

National Brownfield Forum

Meeting Notes

28 November 2024, 11.00am – 3.00pm Teleconference



FINAL

Present:

Darren Beriro (Chair)	HKA
Liz Hart (Deputy Chair)	CL:AIRE
Alex Lee (Outgoing Chair)	Ministry of Housing and Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
Nicola Harries (Secretariat)	Scottish Government
Rob Foers	Environment Agency (EA)
	Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Elliot Paton	Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
Angela Haslam, Theresa Cory & Kirsty Darby	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
Matt Llewellyn & Trystan James	Homes England (HE)
Caroline Thornton	Office of Environmental Protection (OEP)
	Environmental Standards Scotland
Edward Lewis	Outgoing chair of NQMS Steering Group
	Local Government Association (LGA)
Mark Williams	Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Pollution Advisory Group (YALPAG)
Richard Hossack & Darren Watson	National Contaminated Land Officers Group (NCLOG)
Luke Bradley	West & East London Land Contamination Officers' Group (WELLCOG)
Seamus Lefroy Brooks	British Geological Survey (BGS)
David Crook	Geological Society
Stella Keenan	Institution of Environmental Science
	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
Hallan Sambrooke	Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists (AGS)
	Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC)
Gavin Day	Society of Brownfield Risk Assessment (SoBRA)
	CIRIA
Joanna Wragg	Society of Remediation Practitioners (REMSOC)
Ruth Easterbrook	National House Building Council (NHBC)
Richard Boyle	Environmental Industries Commission (EIC)
Tim Elliott	Soil and Groundwater Technology Association (SAGTA)
	Home Builders Federation
Geraint Williams	
Tom Henman	
Joanna Wilding	
Joanne Kwan	
Steve Edgar	
David Jacob	
Jane Thrasher	
Chris Taylor	
Rhodri Williams	
Invited:	
Estelle Dehon KC	Cornerstone Barristers

Apologies:

Emma Tattersdill
Graeme Duggan

UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA)
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
(DEFRA)
Welsh Government (WG)

Andrew Williams

Agenda

1. Administrative:
 - a. Welcome and Apologies
 - b. Introductions of newly represented organisations
 - c. Actions from last meeting
 - d. Membership
2. General Knowledge Share
 - a. Government and Regulatory Update
 - b. Opportunity for clarification on the industry updates as received in advance
 - c. Hot or emerging topics open session
 - d. NQMS Update
 - e. Standards
3. Specific Knowledge Share
 - a. Presentation: Estelle Dehon KC Cornerstone Barristers "Overview and implications of the Supreme Court's decision in *Finch*"
 - b. Question and Answers
4. Update and Discussion: National Brownfield Forum Task and Finish Group to map brownfield development policies and regulatory aspects
5. AOB
 - a. Geoscience Alliance
6. Date of next meeting

Meeting Notes

1. Administrative

a) Welcome & Apologies

Darren Beriro (DB) welcomed everyone to the National Brownfield Forum (NBF) and apologies were given.

b) Introductions of represented organisations

DB introduced Luke Bradley (LB) of Environment Standards Scotland and Rhodri Williams of Home Builders Federation who are new organisations attending the NBF. DB also welcomed those new to the NBF from organisations already represented.

c) Actions from previous meetings

DB reviewed all actions. All were completed except NH confirmed that she had not had a response from "The House" magazine requesting to write an article about the NBF.

Alex Lee (AL) offered to follow up with contacts.

ACTION: AL to enquire with contacts within the House of Lords to see what opportunities there may be to write an article about the work of the NBF.

d) Membership

DB encouraged all to promote the NBF and to identify other groups to be invited to join. It was noted that the forum is now large, so any new members need to demonstrate how it is strategically important for them to join.

2. General Knowledge Share

a) Government and Regulatory Update

DB introduced the different government and regulatory groups represented and welcomed them to provide an update.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

Rob Foers (RF) provided an update on behalf of MHCLG.

He confirmed that since the last meeting there has been a consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which set out clear house building targets and the importance of using brownfield first. The consultation ran from July to October 2024 and MHCLG received 11,000 responses. MHCLG is hoping to provide a response to the consultation by the end of 2024.

POST MEETING UPDATE:

Publication of revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

On 12 December 2024 Government published its response to the 'Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system' consultation that ran between July and September 2024. An overview of the changes made to the planning system are set out here - [Planning overhaul to reach 1.5 million new homes - GOV.UK](#). The full government response can be found here - [Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK](#). And the revised NPPF here - ([National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK](#) – December 2024 NPPF). Various associated planning guidance documents were also updated/revised which can be found here ([Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK](#)).

The changes of particular note are -

- A new standard method for assessing local housing need, which increases the overall target for England from around 305k per year to over 370k. the new approach seeks to direct housing growth to where it is least affordable. The approach seeks to align to the overall government ambition of 1.5m new homes over the next five years.
- To support the commitment to a brownfield first approach, revised policy expects proposals for the redevelopment of brownfield land to be 'approved unless substantial harm would be caused'
- Reiteration of the commitment to explore further action to support and expedite the development of brownfield land in urban areas through 'brownfield passports' with further details to be set out next year
- Changes to Green Belt policy - requiring councils to review Green Belt to meet new housing figures and identifying and prioritising lower quality 'grey belt' land

As noted above the government is continuing to progress brownfield passports. The Government published a working paper in September ([Planning Reform Working Paper: Brownfield Passport - GOV.UK](#)) and is welcoming comments on the content of the paper. This is an informal consultation process and there is no specific deadline to respond. Details of further steps will be set out in due course. Comments can be submitted via email brownfieldpassport@communities.gov.uk or via an online response form from the link above.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Graeme Duggan (GD) was unable to provide a verbal update on DEFRA activities but sent a written update that was shared with attendees.

Sustainable Soil Management in Construction Guidance

Defra are planning to publish a Beta version of the updated Code of Practice for the Sustainable use of Soils on Construction Sites in the next few months. The document will be sent to the projects Technical Advisory Group to review and test the usability of the guidance in its intended format as an online manual, rather than as a fixed PDF page.

At this stage, the guidance will not be a final version. Defra expect it to be actively tested and improved and there will be means for users to provide feedback directly to Defra on any key outstanding issues.

NBF Task and Finish Group

Defra has circulated the invite to the Task and Finish Group and Defra is pleased to confirm its involvement in the group. The group comes at an opportune time to support and inform some major initiatives, including the recently announced [Defra regulation review](#). It is a good opportunity for Defra to gather evidence and understand the views of NBF members and we are keen to participate and support the Task and Finish Group.

Circular Economy

Defra are working on an update to the Environmental Improvement Plan. Through this work we have been involved in some work relating to the circular economy which may be of interest to the NBF. There isn't much information available publicly yet but we are able to provide the following lines:

'In its manifesto, the government committed to reducing waste by moving to a circular economy. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has set this as one of Defra's top five priorities. To progress delivery, Defra's Secretary of State has asked his Department to convene a taskforce of experts from across government, industry, academia and relevant NGOs. Defra is also involving other government departments with strong interests in the delivery of a circular economy to closely cooperate in this work. The Taskforce will help us to develop a Circular Economy Strategy and a series of roadmaps detailing the interventions that the government and others will make on a sector-by-sector basis. The outputs will aim to support economic growth, deliver green jobs, promote efficient and productive use of resources, minimise negative environmental impacts and accelerate to Net Zero.'

Further information will be released in due course.

Environment Agency

Angela Haslam (AH) provided an update on behalf of the Environment Agency. She confirmed that the Regulatory Position Statement 215 – Treating small volumes of contaminated soil and groundwater has been updated [Treating small volumes of contaminated soil and groundwater: RPS 215 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). In addition the land contamination technical guidance land page on .GOV.UK has also been updated [Land contamination: technical guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

AH confirmed that the Environment Agency is approaching the end of the current 4-year funding period in relation to PFAS which included the PFAS risk screening project. The EA is now looking at various options for publishing as much of the research and reports from the risk screening work as possible. One project that is currently being worked on is in relation to the PFAS Remediation Lines of Evidence Evaluation/Decision Framework, which will be presented after this update.

The Environment Agency has currently released a consultation on charge proposals and hourly rates including voluntary remediation. [Environment Agency charge proposals for waste crime and hourly rates - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) Consultation closes on 20 January 2024.

POST MEETING UPDATE:

Groundwater Hazardous substances consultation - On Friday 20th December, The Environment Agency launched the next public consultation on groundwater hazardous substances and non-hazardous pollutants, see link below. If you have any comments please respond to the consultation - [JAGDAG Hazardous Substances/Non-Hazardous Pollutants Consultation December 2024 | wfd uktag](#)

State of Contaminated Land Report (SoCL) – The EA was commissioned by Defra to do a SoCL report on 1st November 2024 with a target report by March 2026.

Kirsty Darby (KD) provided an overview of the new qualitative PFAS Lines of Evidence project that they have recently tendered. She explained that the final deliverable will be the decision making framework for remediation of PFAS contamination in soil and groundwater. and training materials for both internal Environment Agency staff and externally for the wider environmental remediation industry. The deliverables will be made available through CL:AIRE.

The presentation is [available here](#).

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) & Welsh Government

Matt Llewellyn (ML) provided an update on behalf of NRW and Welsh Government.

- NRW is currently in the process of updating RD073 which is NRW position on Land contamination small scale remediation schemes. This is the Wales equivalent of the RPS215 position statement that the Environment Agency have updated last month. The driver for NRW to update it at this stage is to mirror the position of the Environment Agency and address the issue/confusion around *in-situ* groundwater remediation and the applicability of the position to that. It's currently going through internal approval but NRW hopes to get it out shortly.
- ML confirmed that he mentioned in the previous meeting that the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (IEPAW- equivalent of Office for Environmental Protection OEP in England) had received a request regarding historic PCB contamination in Wales and is intending to carry out a report to Welsh ministers expanding the topic out to cover whether the existing legal framework (for contaminated land) is fit for purpose. IEPAW have recently advertised PhD placement to assist with this process [Welsh Government PhD Placement: Contaminated Land in Wales – epwales.org.uk](#)
- NRW is aware that the functionality of Part 2A has come into the spotlight recently across the UK with other agencies/departments and therefore this may be of interest given the legislation and regulations, stat guidance etc are essentially the same in Wales. As ML understand the PhD placement and IEPAW are intending to look into the following in relation to the contaminated land regime:
 - The law no longer delivers its intended objectives and outcomes, either because it is outdated, or it no longer functions in a way which protects the environment
 - Guidance or information about the law is not accessible. The quality and availability of information or guidance impedes deliverability or operability for users.
 - Practical delivery of the law is impeded. Where there are improvements which could be incorporated as a result of advances in science or technology or where barriers exist which frustrate or prevent practical delivery of law.
- NRW have been contacted by Nottingham university on behalf of DEFRA in relation to a rapid review of evidence and data on impacts and risks to animal and human health from land and water contaminated by metals from abandoned metal mines across England and Wales. NRW will be providing what assistance it can on this in terms of sharing data and reports for the project.
- NRW and the coal authority (or Mining Remediation Authority as they are now known) hosted its annual Minexchange event on the 14 November 2024 with this years theme of 'Challenges & Opportunities when Managing Legacy Mining Sites in Wales and the UK'. Essentially a conference bringing together leading experts from industry, academia, NGOs and government agencies to discuss the latest developments.

Scottish Government (SG) and Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)

Caroline Thorton (CT) provided an update on behalf of SG and SEPA. She confirmed:

Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018: Proposed Standard Conditions for Registration level activities. This consultation closed on November 24th and SEPA will be considering responses over the next period. Relevant for land contamination and brownfield sites are a proposed new tiered system of registration in relation to the old paragraph 9 and 19 waste exemptions relating to the deposit / re-use of waste soil.

Scottish Government has now issued a revision of the Environmental Quality Standards and Status Directions 2024. The directions update the environmental standards and ways of classifying status, which are both necessary to support the River Basin Management Planning process. Scottish Government has published these Directions on the Scottish Government's website ([Water environment: legislation](#)). The directions come into force on the 1st February 2025. In line with these new standards, SEPA has updated its guidance in relation to [Assigning Groundwater Assessment Criteria for pollutant inputs](#) (WAT-PS-10-02) and [Land Contamination and Impacts on the Water Environment](#) (formerly known as the 'Brown booklet'). We have also published an associated [List of groundwater standards](#). The revised SEPA guidance is based on the outputs of the 2021 Scottish Government & SEPA joint consultation on the Directions. SEPA will be liaising with key stakeholders in January and February 2025. As with the directions – the SEPA revised guidance will apply from 1st February 2025. However, we understand that risk assessments for activities impacting on groundwater may have just been completed or be in progress using the previous standards and methodology during this period. To take account of this, risk assessments undertaken using old or new standards and methodology will be accepted for a transition period after the 1st February date. Further [guidance on the transition](#) is available on the SEPA website.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)

Edward Lewis (ED) provided an update on behalf of DAERA and NIEA. He confirmed that the DAERA minister is currently reviewing the governance for environmental protection and assessing whether there should be an independent agency in Northern Ireland. ED confirmed that there is still no progress in bringing a Part 3 (equivalent to Part 2A in England & Wales) into force.

Office of Environmental Protection (OEP)

Darren Watson provided an update on behalf of the OEP.

- OEP are close to finalising its next (2023/2024) EIP progress report, which will be laid in parliament in early January 2025. With the change in government, OEP are focusing on opportunities to improve the natural environment in addition to fulfilling its duty to report on progress. OEP retain a focus on biodiversity and this year look more in-depth at the farming sector and incentive schemes. However, for soils, while there is a focus on agricultural soils, OEP highlight that urban and brownfield soils should not be omitted from governments plans and present an opportunity to further improve the environment.
- OEP are continuing to develop its approach to soils and what it can add in the urban space, alongside its work on chemicals which is focusing this year on governments EU-exit approach to regulation.
- OEP have initiated a project to develop circular material use rate calculations and Sankey plots of primary material flows for both England and Northern Ireland as part of its work on circular economy (noting this is one of Defra's 5 new priority areas)
- OEP is working on a project to explore the approach to and efficacy of monitoring of compliance with environmental standards by public authorities. This is aimed at obtain a broad perspective on the compliance monitoring landscape across several environmental policy areas and acting as a pilot into how the OEP will conduct this work through looking at compliance within the waste and installations sector. To be published c.March 2025.
- OEP have published its latest [Complaints report](#) for July to September 2024. OEP received 145 enquiries and 13 complaints in the period. Ongoing investigations include Emergency Authorisations for neonicotinoid pesticide use; Classification and

adaptation of Special Protection Areas (Northern Ireland); Classification and adaptation of Special Protection Areas (England); DAERA guidance on assessing applications for ammonia emitting agricultural developments; and Regulation of combined sewer overflows (CSOs).

- The complaints team have also undertaken 'horizon scanning' identifying potential future topics including on the waste hierarchy. This includes scoping the duty of care and waste hierarchy obligations imposed on Local Authorities with the potential to explore policies for, and the regulation of, the waste hierarchy by the Environment Agency

Homes England (HE)

Mark Williams provided an update to the group about Homes England. He confirmed:

- As part of the Government's New Homes Accelerator initiative, Homes England has been working with MHCLG to establish a new team, ATLAS 2.0 (Advisory Team for Large Application Sites), to support Local Authorities and developers in unlocking and accelerating stalled housing sites. The focus is on large sites with >1,500 homes and a 'Call for Sites' closed at the end of October, with the team now reviewing and prioritising applications for support.
- In September, Homes England entered into a Joint Venture with Lloyds Bank and Barratt Homes, called the MADE Partnership, to act as a Master Developer for large residential-led sites from between 1,000 and 10,000+ homes, including Brownfield sites and new Garden Villages. The first deal was announced at the beginning of November with Tameside Council, Greater Manchester, for the Godley Green Garden Village, which will comprise over 2,000 new homes.

National Contaminated Land Officers Group (NCLOG)

Hallan Sambrooke provided an update on behalf of NCLOG.

NCLOG has recently hosted a successful webinar with CL:AIRE on Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice (DoW CoP) and Material Management Plans (MMPs), with a focus on regulator training. Other webinars are in the pipeline, subjects are proposed to include ground gas, alternative brownfield land uses and battery energy storage systems on greenfield sites.

The NCLOG co-chairs have accepted an invitation to join the NQMS Steering Group.

NCLOG will be presenting again at SoBRA/RSC's Winter Conference in December and a further presentation in Scotland on the 'Regulator's Guide to Cover Systems and their Verification' is proposed early in 2025.

Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Pollution Advisory Group (YALPAG)

Stella Keenan provided an update on behalf of YALPAG. She confirmed that YALPAG's Land Technical Group meet twice a year with the last meeting being held on 25 September 2024. She confirmed that YALPAG guidance documents continue to be reviewed and updated as and when necessary. The Verification Requirements for Cover Systems (Version 4.1) was issued in June 2021 and is due for review. The Planning guidance was reviewed, updated and issued in July 2023. The Verification Requirements for Gas Protection Systems guidance is currently

in the process of being reviewed and updated.

West and East London Land Contamination Officer's Group (WELLCOG)

Gavin Day provided an update on behalf of WELLCOG.

WELLCOG met in September 2024:

- Graham Shields from the London Geochemical and Isotope Centre (or LOGIC) at UCL presented on regional geochemistry and talked about geochemical analyses.
- Robert Tyler from the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC) presented on RBKC's approach to addressing significantly elevated levels of substances (such as lead, asbestos and PAH's) for smaller develop sites not associated with industry. The approach aims to pick up significant land contamination issues that are known to commonly exist with made ground across urban areas through Planning – see CLC2 guidance at [Land contamination | Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea](#). It was highlighted that, despite knowing that substances such as lead are often very elevated (i.e. average levels of 1000mg/kg plus) in areas not associated with past industry and a relatively large proportion of development work being associated with small developments (such as conversions and refurbishments), many authorities do not address such contamination through the planning regime in line with planning policy, guidance and, very often, planning application forms.
- Concerns have been raised by contaminated land officers who have been moved from Environmental Health Departments to Planning and Development Departments. In particular, officers identified that broadly they are unable to undertake Part 2A work, in some cases even when there are clear risks evident, and have been blocked from commenting on developments by planning managers where land contamination issues clearly need to be addressed. Other officers highlighted that they had been moved to other sections of their Council's (for example waste, licensing, etc.) and had experienced problems due to the lack of understanding by managers, without environmental health/contaminated land backgrounds. With many Environmental Health Departments changing or being disbanded, this was highlighted as a risk to the delivery of robust land contamination work under both Part 2A and Planning.
- There was discussion around Planning Authorities not acting upon land contamination advice for some developments. This is a particular concern, given that planning is the most common route by which local authorities say they are addressing contaminated land issues.

In terms of future actions:

- WELLCOG will be undertaking a survey of London Authorities to establish the current status of land contamination in the capital and obtain further information on some of the challenges highlighted above.

b. Industry Update

CL:AIRE update

CL:AIRE celebrated its 25 Anniversary at an event at the Royal Society of Arts, London on 21 November 2024. It was great seeing friends, guests and members at the event.

Projects/initiatives/publications (listed alphabetically)

Aggregates from Inert Wastes Quality Protocol

CL:AIRE continues to participate on the Environment Agency Aggregates Task Group, the most recent meeting was held on 22 September, with the focus continuing on input proposals for the new framework. CL:AIRE is working with its own internal working group feeding into the work and has submitted its proposed changes to input descriptors and exclusions, which will now be reviewed alongside submissions from other task group members.

Category Four Screening Levels Project

The C4SL mercury report was published in August. The team are working hard to get the next C4SL reports reviewed and published which are likely to be 111-TCA and MTBE.

Concawe Sustainable Management Practices Project

CL:AIRE has been working with Concawe on a Sustainable Management Practices (SMP) project, which has now been completed and reported to Concawe. The report is due to be published on Concawe's website this month.

DoW CoP

CL:AIRE has consulted with various industry groups and the Environment Agency regarding its plans for version 3. CL:AIRE has successfully delivered training in 2024 in Reading, Manchester, Cardiff and more recently in Belfast where representatives from Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland attended.

CL:AIRE is continuing with its auditing, offering its new Insight service and DoW CoP international.

EiCLaR (enhanced *in situ* bioremediation)

The EC-funded [EiCLaR project](#) is completing in December 2024, with CL:AIRE's knowledge transfer activities significantly ramping up. CL:AIRE has recorded six podcasts, interviewing work package leaders about themselves and their involvement in the project, which have been uploaded on the [EiCLaR website](#). CL:AIRE is working on the final project newsletter, animation, a number of technical bulletins and education pack. All will all be ready at the end of December 2024.

Gas Protection Verification Accreditation Scheme (GPVS)

The autumn 2024 interviews for GPVS accreditation has now finished. There were eleven applicants within this round consisting of five Specialist (SGPV) and six Technician (TGPV) grade applicants (including two resubmissions). Five have been awarded (3 TGPV and 2 SGPV), three postponed due to unsuitability of supporting documentation, two not awarded and one withdrawn. CL:AIRE has rolled out the auditing plan of CPD for those SGPVs currently coming up for renewal. In addition, CL:AIRE is starting to plan the 2023/2024 audits of the declarations submitted under the GPVS. Over 400 declarations have now been purchased since the scheme started.

The next GPVS accreditation window opens 2 January 2025 – 28 February 2025.

ICEC - MCM

CL:AIRE continues to support the Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Centre for Mineral-based Construction Materials (ICEC-MCM), led by University College London. It held the end of project meeting on 19 November and CL:AIRE will be promoting the project outputs via its eAlert.

Industry Profiles

CL:AIRE has completed phase one of this project, preparing a prototype of the web portal and summarising the results of the industry questionnaire and workshop.

Legacy Wastes in the Coastal Zone

This research project, led by Newcastle University, ended in July 2024 and CL:AIRE will produce a research bulletin to summarise the key messages of the research.

National Quality Mark Scheme (NQMS)

CL:AIRE continues to perform the administrative role for the NQMS and hosting the website. The NQMS steering group has recently appointed Liz Hart as the new chair. The last meeting was held on 7 November 2024.

Natural Source Zone Depletion (NSZD) Guidance and Monitored Natural Attenuation (MNA) Guidance

CL:AIRE ran two very successful training sessions at RemTech Europe to promote the NSZD and MNA guidance documents in the UK. CL:AIRE is continuing to work on promoting the two guides through platform presentations and webinars.

PFAS

CL:AIRE continues to work on two PFAS bulletins, one on addressing implications on the management of excavated soils and another on methods to detect and quantify PFAS. In addition there are a number of potential demonstration projects also in the pipeline

Piling Guidance

The updating of the Piling and Penetrative Ground Improvement Methods on Land Affected by Contamination guidance has now been reviewed by the TRG and is with CL:AIRE preparing it for publication.

Sustainable Remediation

The SuRF-UK steering group is working on updating the framework document. It will be significantly streamlined linking out to the new SuRF-UK resources.

The International Sustainable Remediation Alliance (ISRA)/SuRF International met on 19 November 2024 at which a new group, SuRF Germany is forming and representatives joined the meeting. There are now representatives from the following countries/regions: UK, France, USA, Canada, South Africa, Italy, Australia, Taiwan, Japan, Brasil, Europe, Latin America

Training and events

CL:AIRE will be launching its 2025 training calendar very shortly, with the following courses being run, with a number of new ones being delivered.

- Definition of Waste Code of Practice (DoW CoP) - classroom
- Non-Licensed Work including NNLW - for Land Professionals - classroom
- Asbestos in Soil and Construction & Demolition Materials CAR-SOIL™ - classroom
- Verification of Gas Protection Systems - classroom
- Introduction to Controlled Waters Detailed Quantitative Risk Assessment – classroom
- Introduction to Human Health Quantitative Risk Assessment – classroom
- Practical Aspects of Ground Gas, Vapour and Water Monitoring & Sampling – classroom
- Ground Gas Risk Assessment - More Than Calculating a GSV – classroom
- Good Practice for Risk Assessment for Coal Mine Gas Emissions – virtual
- Introduction to Soil and Groundwater Risk Assessment – eLearning
- Introduction to Sustainable Remediation Appraisal – eLearning
- Introduction to Brownfield Site Investigation – eLearning
- Asbestos Awareness for Land Professionals – Full & Refresher – eLearning
- Statistics for Comparing Soil Contamination Data to a Critical Concentration – classroom - **New**
- Understanding the Principles and Practice of Sustainable remediation – classroom – **New 2025**
- Groundwater Monitoring and Sampling – classroom – **New 2025**
- Advanced Conceptual Site Modelling – classroom - **New 2025**
- Monitored Natural Attenuation and Natural Source Zone Depletion – classroom - **New 2025**

All will be available to book from [Book or buy \(claire.co.uk\)](http://Book%20or%20buy%20(c%20claire.co.uk)) soon.

CL:AIRE's involvement in recent and planned Conferences and Events:

Contamination & Geotech Expo 11-12 September 2024 (Birmingham, UK)

CL:AIRE was a partner organisation for this annual event.

RemTech Europe, 16-20 September 2024 (Ferrara, Italy)

CL:AIRE was represented on the Scientific Committee, and chaired several scientific sessions.

Sustainathon 2024, 24-25 September 2024 (online)

CL:AIRE was represented on the organising committee and chaired several hours of the event.

International Committee on Contaminated Land 17-18 October 2024 (Bern, Switzerland)

CL:AIRE presented 25 years of CL:AIRE and Sustainable Land Reuse in the UK.

Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) Europe 35th Annual Meeting, 11-15 May 2025 (Vienna, Austria)

CL:AIRE will be hosting a session on hazards and risks in soil management.

AquaConSoil, 16-20 June 2025 (Liège, Belgium)

CL:AIRE will be attending and participating at this event.

CL :AIRE would like to encourage people to register with CL:AIRE's website and subscribe to its ealert to keep up to date with all its activities. It is free. [Home \(claire.co.uk\)](http://Home%20(c%20claire.co.uk))

UK Environmental Law Association

UKELA has continued its usual programme of events and participation in relevant consultations. Recent consultation responses which may be of interest (copies of which can be found on UKELA's website) are as follows:

- Response to the consultation on fisheries management measures within Response to the OEP's consultation on its draft Strategy and Enforcement policy (UKELA response published 9/10/24).
- Scottish Offshore MPAs (UKELA response published 11/10/24).

Specialist in Land Condition

The Chair of the SiLC Professional and Technical Panel (PTP) is Louise Beale and Lucy Bethell is Deputy Chair. The PTP includes organisational and technical representatives from the constituent professional bodies and AGS, as well as a small number of co-opted members.

The last SiLC PTP meeting was held virtually on 17/09/24 and the next meeting is due on 02/12/24. There are currently 200 SiLCs and 114 SQPs with an application round currently underway. We are continuing to offer free conversion to SQP for existing SiLCs and have aligned subscription rates for SiLCs with or without SQP status to remove any disincentives for conversion.

Other current areas of SiLC activity include:

- The SiLC PTP is undertaking a review of the SiLC application and assessment process seeking to update and streamline the process with the aim of increasing the size of the SiLC register whilst maintaining SiLC's high professional standards and competence. The current focus is on the format of the exam paper, guidance and support to assessors, the format of the Introduction Day, updating the website and reviewing the SiLC criteria.
- Following the successful SiLC/ CIRIA Soil CoP Stakeholder workshop on '[Future regulation of excavated soils](#)', SiLC published three papers which set the scene around material reuse issues, presented the findings of the workshop and ideas for improvements. [SiLC_CIRIA-COP_Reuse-workshop_3_options_to_consider_Rev00.pdf](#) A related article was placed in Ground Engineering '[Regulation makes reuse of excavated materials hard, but there are opportunities to change this](#)' | [Ground Engineering](#)
- Continuing to raise awareness about limitations to reuse of excavated materials due to the EA approach to waste permitting which is delaying regeneration projects and could limit the government's ability to meet its brownfield first and sustainability agenda. This includes plans to write and meet with government and the EA and providing feedback to CL:AIRE on DoWCoP V3 draft.
- SiLC are looking for volunteers to support collaboration with CIEH and NCLOG to develop a template for peer reviews to support local authority officers.
- Tom Henman has taken over from Roger Clark as SiLC representative on the NQMS Steering Group and we have been working on modifications to the Overview and Appendix 1 documents.
- SiLC held a webinar on 'Maximising Natural Capital Benefits for Brownfield and Sustainable Development' on 20 June 2024 with good attendance from young careers professionals.
- The Climate and Sustainability sub group held a session with speakers from the Green Finance Initiative and DEFRA focussing on policy and frameworks related to land condition and brownfield sites.
- SiLC is looking for volunteers to support to review and update to the National Brownfield Skills Framework (but not the accompanying Excel tool as our 2023 survey suggested that this is not widely used). This will include its expansion to cover relevant technical

competencies being reviewed by the recently established SiLC Climate & Sustainability sub-group.

- SiLC is currently planning the 2025 Annual Forum, which is to be held online on 27 March, and will be seeking speakers. SiLCs are invited to submit case studies of successful projects.

The Institution of Environmental Sciences

Recent activities for the Land Condition Community include:

- The annual Land Condition Symposium is being held next year on the 11th March at the National Brownfield Institute in Wolverhampton. This has been pushed back from its usual November date. Details will be shared when available.
- The Land Condition and Institute of Air Quality Management plan to release their final draft of their joint guidance *Air quality monitoring on contaminated land sites* for member consultation in February 2025. The Early Careers Networks for both communities have fed into the draft guidance.
- The IES signed a letter of support for the latest DoWCop V3 draft after review.
- The IES has been holding a number of events dedicated to highlighting career pathways in the specialism, with the [next scheduled](#) for the 26th November. They are available to watch on our [YouTube channel](#).
- The Community will be holding a virtual roundtable discussion in the New Year on PFAS.
- The Community has been working on an agreed definition for the land condition specialism.
- The latest IES journal focused on [Net Gain](#), including an article on brownfield regeneration and biodiversity net gain.

Society of Brownfield Risk Assessment (SoBRA)

Conferences

The RSC Toxicology Group / SoBRA joint Winter Conference (and SoBRA AGM) is on Tuesday 10 December 2024 at Burlington House, London, and online. Further details at <https://sobra.org.uk/events/>.

Sub-groups

The active sub-groups are:

- NAPL
- Ground Gases (with a radon working group)
- Controlled waters and climate change
- Early Careers

Publications

Updates to the four Practical Tips documents (human health, controlled waters, vapour intrusion, improving risk assessment - field to desk tips) to reflect current legislation and guidance.

Update and re-issue of the Groundwater vapour generic assessment criteria report (V2.0 September 2024).

Details of all recent publications are available at [SoBRA Reports](#).

Accreditation scheme

The first 2024 window was open during February, where there were 6 applicants for either RSoBRA or ASoBRA and the second window was open during August, where there were 7 applicants for either RSoBRA or ASoBRA.

Currently there are 113 accredited members, of which 54 are ASoBRA for one or more disciplines. Interviews and awards have not yet been finalised for the August window.

Other activities/events

The early careers sub-group have organised another series of freely available webinars for 2024. Three webinars have taken place, with a further scheduled for early December:

- Tools to support NAPL risk assessment (Anna Hitchmough & Caroline Walker 6/8/24)
- The importance of the ground model (Chris Everitt 24/10/24)
- Newcastle Allotments Lead Biomonitoring Study (Lindsay Bramwell 14/11/24)
- Part 2A investigation of vapour intrusion from chlorinated solvents (Simon Burr 3/12/24)

Access to and details of all the previous webinar recordings can be found here [Early Careers Webinars – SoBRA](#). A recently call to SoBRA member for more participants has resulted in an expanded membership of the group.

CIRIA

Climate change and land project has started and we are carrying out an industry survey. Here is the link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XK82BKX>

PFAS - CIRIA delivered our fifth PFAS conference on 12Nov 2024 and has published C819 Good practice guidance: some per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in soil and the water environment in October and here is more information

<https://www.ciria.org/ItemDetail?iProductCode=C819D&Category=DOWNLOAD&WebsiteKey=3f18c87a-d62b-4eca-8ef4-9b09309c1c91>

CIRIA understand PFAS is a fast moving subject and CIRIA's PFAS Form will produce a web portal to capture new developments in the future. We are now looking for case studies and news items.

Microplastics - CIRIA has also started a new project that will produce good practice in managing microplastics in construction projects. It is about understanding the impact of microplastics, fate and transport. which parts of construction process what we should do better to reduce the spread.

Soil Community of Practice is now planning for 2025 – we are looking for case studies, blogs, event ideas and speakers.

Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists (AGS)

Recent successes of the AGS Working Group: AGS CLWG

- Virtual meeting was held on 10th October with 30 members in attendance.
- Kirsty Darby, Environment Agency, provided a presentation for the last Contaminated Land meeting, the talk was on a Lines of Evidence Approach to Assess the Effectiveness of PFAS Remediation Technologies.
- David Carr, Environmental and Community Protection, Dacorum Borough Council, provided a CLO perspective on common mistakes he encounters when reviewing reports in a previous edition of the AGS Magazine.
- AGS held a conference in November entitled 'We Need to Talk About Groundwater'.

The main topics / projects the Working Group are currently working on:

- The CLWG received updates from the NHBC, SiLC, SoBRA, NBF, Environment Agency and the OEP.
- A mind map of standards relating to site investigation is being finalised along with an article on forecourt drilling.
- There is strong support to update the former Department of Environment Industry Profiles.
- An article is being drafted on gas monitoring data and the AGS format.
- An update was provided on standards including BS 10175, BS 8576 and BS 10177.
- An article on SuRF UK Guidance to be drafted.
- An article on turbidity in piling is being finalised.

- An article on historic lab methods vs current methods to be drafted (focus on asbestos risk assessment).
- A subgroup within CLWG has reviewed and provided comments on v3 of the DoWCoP.
- An article on history of remediation in Swansea to be drafted.

The topics / projects the Working Group will be looking at in the future:

- An article is being prepared following the publication of CIRIA's PFAS guidance. The main authors of the guidance are CLWG members.
- The Data Management Group, with support from the CLWG and the Labs Group, have organised a meeting in Birmingham in November. The aim is to consolidate existing AGS ERES codes and ensure consistency in reporting of asbestos, WAC, dissolved and total metals and PFAS.
- The AGS annual conference is taking place 1 May 2025 in London.

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

RICS responded to the September consultation on NPPF supporting brownfield development.

NHBC

NHBC 2025 Standards are now available and come into effect from the 1st January 2025. Free downloadable copies are available here: [NHBC Technical Standards | NHBC](#) where you can also find a video that goes through the changes in the 2025 version. A copy of the complete list of changes to the 2025 Standards for reference is [available here](#). NHBC would also recommend subscribing to its monthly newsletter Clicks & Mortar for all the latest news from NHBC, which can be found here [Clicks & Mortar | NHBC](#).

We are continuing the successful 'Clean capping requirements for brownfield land remediation' webinar, which this year will be free and held on Wednesday 29th January 2025, 10am-1pm.

About the webinar

An important part of completing the remediation of brownfield sites is the topsoil and subsoil used to cap the site. Delivered in association with Boughton Loam (formerly British Sugar TOPSOIL) and Tim O'Hare Associates, this webinar brings together leading experts to discuss the key requirements in:

- the selection and sampling of appropriate soil sources
- the assessment of site-won and imported soils
- soil compaction - problems, causes, avoidance and repair
- the design, placement and verification of the clean capping layer.

This is key to successfully clearing NHBC and Local Authority conditions, and you will leave the webinar with greater knowledge on the various sources of topsoil, pitfalls, sampling and testing and the Local Authority/NHBC requirements.

Registration details will be available on the webinar section of our website soon.

British Geological Survey

BGS won two Brownfield Awards in October for its research on the dermal bioavailability of PAH in soils - 'best research, innovation or advancement of science in the brownfield sector' and the coveted 'judges choice award'. The work represents a long-term collaboration with National Grid, WSP and the University of Nottingham to develop this science area.

BGS is co-supervising a PhD research project with the School of Public Health, Imperial College London. The supervisory team includes Daniela Fecht (ICL), Darren Beriro (BGS), and Diana Varaden (ICL). The project is looking at social and population health impacts of neighbourhood changes after redevelopment of contaminated brownfield land. This is a 3-year research project

funded by the London Interdisciplinary Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership (LISS DTP).

BGS has been invited by GO-Science to lead a Community of Interest on the Future of the Subsurface, alongside The Geological Society of London. The network, 'Future of the Subsurface Community of Interest', is set to be a community of decision makers from Government departments, local authorities, regulators and others in the public sector involved in subsurface policy and planning. <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/new-community-to-support-management-of-the-subsurface/>

The Urban Interactive 3D models tool, hosted within BGS GeoIndex (onshore), was launched as a free to view service in 2021. It now includes a conceptual model featuring Liverpool and Warrington. Further information is available. <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/what-lies-beneath-liverpool/>

The G-BASE topsoil geochemistry database and interpolated maps have been made available for all to view and download for free on the UK Soil Observatory (UKSO) web portal. <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/40-years-and-counting-new-topsoil-data-provides-most-extensive-snapshot-of-environmental-pollution-effects/>

BGS attended the recent AGS lab working group meeting to present on the differences between the new BS ISO 8259 (BS ISO 8259) which overlaps with BS ISO 17924 (BARGE UBM).

BGS responded to the MHCLG consultation on the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes.

GSNI has launched the new Engineering Geology Map for Belfast. This is an update to the original 1970s map and has been made to meet the needs of numerous geotechnical, civil and environmental engineering stakeholders.

Recent Publications

Dowell, S., Humphrey, O., Isaboke, J. et al. Plutonium isotopes can be used to model soil erosion in Kenya. Environ Geochem Health 46, 338 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10653-024-02084-2>

Gonzalez Quiros, A., MacAllister, D.J., MacDonald, A. et al. De-risking green energy from mine waters by developing a robust hydrogeological conceptual model of the UK Geoenergy Observatory in Glasgow. Hydrogeol J 32, 1307–1329 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10040-024-02778-y>

The Environmental Industries Commission

2024 Achievements - Driving the agenda and influencing policy

A Plan for the Next UK Government.

Many of our manifesto asks reflected in policy. This progress was further strengthened in the Autumn Budget, which acknowledged our call for a clearer, funded pipeline of work and a commitment to tackling the climate and biodiversity crisis.

Represented in consultation submissions.

Submissions include the Budget, National Planning Policy Framework, Great British Energy, Grey Belt, EFRA Select Committee priorities and the Definition of Waste: Code of Practice and DowCoP V3 consultation.

New Public Affairs Group.

Will further unite members to advance our industry's agenda and deliver priorities for our sector.

Continuing to build robust relationships locally, across the devolved nations.

Over 20 Task Force events enabled members to connect with Government, clients and other key stakeholders.

Link to the summary report [EIC's One Crisis: A One Solution Approach Seminar.](#)

2024 Achievements – Knowledge sharing and networking

Brought together industry leaders, environmental supply chain experts and policy makers to develop a plan for the 'triple crisis' of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

Providing guidance to non-specialists and developers.

The [EIC Nature and Biodiversity Guide](#), written primarily for scheme developers, programme managers and major contractors, the guide introduces Biodiversity Net Gain (in England) and natural capital, and how these apply in practice throughout a development project life cycle.

Develop the next generation of leaders through our Emerging Professionals Network.

This thriving network, has groups in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales offering opportunities to develop new skills, expand connections and engage with influential thought leaders. [Emerging Professionals Winter Reception](#) which will be held on 12 December 2024 in London.

Raise your profile and enjoy networking at the Consultancy and Engineering Gala Dinner and the EIC programme of events

Join over 300 industry leaders and professionals at the [Consultancy and Engineering Awards](#) to celebrate the achievements of our sector. This event is open to EIC and ACE members and is on 30 January 2025.

2025 Targets

Championing our sector as a key enabler and delivery partner for the Industrial Strategy and sustainable infrastructure development.

Opening doors for members to engage with policy makers, civil servants and clients on critical issues like climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss, while highlighting how the environmental industries can deliver effective solutions.

Attracting and retaining top talent by promoting our sector as an exciting and rewarding career choice and supporting inclusive workplaces through our [People and HR Group](#) and [Emerging Professionals Network](#).

Advancing best practices across environmental services. We will showcase innovative solutions, produce client guides, and roadmaps on flood infrastructure, national development plans, and the circular economy.

Land Contamination Task Force Activities

- Sub-group responded to CL:AIRE request for views on proposed DowCoP v3
- Ongoing activities around Land Remediation Tax Relief including noting Treasury's intention (announced in the 2024 budget) to consult on Land Remediation Relief in Spring 2025
- Response to relevant Consultation

c. Hot or emerging topics

Members wanted people to be aware that Dan Corry has been appointed to lead a Defra regulation review. Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dan-corry-appointed-to-lead-defra-regulation-review>

An industry survey in relation to geo-related risks from climate change and extreme weather effects to land development has recently been published that people are encouraged to complete. Further information and access to the survey is here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XK82BKX>. The closing date is 1 December 2024. It was flagged that a lot of work on this topic had already been carried out for the Environment Agency a few years ago as a research project which would be worth trying to get access to.

Two recent news items, people may be interested in, in relation to land contamination issues.

- Betham, North Yorkshire are bringing legal case over PFAS contamination: [Bentham residents bring legal case over 'forever chemicals' - BBC News](#)

- Cleathill natural gas explosion: [Two dead after explosion in Bedford following heat pump drilling in the summer | Ground Engineering \(geplus.co.uk\)](#)

As a result of the explosion, AGS confirmed that they plan to write an awareness note about the potential risks of natural gas pockets.

d. National Quality Mark Scheme for Management of Land Contamination (NQMS) Sub Group

Liz Hart (LH) new chair of the NQMS steering group provided an update.

She expressed thanks for Seamus Lefroy-Brooks for all his efforts and hard work developing and prompting the NQMS & welcomed NCLOG. LH explained how important it is to have both Regulators and Industry supporting the NQMS declaration process and also showing support for the scheme as the SQP is a mechanism of demonstrating an individual is suitably qualified in land contamination assessments.

Tom Henman who sits on NBF representing SiLC has now replaced Roger Clark who has stepped back, thanks to Roger Clark for his years of support.

The NQMS considered new members of the Steering Group, it was suggested this include SEPA (EA and NRW already represented) and to try and improve links with planning since this remains an area where improvements are needed in quality of reports – eg to reach out to Home Builders Federation, LGA Planning Advisory Service and Planning Officers Society, any other suggestions or contacts would be welcomed.

Following the last NBF meeting, members were asked to nominate potential candidates for deputy chair role. The steering group received two nominations for the role. Theresa Cory from the Environment Agency is the nomination the steering group voted to take forward by agreement with NBF.

The NBF agreed to Theresa's appointment.

The SG discussed and included in the updated terms of reference the importance of trying to have the Chair and Deputy Chair roles filled by industry and Regulators to maintain a balance and reflect the importance of the NQMS across the sector. It might not always be possible, but it was felt this should try to be maintained if possible.

The SG had a reflective look at progress over the last 10years and considered how to increase uptake of the scheme. It was agreed that focus would be around:

- Promoting NQMS in planning with consideration of stronger reference to NQMS in the planning portal and consider updating wording around demonstrating competency in the LCRM.
- Developing a simple marketing strategy considering what's been done in the past and building on this, targeting the concept of right first time and cost benefits of this, specifically to housebuilders where a lot of poor reporting is still seen (ties to the Government initiative to supporting home building – delays in planning are sometimes just a consequence of poor site conceptualisation)
- Review the competencies for the SQP, make sure these are still appropriate and check these against the SQP awarding process. Provide a summary of this as feedback to the awarding body and provide feedback to the NBF of any recommendations.

General update to end of June 2024.

- 153 SQPs
- 323 Declarations

e. Standards

Nicola Harries (NH) shared the update that Mike Smith kindly provided outlining the new standards that are in preparation or out for consultation. Sincere thanks were given to Mike Smith for collating and sharing this information. Full details are [provided here](#).

2. Specific Knowledge Share

Presentation was provided by Estelle Dehon KC : Overview and implications of the Supreme Court's decision in *Finch*".

DB thanked Estelle Dehon for a very informative presentation. It has helped NBF members understand the implementation of the Supreme Court's judgement.

3. Update and Discussion: National Brownfield Forum Task and Finish Group to map brownfield development policies and regulatory aspects

DB provided an update on the proposed task and finish group. He explained that discussions had been had with representatives from MHCLG, Defra, Environment Agency and OEP, all were supportive of the work. He confirmed that a terms of reference has been shared with the representatives which identified the purpose and scope of the task and finish group. It defined four questions to ensure clear boundaries of activities and avoid scope creep, with the output being a systems diagram and short briefing note:

1. Which environmental policies are relevant to BF land and what is the desired influence of each of these?
2. How do these policies interact with one and other i.e. are they synergistic, antagonistic, mutualistic or agnostic?
3. Where do examples of policy impact exist and where are there knowledge gaps?
4. For the impact examples what are the potential sustainability impacts on BF development?

The feedback was that the work needs to ideally be delivered in draft by end of March 2025 to be impactful and to align with other review work that has been commissioned by Defra <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dan-corry-appointed-to-lead-defra-regulation-review>

Members felt that the programme was extremely ambitious, but recognised that it is important that this work inputs to the wider agenda of work that is being carried out by government.

4. AOB

a. Geoscience Alliance

AL confirmed that at present there has not been any progress that he has been made aware of yet.

5. Date of Next Meetings

- 3 April 2025
- 8 July 2025
- 20 November 2025

DB thanked everyone and closed the meeting.