplished – a thorough and experiential understanding of the area and underlying principles.

L5. Expert – an unsurpassed depth of knowledge in this area. Widely regarded as a leading authority

To assess the level a practitioner is working at the LCSDF has a set of capability sheets. These are the backbone to the framework and each capability sheet has a list of Activities which define what an individual would be expected to do for each capability and there are Indicators which define what evidence may be needed to demonstrate capability. At Level 1 it is expected that a practitioner has a basic knowledge of key principles and they would rely on procedures, manuals, other team members or a manager for instruction and need close supervision to deliver on routine tasks. It is considered that given the practitioner is in the early learning stage of their career that a specific Level 1 capability sheet setting out the specific tasks and indicators is not necessary. The levels in the capability sheet in the LCSDF start at Level 2 although at this level many of the tasks are presented as targets.

It is expected that a practitioner with the skills and experience necessary for Level 3 would be working towards or capable of applying for Chartership or similar and those practitioners operating at Level 4 will be at a level which would be expected of being capable to apply to become a registered SiLC.

There are no formal measures by which individuals are assessed and the options for assessment are flexible and likely to be designed by employer in partnership with an individual although assisted by applying the framework as a guide and to include coaching and mentoring as necessary. The structure set out in the LCSDF will be used as part of the SiLC development scheme which is intended to encourage each individual to pursue professional membership and qualifications and which will create greater momentum and growth in the SiLC Register and underpin the scheme in the long-term.



***“...those practitioners operating at Level 4 is the level which would be expected of a registered SiLC...”***



## News update by the SiLC Champion

Secretariat  
The SiLC Register  
c/o CIRIA  
Griffin Court  
15 Long Lane  
London EC1A 9PN

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7549 3300  
E-mail: [info@silc.org.uk](mailto:info@silc.org.uk)

### SiLC Champion Feedback

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

**Presentation materials about SiLC are available - contact the secretariat**

Regards

**Kevin Eaton**  
SiLC Champion

### Supporting Organisations



## Contaminated Land Capital Grants funding slashed

In December 2013 Defra wrote to the local authorities informing them on the future of Defra funding for the Contaminated Land Capital Grants Scheme stating that “...Since 2009/10, over £38m has been made available to local authorities through the Grants Scheme. However, as you will be aware the budget for the scheme has undergone significant incremental cuts in line with the economic downturn, decreasing from £17.5m in 2009/10 down to £2m for 2013/14...”. The letter goes on to explain that from April 2014 Defra will no longer be supporting the costs of investigating and remediating contaminated land under Part 2A through the Contaminated Land Capital Grants Scheme although a small amount of funding of £0.5 million annually will be made available for emergency cases only and this is subject to the capital funding in Defra.

Whilst the cessation in funding is associated with the widespread government funding cuts it is cited in the letter that the reason for withdrawing funding is that the revised Part 2A Statutory Guidance published by Defra in April 2012, provides clarity to local authorities on implementing Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act, to focus their attention on the highest-risk sites and to dismiss the lower risk sites more quickly and easily. Given that Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act provides councils with a statutory duty to investigate and ensure the remediation of contaminated land sites so that they do not pose a potential risk to health, it is unclear how this responsibility will be achieved without funding from central government.

A recent report published by The European Commission Joint Research Centre entitled ‘[Progress on the management of contaminated sites in Europe](#)’ presents the current state of knowledge on the management of contaminated sites in Europe. The report is based on data that were collected from the National Reference Centres for Soil in 39 countries belonging to the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIO-NET). The report estimates that there are 2.5 million potentially contaminated sites in Europe where soil contamination is suspected and approximately 45% of these, 1,170,000 sites are identified to date as potentially contaminated sites and 342,000 identified as contaminated sites of which approximately 50,000 sites have been remediated and it is estimated that there could be as many as 340,000 which need to be remediated.

From data provided by nine countries only, on average, 42% of total expenditure on the management of contaminated sites comes from public

budgets with around 81% of the annual national expenditures for the management of contaminated sites is spent on remediation measures, and 15% is spent on site investigations. The UK is not one of the countries which provided data on expenditure, although it is clear that the UK public expenditure on the management of contaminated land is significantly less than other European countries and with the scaling back of the UK Contaminated Land Capital Grants Scheme public expenditure will soon amount to nothing.

Not long after Defra announced the end of funding of the Contaminated Land Capital Grants Scheme the BBC reported on residents from a housing estate built in the 1950’s on a former print works in Blanford, north west of Glasgow where contaminants such as lead and arsenic had been recorded at high concentrations in samples of soil from the residents gardens. The residents of the housing estate had been informed by Sterling Council that they could face a clean up bill of £630,000 with individuals facing bills of up to £70,000 each. In an unusual move the UK Government decided to pay £225,000 towards the costs and soon after the Scottish Government announced it would fund a further £300,000 towards the remediation works. Sterling Council had already agreed to pay £125,000 and so for these residents they have been fortunate to benefit from government south and north of the boarder who may have other political agendas in mind and can by-pass the normal funding channels. The residents of the next housing estate identified as contaminated land may not be as fortunate, but then again with a lack of funding they may never even find out their garden are contaminated.

## Have your say

SiLC has established a group on Linked In. It is open to all SiLCs on the register and there are 84 members currently. So if you are a registered SiLC and want to raise any issues, start a debate or flag up what’s happening in the sector why not submit a post. All views are welcome on this and how best we can use the group as a means of meaningful communication.

Or why not submit an article to the SiLC newsletter

For any formal communication regarding the SiLC scheme please use the e-mail [info@silc.org.uk](mailto:info@silc.org.uk)