

National Brownfield Forum

Meeting Notes

15th March 2022, 11.00am – 3.00pm Teleconference



Final

Present:

Alex Lee (*Chair*)

WSP

Nicola Harries (*Secretariat*)
Graeme Duggan

CL:AIRE
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Rob Foers

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

Richard Boyle
Trystan James
Angela Haslam
Edward Lewis

Homes England (HE)
Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Environment Agency (EA)
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)

Darren Beriro
Simon Cole
Tom Henman
Seamus Lefroy Brooks
David Rudland
Stella Keenan

British Geological Survey (BGS)
Society of Brownfield Risk Assessment (SoBRA)
Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC)
Chair of NQMS Steering Group
Environmental Protection UK (EPUK)
Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Pollution Advisory Group (YALPAG)

Jane Thrasher
Steve Edgar

Environmental Industries Commission (EIC)
The Society of Remediation Practitioners (REMSOC)

Jenny Lightfoot
Emma Tattersdill
David Jacob
Rebekah Norbury

Geological Society
UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA)
National House Building Council
National Contaminated Land Officers Group (NCLOG)

Joanne Kwan
Paul Nathanail

CIRIA
LQM

Apologies:

Matt Llewellyn
Max Tolley
Geraint Williams

NRW
Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)
Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists (AGS)
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
Welsh Government (WG)
Soil and Groundwater Technology Association (SAGTA)

Tim Elliott
Andrew Williams & Joanne Smith
Frank Evans

Lucy Thomas
Caroline Thornton
Rachael Davies

Home Builders Federation (HBF)
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
Flintshire Council & Welsh Contaminated Land Working Group

Hallan Sambrook

Staffordshire Contaminated Land Officer Group

Corresponding Members:

Eddie Tuttle & David Philp
Euan Hall

Chartered Institute of Building
Land Trust

Agenda

Welcome and Apologies

Introductions of represented organisations

Terms of the Group

Review of previous minutes & actions

Update from Government Departments, Environment Agencies and Homes England

Standards Update

Subgroup – National Quality Mark Scheme Update

Roundtable Update from Industry Groups and Local Authority Fora

AOB

- Nature of future meetings – Face to face or remote
- Content of meetings – knowledge share or invitees to discuss specific topics
- Hot topics

Date and location of next meeting (5 mins)

Meeting Notes

1) Welcome & Apologies

Alex Lee (AL) welcomed everyone and apologies were given. AL explained that this was his first meeting as chair and wanted to thank Paul Nathanail for his time as chair for the past 2 years. Paul will remain for another year as former chair.

2) Introductions of represented organisations

AL welcomed everybody and gave a warm welcome to those that were new to the National Brownfield Forum (NBF), this included David Jacob – NHBC representative, Rob Foers – DLUHC representative and Tom Henman – SiLC representative.

3) Terms of the Group

AL explained that with a change of chair then the terms of the NBF are reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant. AL reminded that the purpose of the NBF is to encourage open dialogue and all discussions are under Chatham House Rule to promote open and frank discussion. AL asked all to review the Terms of Reference and to let NH know of any changes that they wish to make.

ACTION: All to review the Terms of Reference and let NH know by 30 April 2022 of any changes required.

4) Review of Previous Minutes & Outstanding Actions

AL guided people through the previous minutes and it was agreed that they were a true record of the meeting. No outstanding actions were carried forward.

5) Update from Government Departments, Environment Agencies and Homes England

Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Trystan James (TJ) provided an update on behalf of Natural Resources Wales (NRW). He confirmed NRW is working on the following:

TJ confirmed that they have been working closely with Environment Agency and participating in the progress meetings for the updating of the Monitored Natural Attenuation report, updating of Remedial Targets Methodology (RTM) and preparation of the Natural Source Zone Depletion (NSZD) guide that CL:AIRE is delivering.

TJ also confirmed that NRW has been working on updating a number of their Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Defence. The MoUs are high level documents that help working together easier.

TJ confirmed that NRW has been feeding into the recent Joint Agencies Groundwater Directive Advisory Group (JAGDAG) review on new chemicals ahead of the public consultation.

TJ also confirmed that NRW will be recognising World Water Day 2022, which is on 22 March 2022 [World Water Day | World Water Day 2022](#)

Welsh Government – Planning and Environment

Welsh Government representatives confirmed that there was no update to provide the NBF at this meeting.

Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC)

Rob Foers (RF) was welcomed and introduced himself as the Brownfield Planning Policy Lead within DLUHC and has taken over from Joe Dale. RF confirmed that DLUHC has a new Housing Minister Rt Hon Stuart Andrew who is committed to brownfield development. He will be attending MIPIM and providing a speech committing to brownfield development.

DLUHC is working closely with Local Government Association (PAS) at housing led initiatives, where local authorities can take the lead. DLUHC is looking at preparing case studies where obstacles exist in redeveloping brownfield sites and how those obstacles are being addressed.

DLUHC is also working with treasury and looking at some of the tax mechanisms that may be able to be adjusted to incentivise brownfield development. In addition, they are looking at potential wider changes for planning policy to also incentivise brownfield development.

DLUHC reaffirmed that they are always keen to hear about issues from industry and government bodies how potentially DLUHC may be able to incentivise bringing forward brownfield land. DLUHC is committed to levelling up and see brownfield redevelopment as an important part of this government agenda.

RF was reminded that the NBF has a very broad membership with a very technical skill set that DLUHC should actively draw upon for help.

Environment Agency (EA)

Angela Haslam (AH) provided an update on behalf of the EA. She confirmed that the EA and NRW are continuing to work on joint guidance which covers the Environmental Permitting Regulations aspects of land contamination which includes information on the most common types of remediation techniques. In addition, the EA is continuing to work on updating the H5 site condition report/baseline reporting guidance and preparing it in the same format as LCRM for GOV.UK.

The EA is also continuing the ongoing PFAS risk screening project and are coming to the completion of Phase 3 which is refine the internal EA GIS model. In addition they have been engaging with key external stakeholders.

AH also introduced two research projects relating to climate change that they are working on. The first is working with CIRIA who are carrying out a literature review in relation to climate change. CIRIA has sent out a questionnaire to ask industry how they are addressing the impacts of

climate change. The second project is working with their nuclear colleagues who has commissioned WSP to assimilate information from industry to try to generate an evidence-based synthesis report to 'Inform regulatory considerations of climate change impacts and adaptation for waste deposit, landfill and land contamination.' This work is to be used to establish a baseline of knowledge, support assessments and contribute to the Environment Agency's Nuclear Decommissioning and Clean-up programme, Nuclear Outcome Plan and climate change work under Water Quality, Groundwater and Land Contamination. The Environment Agency ultimately seek to take an informed and consistent approach in accounting for future climate change. The work is notably intended to assist decisions that will address timescales of up to about 1000 years after present

In addition AH described a small research project that BGS and Jacobs are delivering on trying to develop a tool to value soil and groundwater remediation on society, the environment and economy. AH explained that the work involves a literature review and testing the feasibility of developing a tool that incorporates a natural capital approach to help measure and communicate the social, economic and environmental value of remediating contaminated sites. As part of the review, the project will identify existing tools that perhaps can be used and potentially adapted.

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

Edward Lewis provided an update on behalf of DAERA and NIEA. He confirmed that Fionntan Adams is now new in post and taken over from Berni Corr. DAERA continues to work on reviewing the next steps regarding the potential implementation of Part iii of the Waste and Contaminated Land Order (Northern Ireland) 1997 following the recent publication of the risk assessment report. DAERA is also looking to close out the review of mercury sites in Northern Ireland in line with the Minamata Convention. NIEA continue to undertake the digital transformation of application services for waste and water authorisations i.e., replacing the old paper based methods. Some services are now live.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Graeme Duggan (GD) provided an update on behalf of DEFRA. He confirmed Defra is continuing with their work on the Soil Health Action Plan for England. Defra is hoping to consult on the action plan in Spring 2022, working on a publication in 2023. The plan will bring together many different strands of work, strongly focusing on appropriate land management practices that improve soil health. In addition, DEFRA is able to announce that they have awarded the updating of the Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction sites to CL:AIRE. The first phase of this work is a literature review which is currently being undertaken. There will also be a questionnaire being sent out shortly that people are encouraged to complete and some focused workshops.

GD confirmed that he plans to speak at events to promote the work that Defra is undertaking with regards to soils in the near future.

Homes England (HE)

Richard Boyle (RB) provided an update on behalf of HE.

As ever, more information on Homes England can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/homes-england>. What follows is a selection of information on our recent development and investment activities.

Milestone for Northstowe as 4,000 homes and £123 million funding secured.

Plans for Northstowe, the largest new town since Milton Keynes have taken a huge step forward, with Homes England securing £123.9 million of funding to deliver new infrastructure and plans for

the penultimate phase of Northstowe given the green light by South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The planning approval covers phase 3A and includes 4,000 new homes, a mixed-use centre, two primary schools, and a range of open spaces for play and recreation, across 210 hectares (519 acres).

The Homes England flagship settlement is set to create 10,000 new homes in total, making it one of the largest new settlements in the country.

See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/milestone-for-northstowe-as-4000-homes-and-123-million-funding-secured>

St Helens is next on the list for English Cities Funding.

With a mission to take on challenging development sites and encourage private and institutional investment in cities, The English Cities Fund (ECF) is behind some of the UK's most successful, place-changing regeneration projects.

The ECF was set up in 2001 to bring together as a joint public private sector initiative, combining the expertise and ambition of Homes England, Legal & General's deep capabilities in delivering long-term, joined-up investment across UK property and infrastructure; and the nationwide urban regeneration expertise of Muse Developments.

With initial investment of £100 million, and an additional £100 million of investment in 2018, ECF is on track to deliver six schemes (with Salford, Plymouth, Liverpool, Wakefield and Canning Town being the other five) in England comprising 1 million sq ft of office, retail and leisure space as well as 1,700 homes with a total value of £2.5 billion. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-partnership-behind-some-of-the-uks-successful-regen-projects>

Avenue Cokeworks Look Back

For nearly forty years, the 98 hectare Avenue Coking Works had produced coal and gas and processed tar and sulphuric acid. In 1992 the Avenue Coking Works closed its doors, with Homes England predecessor bodies taking ownership of the site in 1999. The ambition for the site was to prevent additional environmental damage and restore the Avenue to a condition in which it would be suitable for other uses.

The Avenue was one of the largest remediation projects in Europe. The site incorporates public open space and amenities including football and cricket pitches, a 70 hectare nature reserve with footpaths, wetland habitats, and a 28 hectare housing and light industrial development area.

Key items of work included the construction of a flood alleviation and SUDS scheme, working jointly with the Environment Agency, and the trans-location of numerous great crested newts, snakes, and water voles and the excavation and treatment of the following quantities:

- 2,200,000m³ of earthworks
- 250,000m³ of complex sorting
- 75,000m³ of bioremediation
- 300,000m³ of thermal desorption
- 250,000m³ of soil manufacture

See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-avenue-landscaping-and-remediation-project-one-of-the-uks-most-significant-brownfield-projects>

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

Unfortunately, no update was available.

6) 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:

<https://www.claire.co.uk/land-forum-2022?download=870:nbf-standards-march-2022>

PN reminded NBF members that British Standards Institution is always looking for volunteers to sit on relevant committees (such as EH4 Soil Quality) and review panels. It is a good opportunity for professionals wishing to develop their knowledge and understand about how standards are developed.

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

Seamus Lefroy-Brooks (SLB) provided an update on the NQMS steering group meeting. He confirmed that the steering group met in March 2022 where there was reported 134 SQPs and 183 declarations purchased. He confirmed that SiLC reported on the outcome of the first audit. A summary of the audit will be made publicly available.

As a result of the first audit, SiLC has made three recommendations of change:

1. The selection of declarations will become a two-stage process to try and capture additional reports and from a wider pool of SQPs.
2. A signed and dated report reviewing form or template will be a requirement of the NQMS scheme for the SQP to use and in a format that can be made available in the event of an audit. Existing company formats that meet the requirements will be acceptable to use. This will be created to ensure that SQPs can provide evidence of their review process.
3. A Modified Appendix 1 will be made available to incorporate tick boxes against each question that the SQP needs to answer. Appendix 1 will be required to be completed, dated and signed off at the time of the review and saved as supporting documentation in case of audit.

These changes will be implemented over the next few months.

POST MEETING:

Report now published <https://www.claire.co.uk/component/phocadownload/category/34-nqms?download=869:nqms-scheme-audit-report-2021>

SLB also confirmed that he has been attempting to follow up with Joanna Averley – DLUHC Chief Planner to encourage recognition of the NQMS on planning applications. SLB also confirmed that NQMS steering group is going to prepare a short bulletin to try and dispel some myths about the scheme. It will be short and punchy, covering the benefits of the scheme. It will be used as a marketing tool and promoted widely.

8) Roundtable Update from Industry Groups and Local Authority For a

CL:AIRE Update

Gas Protection Verification Accreditation Scheme (GPVS)

CL:AIRE continues to promote the scheme and two introductory lunchtime webinars to become a Technician Grade (TGPV) and Specialist Grade (SGPV) accredited person are being organised on 14 and 18 March 2022, further information [here](#).

A number of SGPVs are now automatically including a declaration automatically as part of the verification process as a way of raising the profile of the scheme.

Training has starting again in 2022 at a purpose-built training facility in Blackburn. The next events are: [17th May 2022](#) & [11 October 2022](#).

National Quality Mark Scheme (NQMS)

There are 110 paid SQPs, 18 awaiting payment confirmation and 183 purchased declarations. Profile is improving and SiLC is making 2022 the NQMS initiative year.

Sustainable Remediation

Following the publication of the updated SuRF-UK Sustainable Management Practices (SMP) document, excel spreadsheet and posters, SuRF-UK has been promoting the document. The SMP document will be presented to Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) on 8 March 2022 and AGS Webinar “Sustainability in the Delivery of Brownfield Remediation” on 17 May. SuRF-UK is also working on a short bulletin on Resilience and Sustainable Remediation. The bulletin is going to signpost to existing work to help practitioners understand how to build resilience into designs and assessments. This is because of recently updated guidance published by ITRC and which SuRF in the US assisted with on Sustainable Resilient Remediation.

Category 4 Screening Level Project

The next C4SL report (on 1,2-dichloroethane) is ready for publication, CL:AIRE is just waiting for the foreword to be signed off.

Natural Source Zone Depletion (NSZD) Guidance

CL:AIRE has been appointed by the Environment Agency to prepare a new piece of technical guidance on NSZD. CL:AIRE has procured the services of Geosyntec following a tendering process to be lead author of the guide. CL:AIRE is project managing the work, working with a technical steering group made up of site owners, regulators and practitioners. The final document will be a sister guide to the Monitored Natural Attenuation Guide.

Monitored Natural Attenuation (MNA) Guidance

The document is now in its final editorial stage following the CL:AIRE TRG review. CL:AIRE is working with Geosyntec which is carrying out the final technical review to ensure it aligns with the NSZD document mentioned above.

P20/Remedial Target Methodology

CL:AIRE has been appointed by the Environment Agency to update the P20/RTM spreadsheet and guidance. CL:AIRE is working with Simon Firth, Steve Buss and Hannah Fraser on this.

Concawe Sustainable Remediation Case Study Project

CL:AIRE is continuing to prepare case studies demonstrating sustainable remediation. 10 case studies have been selected and these are now in various stages of writing and review.

EiCLaR

CL:AIRE continues to be part of the EC-funded EiCLaR project as the knowledge dissemination partner. Further information about the project is available [here](#).

Landfill Remediation

Unfortunately, no progress has been made on this. The Environment Agency's internal guidance is being reviewed by its legal team.

PFAS Bulletins

CL:AIRE has started preparing the short information bulletins on key areas of PFAS.

DoWCoP

CL:AIRE is currently waiting for the Environment Agency to arrange a meeting with their subject matter experts.

Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites

CL:AIRE has recently been awarded the contract by Defra to update this piece of guidance.

ReCon Soil

Recon Soil (project studying the potential reuse of surplus materials from the construction industry) is having a launch event at the Eden Project on 31 March 2022. If anyone is interested in attending, please make contact with CL:AIRE through the [Help Desk](#).

CL:AIRE Training Suite

CL:AIRE's training suite is up and running in Reading now delivering on a number of different training courses. Further information [here](#)

British Geological Survey

The BGS is supporting the Geospatial Commission in delivering the treasury-funded [National Land Data Programme](#) – we are conducting the user requirements gathering workstream. The NLDP aims to assess the feasibility and value of a common approach to enhancing the value of land data in decision-making, including joining up data sources and identifying opportunities to improve its accessibility and utilisation. The NLDP includes a functional Alpha prototype land data platform which will be used to evaluate the potential impact of use cases identified in three pilot areas (Devon, West Midlands and Northern Ireland). Further details can be found in the attached document.

BGS, Jacobs and the EA are working together to establish links between the remediation and redevelopment of brownfields and sustainable growth (natural capital, social value and economic prosperity). We are investigating the feasibility of a digital tool to help the EA and wider stakeholders quantify any links and expected benefits.

BGS is a partner in the EPSRC funded [VENTURA](#) project. We are currently planning for a design sprint with Greater Manchester, the Environment Agency and United Utilities to collaboratively develop future urban water management systems models to better understand supply and discharge capacity, supporting catchment scale decision-making. The research and case study teams will evaluate these models in the context of plans for new development (much of which is brownfield) and climate change scenarios. The work complements a new [Trilateral](#)

[Agreement](#) that prioritises 'shared outcomes' and partnership working that the three organisations have agreed outwith VENTURA.

UKELA

UKELA's working groups have continued to contribute to various government consultations, the most recent of which are:

1. Consultation response to the BEIS Regulation Reform, led by the Governance and Devolution Group (1 October 2021);
2. Response to the Government's Strategic Priorities for Ofwat, led by the Water Working Party and the Nature Conservation Working Party (15 October 2021);
3. Response to the Local Nature Recovery Strategies consultation paper, led by the Nature Conservation Working Party (2 November 2021); and
4. Response to The DEFRA and Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies Stakeholder Consultation, led by the Nature Conservation Working Party (28 January 2022).

The environmental litigation working party is currently putting together a response to proposed Human Rights Act 1998 reforms, the consultation deadline for which is 19th April 2022. There are some interesting areas to address including raising the question of a substantive right to a healthy environment rather than relying indirectly on rights such as the right to life, right to a fair trial and right to respect for private life, family life and home.

UKELA also maintains its contact with the OEP (Office for Environmental Protection) with UKELA being invited, most recently, to put forward ideas around implementation of the OEP's monitoring and enforcement function.

Upcoming events include:

- Noise working party meeting, 29th March 2022: how do we get noise up the political agenda, with John Stewart, Chair of the UK Noise Association
- UKELA's annual conference is due to take place in the week commencing 13th June 2022. It is expected to be a hybrid event - i.e. mostly online but with some "in person" elements.

SOBRA

Conferences

SoBRA's annual winter conference was held on the 8th December at the RSC library in Burlington House and jointly held with the Toxicology Group of the Royal Society of Chemistry. It was our first ever hybrid event with the conference streamed live to people who attended on-line. We hoped this hybrid style would maximise the accessibility of the event to our members – particularly those who don't live near London - and from feedback received it was a success and we will be striving to provide hybrid events from now on. The morning session featured speakers from the Environment Agency, academia and consultancies. In the afternoon session, we heard updates from the C4SL project and all the active sub-groups. This included the launch of the Asbestos Toolkit which is the final document to be produced by the asbestos sub-group. Chair Simon Cole outlined the Society's activities for this year and our plans for the next.

Thank you to our members for attending (attendance was 162) and to our speakers for giving up their time so generously. The programme, presentations, and a recording of the conference can be found on our website at [Past Events - SoBRA](#).

SoBRA has issued "save the dates" for the 2022 summer workshop and winter conference. These are planned to be held at the Priory Rooms in Birmingham on Wednesday 22nd June and at Burlington House on Thursday 8th December. Both will be hybrid events with the at venue event streamed live to those attending on-line. Although this considerably increases

the cost of the events the executive committee considers it worthwhile (now the technology exists) in maximising the reach and benefit of these events to our members.

Details of all upcoming events can be found here [Next Events - SoBRA](#).

Sub-Groups:

The active sub-groups are (and include the newly active CSM and Statistics sub-group):

- NAPL
- Vapour Intrusion
- Ground Gases
- Early Careers
- Controlled Waters & Climate change
- CSM and Statistics

Of note, the Controlled Waters and Climate Change sub-group is currently collaborating with CIRIA and the EA on various projects on climate change and will be presenting at the SiLC annual forum in March.

The asbestos sub-group has closed after the publication of the asbestos in soil HHRA toolbox. The executive committee would like to express their gratitude to the subgroup members for all their work over the last 9 years.

Publications:

The asbestos sub-group released its asbestos in soil human health risk assessment (AiSHHRA) toolbox in December. Publications from other sub-groups are scheduled for 2022.

Accreditation Scheme:

The first accreditation window for 2022 opened and closed in January and an update on the outcome of the applications will be made in due course.

Other Activities/Events:

The early careers sub-group has organised another series of freely available webinars for this year. The first is an "Introduction to human health GAC derivation" with Laura Garland of Arcadis on the 17th March at 1:00 PM GMT. Joining details and details of all the planned webinars can be found here [Next Events - SoBRA](#).

NHBC

NHBC Foundation - Hazardous ground gas - An essential guide for housebuilders

The purpose of this Foundation publication is to provide updated best practice guidance to our registered developers, builders, their advisors and regulators on ground gas related issues. The last major NHBC publication on ground gas was the 2007 '*Guidance on evaluation of development proposals on sites where methane and carbon dioxide are present*' and it is important to note that this Foundation publication is not an update or replacement for that document, or to summarise the technical detail contained with more recent guidance. However, it is designed to provide a concise 'how to' guide that signposts appropriate guidance as required.

The Foundation project was put out to competitive tender in May 2021 and was awarded to a combined offering from Buro Happold and EPG. A first draft was provided to NHBC in November 2021 for initial feedback and the second draft is underway. Consultation is currently ongoing over proposed typical design details that we want to include within the Foundation publication as this is a key area for NHBC.

The advice provided within this Foundation publication ranges from preliminary risk assessments, to design and right through to the application of ground gas protective measures and its

verification. The publication also sets out key watch points throughout to provide focus points based upon industry experience. Lastly, should this publication require an update/amendment following first publication there is scope from NHBC Foundation to do this.

AGS

The last Contaminated Land Working Group meeting was held 25 January:

- An article on AGS's guidance relating to Waste Classification for Soils is ready for print.
- An article summarising CL:AIRE's publication on Good Practice for Risk Assessment for Mine Gas Emissions is also likely to be published in the next AGS magazine.
- Guest speaker Richard Lankshear from the NHBC gave a presentation on confidence in innovative construction.
-

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

- Future articles are being prepared on the potential review of BS 10175, clean cover systems and SiLC's Affiliate Scheme.
- A future article is being considered on the Yellow Book when the revised version is published.
- AGS's Client's Guide to Desk Studies and Reference List is currently being drafted.
- AGS's Client's Guide to Geoenvironmental Reports is being reviewed by the Loss Prevention Working Group.
- AGS CLWG and Lab members are contributing to the asbestos task and finish subgroup with the aim of updating the former Blue Book Method and then producing a user guide.
- The Data Management Working Group is at the early stage of reviewing ERES codes with assistance from the CLWG and Labs groups.
- A sustainability sub-group has been set up by AGS. The terms of reference have been agreed and the group will report progress at CLWG meetings.
- Articles are being planned on sustainability in ground investigation, sampling and laboratory analysis.
- AGS have announced a two-part webinar on sustainability in the delivery of brownfield regeneration (both in May). Further webinar topics are being planned.
- SoBRA are writing an article for a future edition of the AGS magazine which will include progress made by their Controlled Waters and Climate Change Subgroup.
- AGS's Labs Group is working on a standardised coal tar analytical methodology.
- The Labs Group is also attempting to improve the quality of water sampling following concern about the reliability of analysis results where chemical preservation has not been used for metals, ammoniacal nitrogen, cyanide, sulphide and other unstable parameters.

RICS

RICS have published an insight paper on Monday 28th February on Network Rail Policy for letting waste sites:

Network Rail as a major owner and manager of brownfield land has developed a strategic framework for its sites near railway lines being used for activities such as waste management, storage, processing, recycling and car breaking, as scrapyards, or for moving or storing materials such as scrap metal or chemicals. Network Rail now uses this framework to improve management of its waste-related sites and help minimise risks for itself and tenants alike, as well as supporting continued enhancement of infrastructure for recycling and reusing waste. The company defines waste sites as land that is leased for any waste-related use, or any use that involves bringing waste on or off site.

This Insight paper from RICS provides an overview of this Network Rail framework, its key component parts and illustrates best practice for both the leasing and management of these sites. Given the growing demand for sites suitable for waste related activity, the paper provides some key points for professionals engaged in advising landlords and tenants of these sites and provides an insight into how best to minimise risk for all concerned. The link to the paper for free download is:

[network-rail-policy-for-letting-waste-sites---sharing-knowledge-to-support-professionals.pdf](https://www.rics.org/network-rail-policy-for-letting-waste-sites---sharing-knowledge-to-support-professionals.pdf)
(rics.org)

CIRIA

- CIRIA to publish the soil management report in Spring
- CIRIA published the ground gas site guide last December.
- Carrying out a literature review and industry consultation for EA about climate change and contaminated land. The work will finish on 31 March 2022. We are also scoping a fund raising for a good practice guidance on climate change and contaminated land
- started to research contractor selection process for the PFAS project
- working on a project which show case good practice with geophysics
- looking for more help with the innovative Site Investigation Hub
- Soil community of practice stakeholders meeting will take place on 7 April 2022. Also looking for case studies and blogs
- will hold two seminars in July and Nov on PFAS and soil management respectively.

National Contaminated Land Officers Group

The first draft of the NCLOG cover systems guidance is nearly complete. An internal review is proposed prior to seeking external review. In addition to the cover systems technical group, due to some issues with recent ground gas risk assessments, NCLOG is looking at setting up a new technical group on ground gas risk assessment. The membership is being asked to volunteer to participate in this.

NCLOG surveyed its members end of last year/beginning of this year to identify hot topics and areas that the membership feels NCLOG should focus on. The Committee is currently reviewing the results of the NCLOG membership survey and future priorities.

We are hoping to hold the NCLOG AGM in May. It will be held online, similar to last year, with a mixture of updates, discussions and presentations. We anticipate the results of the survey feeding into this event.

Geological Society

The Geological Society Contaminated Land Group (CLG) is supporting the Hydrogeological Group in delivering a conference 'The Hydrogeology of Sandstones' on 4th and 5th May 2022, including a session on contaminated land <https://www.hydrogroup.org.uk/the-hydrogeology-of-sandstones/>

2022 is the Geological Society Year of Sustainability and the CLG is in the early stages of planning a meeting on sustainability and climate change in relation to contaminated land. The Geological Society has produced an excellent poster to highlight the role of geology in contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/~media/shared/documents/education%20and%20careers/Resources/Posters/Geoscience%20for%20the%20Future%20poster.pdf?la=en>

A series of videos have been produced by the CLG to showcase the interesting and varied careers possible within contaminated land and frame the work we all do in a way that will hopefully appeal to younger audiences encouraging them into the industry. The videos are currently in the final stages of editing with the finished videos to be uploaded to the Geological Society website careers pages and youtube.

RemSoc

RemSoc currently have 3 main active sub groups.

Framework for Betterment

We are developing a Practitioners Framework for Betterment. Even though “Betterment” is a term used and implemented widely during the remediation of contaminated land, there is a significant amount of varying opinions of what the word Betterment means (in the context of contaminated land) and what is required to ensure it is achieved. These varying opinions, coupled with the lack of a formal definition, are likely to lead to inconsistencies in implementing such schemes and often result in disagreements between relevant stakeholders such as clients, consultants, contractors and regulators of when Betterment has been achieved. It is intended that the framework will help those dealing with site whereby Betterment is the chosen or necessary approach to close out remediation. So far, the group have looked at how betterment fits into LCRM, and have reviewed outputs from last years RemSoc conference to draw out general themes and conclusions which will then be used to form a checklist in the Practitioners Framework. Terms of Reference are on the Website. <http://www.remsoc.org/practitioners-framework-for-betterment/>

Practitioners Guide To Materials Tracking

We have also established Terms of Reference for a working group developing a Practitioners Guide to Materials Tracking and Verification. CL:AIRE Definition of Waste Code of Practice (DoWCoP) Materials Management Plans (MMPs) are an industry mainstay, being the simplest, quickest and often the most sustainable way to re-use and import materials which would otherwise be disposed of as waste. Recent CL:AIRE audit data has highlighted materials tracking and verification are areas needing improvement.

This finding is concerning as the tracking of materials and their verification is essential to demonstrate the reused material should not be considered a waste and attract landfill tax. The verification process needs to be planned and start immediately upon excavation of materials. It should include details on where materials were produced, any treatment and their final fate (whether offsite or onsite). Supporting evidence should provide an auditable trail. The group are newly established. If you want to join the discussion, get in touch.

The Early Career or Supporting Career Development Group remains active

This working group continues to indefinitely to help support the Society's ECPs, led by Sarah Poulton (Natural Resource Wales) with support from Richard Williams (VertaseFLI). Discussions are continuing with IES regarding a joint ECP events, and we are exploring a potential opportunity to provide free online training to ECPs on people management skills.

EIC Update

The last working group meeting in February had presentations from Natural England and Defra on the Biodiversity Net Gain Consultation. EIC members are preparing a response to this.

As part of the continuing Brownfield First campaign , EIC members met with HM Treasury to discuss recommendations made in the EIC report 'brownfield: supporting levelling up.'

A new website was launched in January 2022. <https://eic-uk.co.uk/news/eic-news/welcome-to-our-new-website/> here there are links to EIC campaigns and documents including Brownfield First, Net Zero and policy briefings.

EPUK

EPUK AGM

The AGM was held on 23 Feb 2022. Prof Jim Longhurst gave a presentation on “The Changing Role Of Local Authorities In Delivering Environmental Protection which considered changes in the capability and competency of LAs to deliver environmental protection after a decade or more of austerity and the impact of the pandemic. A link to this presentation and notes of the meeting can be found here:

<https://www.environmental-protection.org.uk/resource/the-changing-role-of-local-authorities-in-delivering-environmental-protection-professor-jim-longhurst/>

Essential Environment

Essential Environment has been published for very many years. EE provides a complete summary and analysis of all UK-wide and EU environmental, pollution and waste legislation and practice as it applies in all parts of the UK. Latterly it has become an online reference text. EPUK has now taken back ownership of Essential Environment from Environmental Technology Publications. EPUK has a new small editorial and IT team maintaining this. Anyone can subscribe and a 12-month licence is included within the EPUK membership subscription for LAs, Corporate and University members.

<https://www.essentialenvironment.org.uk/>

SILC

SiLC is continuing to increase their numbers of SiLCs/SQPs with a further 7 candidates applying in the Spring 2022 round and 5 candidates were successful in the Autumn 2021 round. SiLC has produced a video about becoming a SiLC to help promote the affiliate scheme, which aims to promote the benefits of being a SiLC which links to the NQMS.

SiLC is looking to raise the awareness of the NQMS and the value it brings to projects. The NQMS will be presented at the SiLC Annual Forum with presentations and panel discussions. The Annual Forum will also be discussing climate change and sustainability.

In June SiLC will be hosting a webinar about landfill remediation and potential solutions

YALPAG

(Post NBF meeting minutes for YALPAG)

- YALPAG’s Land Technical Group meet twice a year - a meeting was held on 30 March 2022.
- YALPAG guidance documents on planning, verification requirements for cover systems and verification requirements for gas protection systems are continuing to be reviewed and updated as and when necessary. The Verification Requirements for Cover Systems (Version 4.1) was issued in June 2021. The Verification Requirements for Gas Protection Systems guidance is currently in the process of being updated. It is anticipated that the planning guidance will be updated in 2022..
- The training sub-group continues to meet and is looking at options around arranging webinar training.

Early Careers

Following the industry group round up, AL observed the valuable work that many groups were undertaking in relation to early careers. It was felt that there was value to co-ordinate this so early career professionals were aware of all the work the different groups were undertaking. NH offered to create a webpage on CL:AIRE's website where the different groups could be listed and links to the different groups made. This would help young professionals with their professional development.

ACTION: NH to look at creating a web page on CL:AIRE's website for Young Professionals linking to the different industry young professional groups that currently sit on the NBF.

AoB

Nature of future meetings

With the country unlocking after COVID, it was discussed whether the NBF should return to face to face with the option to join online. There was a discussion about the pros and cons of fully online as opposed to face to face with a hybrid option. It was acknowledged that meeting online suited many as any location chosen would require many people to travel and there are significant costs associated with this that not everyone can get covered. It was agreed that a poll would be created for members to vote their preference, and then whichever is most preferred will be selected initially going forward. The three options to choose will be:

- Remote
- Face to Face with Hybrid Option
- Face to Face

ACTION: NH to create a poll for NBF members to vote.

Content of meetings – knowledge share or invitees to discuss specific topics

AL led a discussion about the format of the NBF and asked whether things could/should change to ensure that the aims and objectives of the NBF were met in line with the terms of reference. It is acknowledged that the NBF is a very powerful knowledge sharing forum, but with the membership, could the NBF be used more effectively? In line with the terms of reference the NBF aims to also "help develop and implement government policy" and "identify key challenges as they arise and seek appropriate resolutions". It was acknowledged that the NBF could maybe do more towards meeting these aspects.

It was acknowledged that the NBF was a great opportunity for government and regulators to transmit important items and a safe space to openly discuss different issues.

It was suggested that as the papers are always circulated ahead of the meeting, for the industry update section NBF members submit their summaries with an expectation that all members read ahead, and the discussion is restricted to clarification points only. There will always remain the opportunity to bring additional items to the meeting if issues arise. This therefore would allow time to dig deeper into industry important topics and help to provide solutions. It is evident from the industry updates that members are working on a huge variety of topics and often on similar topics. It maybe useful for the NBF to discuss some of these topics in more depth, such as climate change, cover systems, data management, radon, biodiversity etc. The NBF will remain predominantly a knowledge sharing forum but also look to address a number of key issues that are important to NBF members.

It was agreed that this was a good idea, but it is also important to remain on topics that NBF members can contribute to, as it was noted that brownfield is a very broad subject but the membership of the NBF is very ground focused.

Hot Topics

AL also suggested to ensure that the NBF helped to address the key issues that the brownfield community is facing, was to actually ask the industry. This way we are hearing from individuals rather than guessing the issues. He asked NBF members their thought about carrying out an industry wide consultation as a questionnaire for the broad industry to complete on the issues that they are facing for redeveloping brownfield land. This way the NBF could gather factual evidence of what are the key issues that are facing the industry in their everyday tasks. The results would be reported factually and would hopefully help government departments and regulators understand what are the barriers to brownfield development, and help NBF focus its activities on the key issues. Individual practitioners would be encouraged to complete the questionnaire rather than NBF members collectively, but NBF members would encourage their membership to complete. This would help build a broad picture of the challenges being felt by different practitioners in different sectors. CL:AIRE would look to prepare the report and upload the results on the NBF part of the website for everyone to access.

It was acknowledged that it was important that the questionnaire would need to have a strict control of scope to ensure a tangible deliverable. It was acknowledged by all that this would be a very interesting and useful piece of work.

AL agreed to work with NH further and develop an outline for the next meeting.

ACTION: AL & NH to scope up the questionnaire outline.

Date and location of next meeting

NH confirmed that the next meeting is 23 June 2022. The format will be decided following the poll.