

National Brownfield Forum

Meeting Notes

20 November 2025, 11.00am – 3.00pm Teleconference



FINAL

Present:

Darren Beriro (Chair)	
Liz Hart (Deputy Chair)	
Nicola Harries (Secretariat)	CL:AIRE
Alex Lee (Outgoing Chair)	HKA
Caroline Thornton	Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
Madeleine Berg	Scottish Government
Matt Llewellyn & Trystan James	Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Angela Haslam	Environment Agency (EA)
Mark Williams	Homes England (HE)
Darren Watson	Office of Environmental Protection (OEP)
Matthew Byerly	Environmental Standards Scotland
David Crook	Local Government Association (LGA)
Richard Boyle	Institution of Environmental Science (IES)
Stella Keenan	Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Pollution Advisory Group (YALPAG)
Ruth Easterbrook	Geological Society
Tim Elliott	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
Geraint Williams	Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists (AGS)
Tom Henman	Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC)
Kate Baker	Society of Brownfield Risk Assessment (SoBRA)
Joanne Kwan	CIRIA
David Jacob	National House Building Council (NHBC)
Jane Thrasher	Environmental Industries Commission (EIC)
Emma Tattersdill	UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA)
Ken Scally	Environmental Industries Association (EIA)
Rebekah Norbury (NCLOG)	National Contaminated Land Officers Group
Robert Tyler	West & East London Land Contamination Officers' Group (WELLCOG)

Apologies:

Emily Jones & Matthew Spencer	Ministry of Housing and Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
John Henderson	Interim Environmental Protection Assessor Wales (IEPAW)
Rachel Boulderstone	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Joanna Wragg	British Geological Survey (BGS)

David Stewart	Scottish Land Commission (SLC)
Leigh Sharpe	Mining Remediation Authority (MRA)
Edward Lewis	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
Rhodri Williams	Home Builders Federation
Steve Edgar	Society of Remediation Practitioners (REMSOC)

Agenda

1. Administrative:
 - Welcome and Apologies
 - Introductions of newly represented organisations
 - Actions from last meeting
 - National Brownfield Forum activities
 - Membership
 - Deputy Chair Role
2. General Knowledge Share
 - Government and Regulatory Update
 - Opportunity for clarification on the industry and local authority fora updates as received in advance
 - Hot or emerging topics open session
 - Brownfield in media
 - NQMS Update
 - Standards
4. Specific Knowledge Share
 - Presentation from Professor Jack Hannam – NRI University of Greenwich – Soil Health.
 - Questions and Answers
5. AOB
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 newly represented organisations

DB welcomed everyone and especially Ken Scully representing the Environmental Industries Association (EIA). Ken Scully introduced himself and the broad areas that the EIA work in.

c) Actions from previous meetings

July 2025

DB reviewed all actions. Alex Lee (AL) has received confirmation that “The House Magazine” would welcome an article on the NBF.

ACTION: DB & LH to write a short article.

NBF members were made aware of the recently released National Standards for Sustainable Drainage in England [National standards for sustainable drainage systems \(SuDS\) - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems-suDs) and some concerns raised for the implementation and transition period.

There was concern shared by NBF members that it appears this piece of government guidance has been produced by one department without regard to the wider implications to brownfield development.

ACTION: NBF members to share any thoughts/concerns with Richard Boyle (RB), who will collate shared examples with Defra on behalf of NBF.

ACTION: RB to respond to Defra and share with NH for the NBF notes.

ACTION: Defra to share with colleagues responsible for National Standards for Sustainable Drainage in England and share concerns expressed from the NBF.

d) National Brownfield Forum profile

DB summarised all the activities where the NBF had been profiled. He confirmed that the policy interaction document has been downloaded over 4500 times which is an encouraging and has received very positive feedback.

DB also confirmed that Liz Hart (LH) has presented at CLR Expo, EIC and Construction Leadership Council. The Construction Leadership Council commended the document on simplifying the complexities of redeveloping brownfield land.

DB chaired a session at Brownfield Regeneration Summit on regulatory and policy review, where the report was referenced.

DB reminded all NBF members to help promote the NBF, due to its broad membership and therefore wide reach. It is important to keep raising its profile across different networks including political forums and government networks to show how the NBF is being constructive in trying to tackle some of the big problems associated with brownfield development.

It was suggested that at the end of each year, that the chair and deputy chair prepare a short brief of achievements of the NBF. This includes new members joining, meetings held, presentations given, downloads etc. This can be posted on LinkedIn through CL:AIRE and linked out to NBF members to help raise its profile as well as personal posts. In addition LH confirmed that the NQMS now has its own dedicated LinkedIn page so will cross post. It was acknowledged that the NBF is well known through its existing networks but it is important to expand beyond those networks. This is something to work on to ensure the NBF is more outward facing. It was agreed to prepare a wrap up annual summary was a good idea.

ACTION:DB & LH to prepare an end of year wrap up summarising its activities.

e) Membership

DB explained that the British Society of Soil Science (BSSS) was interested in joining the NBF. DB shared some information about the group. Members agreed that the BSSS should be invited.

ACTION:DB to invite BSSS.

In addition Natural England has indicated an interest to join the NBF. It was agreed that it was felt that NE should be invited.

ACTION:LH/NH to invite Natural England.

f) Deputy Chair Role

DB explained that this meeting was his last and that LH will be taking on chair at the end of the year therefore the NBF is seeking a new deputy chair. All NBF members are encouraged to advertise that NBF is seeking a new deputy chair. It has been also promoted on LinkedIn.

NH explained if more than one nomination is received then members will be required to vote.

Nominations are to be received by 12 December 2025

If more than one nomination is received people will have until 19 January 2026 to provide their preference.

Decision will be announced by 26 January 2026.

Currently DB, LH and NH are aware of potentially two candidates that maybe interested, but these have not yet been confirmed.

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)

Unfortunately nobody from MHCLG was available to attend but offered to meet DB and LH. They sent the following update.

They are progressing with the planning reforms at pace.

Meeting with Emily Jones planned to update on progress.

POST MEETING NOTE:

National Planning Policy Framework is now out for consultation. Further information is available: [National Planning Policy Framework: proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK](#). Consultation closes 10 March 2026.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Defra sent their apologies. Graeme Duggan has moved to a new role. No update was provided.

Environment Agency

Angela Haslam (AH) provided an update on behalf of the Environment Agency (EA). AH confirmed the following:

Headline – State of Contaminated Land survey/questionnaire went live on 14th Nov to all Local Authorities with Part 2A duties in England. The survey includes statutory and voluntary questions, the response deadline is 9th January 2026.

H5 site condition report guidance– external consultation imminent, NBF to be informed and provided with link when live.

POST MEETING NOTE:

The consultation is [available here](#) and is open until **18 January 2026**.

DoE Site profiles project Phase 2– Thank you to funding for the project from the AGS Innovation/development fund, as well as collaborative funding for NRW we have been able to let the next phase of the project to CL:AIRE to develop a further 10 profiles into the new template, consult with industry and review by the TRG.

SR2008 No 27: standard rules mobile plant for treatment of soils and contaminated material, substances or products, is being updated to include discharge of treated groundwater back to ground (groundwater activity). External consultation expected Jan to March 2026.

Voluntary remediation advice service – with our publishing teams.

Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) 2016 Groundwater Activity Cost Benefit - This project will commission a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) of UK specific resources to identify relevant considerations for what is meant by "disproportionately costly". Disproportionately costly is one element of assessing if all necessary and reasonable measures have been taken to prevent inputs of pollutants into groundwater for remediation and re-deposit of contaminated materials as a groundwater activity (Schedule 22 - Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016). Guidance exists on how to carry out cost benefit analysis for the detailed evaluation of remediation options to manage the risks from land contamination. There is no guidance on how to carry out cost benefit analysis for the purposes of evaluating disproportionately costly. This REA will be used to develop guidance on how to carry out cost benefit analysis for the purposes of evaluating disproportionately costly.

Current Consultations

Reforms to the statutory consultee system - GOV.UK closes 18 Jan 2026

This consultation seeks views on the following proposals (England only):

- removing statutory consultee status from certain bodies
- reviewing the scope of what statutory consultees advise on
- improving performance management across existing statutory consultee bodies in the planning system more widely

Significant water management issues: river basin management plans - GOV.UK closes 20 May 2026

Land contamination PFAS projects – 25/26

- **Permeable Reactive Barrier/Soil Stabilisation for soil and groundwater** – Contract let to CL:AIRE, contact Rob Sweeney rob.sweeney@claire.co.uk for further details or see the latest CL:AIRE E Alert.
- **Developing an Approach to Groundwater DQRA for PFAS** – see tender description of the project details - [Developing an Approach to Groundwater DQRA for PFAS - Find a Tender](#)
- **Background PFAS in Soils project**- next phase of work let to BGS to develop a national scale soil survey methodology and delivery plan.
- **PFAS site profiles** -ongoing discussions with CL:AIRE regarding publication of 13 industry profiles (developed by Jacobs as part of the EA PFAS Risk Screening project 2020 to 2024).

Publications

Published paper on Background soil concentrations - [A comparative analysis of PFAS in archive and fresh soil samples in England and implications for large-scale surveys - ScienceDirect](#)
Chief scientists group recent publication - [Rapid evidence assessment of PFAS incineration and alternative remediation methods - GOV.UK](#)

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) & Welsh Government

Matt Llewhellin provided an update on behalf of NRW. He confirmed the following:

- As mentioned previously the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales' current work is looking at the functioning of the Part 2A contaminated land regime in Wales. The Assessor has now appointed Professor Robert Lee of Birmingham University to lead the

review and NRW recently attended a roundtable workshop in late October. This brought together representatives from LAs, Welsh government, Academia and consultancy to work through the various stages of the regime, costs and funding and the overall adequacy to see if and where improvements or changes could be made.

Further to the workshop there may be an additional formal request for evidence but as NRW understands a report and recommendations to Welsh government will be published sometime towards the middle of next year. Given it's focus on Part 2A the findings and recommendations could obviously have relevance and crossover to other parts of the UK.

- NRW has received funding for a new project to further the investigations into the potential impact of historic landfill sites on marine protected areas. This work builds on a Wales wide study conducted in 2023 ([Investigating the impact of landfill sites at the coast on Marine Protected Area features in Wales](#)). The new project is planned for 3 years, with funding confirmed for the first year (25/26) under the WG Nature Networks programme. This project will take forward recommendations from the previous project - to undertake a site level study in an area of key interest, to incorporate more detailed site level evidence to better understand pressures from coastal waste sites in discrete locations, and to identify relevant options to reduce impacts to the marine environment.

The Dee Estuary has been selected as the hotspot area to focus the site level study on. Initial work will look at the characteristics of the landfills and their risks (i.e. landfill contents, landfill engineering, Shoreline Management of the area, risk of erosion and flooding etc.)

The next steps will be around understanding the impacts to marine protected features and the zone of Impact different waste types may have.

- Also to mention, NRW have recently provided comments on proposed actions within the DEFRA PFAS action plan. Counterparts in Welsh Government were also consulted with some aspects of the plan relating to legacy pollution and historic land contamination.
- Finally, NRW and the Mining Remediation Authority held another successful Mine Xchange event in Cardiff on November the 12th with 150 people in attendance. The event focussed on research, development and innovation on metal and coal mine remediation with Presentations from academics, government agencies and a wide variety of specialists.

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

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

- Maddy Berg is back from maternity leave since October and back to being the main contaminated land contact for SG going forward
- SG and SEPA attended and presented updates at the NCLOG conference on 19 November
- Next Contaminated Land Advisory Group (CLAG) meeting is booked in for 11 December
- CLAG subsidiary working group has been developing a good practice guide to LA department interactions where a site with contamination goes through planning / building standards process. This is almost finalised and will be presented to CLAG members ahead of the next meeting.
- Considering a State of Contaminated Land Report for Scotland

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

No updates were provided by DAERA or NI EA.

Office of Environmental Protection (OEP)

Darren Watson (DW) provided an update on OEP's work.

OEP is in the later stages of developing our annual Environmental Improvement Plan progress report which will be laid in Parliament in early January 2026 and published on the website. OEP have maintained its position that all soils should be sustainably managed, rather than the current approach for agricultural soils, though OEP commend progress here. OEP have also highlighted the need to ensure sewage sludge and excavated soils are sustainably managed and it has included a case

study presenting work undertaken by BGS, Jacobs and the EA who have developed a tool examining the natural capital benefits of brownfield remediation. Here OEP point towards the significant benefits of this being further developed and deployed from local to national scales in benefit of a range of EIP targets and commitments.

OEP is also part way through its project examining the risks, blockers and opportunities to implementation of the waste hierarchy and (via the consultants Eunomia) have received excellent engagement from industry and regulators. OEP will use this work to inform the development of a potential long-term resources and waste programme, which is also in the very early stages of developing. That programme (if adopted by the Board) will likely include soils and to some extent brownfield remediation. The final report will be published on the website in early 2026.

Environmental Standards Scotland

Matthew Byerly (MB) provided an update on behalf of Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS).

ESS continues its investigation case on whether local authorities in Scotland are carrying out their Part 2A duties to inspect land from time to time. ESS' findings have been presented to the Scottish Government and SEPA. ESS is now considering the next steps.

MB noted that IEPAW has also launched its own investigation on the contaminated land regime. ESS, OEP and IEPAW will be meeting to discuss each organisation's work in this area. They have a memorandum of understanding that includes collaborating on similar pursuits where suitable.

MB confirmed that he would be interested in the questions that Environment Agency will be asking the local authorities in England in relation to the state of contaminated land.

Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (IEPAW)

John Henderson (JH) was unable to attend and provide an update.

Homes England (HE)

Mark Williams (MW) confirmed that HE is working with MHCLG and the new Towns Task Force considering locations of potential new towns in England. HE is performing the technical due diligence work for the 12 shortlisted locations, this work is ongoing. In addition MHCLG announced £121M of funding to accelerate the regeneration of the former railway yard in Newcastle which is a large brownfield site to deliver mixed use development including 1100 new homes. In September HE signed its 9th strategic place partnership with York and North Yorkshire combined authority. HE is looking to work collaboratively with combines authorities to unlock strategic sites in their areas and to promote regeneration.

Local Government Association (LGA)

David Crook (DC) explained that the latest Brownfield Land relief fund will soon be announced. It is £20M accessible for local authorities to be used on sites that they own and is to be used to unlock development sites for housing that have abnormal costs. Post budget it is hoped there will be additional fund also released.

b) Industry and Local Authority updates (written updates; in alphabetical order)

AGS Contaminated Land Working Group

Recent successes:

- A virtual meeting was held on the 7th of October with 30 members in attendance.
- Recently published article on the Interpretation and Understanding of Historic Soils Data.
- AGS ran a successful webinar on [Trial Pitting - Controlling the Risks](#). AGS followed up the webinar with an article published in the AGS magazine.
- An article on [Bridging the Knowledge Gap - Climate Change and Sustainability](#) has also been published in the September edition of the magazine.
- AGS published an article on [Neurodiversity and Disability in Geoenvironmental and Geotechnical Engineering Sectors](#).
- AGS have published their [Sustainability Charter](#) and [Policy](#).

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

- The CLWG received updates from the NBF, NHBC, SiLC, SoBRA, Environment Agency, C4SL project, CIRIA, CL:AIRE and GeolSoc Contaminated Land Group.
- AGS is supporting the next stage of updating the former Department of Environment Industry Profiles.
- AGS are reviewing BRE 365 Soakaway Testing guidance. This is in response to safety concerns with respect to working near water as well as issues relating to the reliability of test results used for design, the specification of testing in low permeability/impermeable soils, and the sustainable use of resources.
- Collaboration with SoBRA and other organisations on Bioaccessibility in Risk Assessment guidance document.
- Standards update provided, including current progress with BS 10175, BS 8576 and BS 10177.
- AGS continued to be involved in C4SL Phase 2 project.
- A mind map of standards relating to site investigation is being finalised.
- Initiative to improve consistency in PFAS CAS numbers used by UK laboratories.
- Articles being finalised on:
 - gas monitoring data and the AGS format.
 - risk assessment of pesticides at greenfield sites.
 - PFAS and microplastics.
- Continued collaboration with GAOF, IStructE, BDA, RICS, FPS, BDA and others.
- The Data Management Working Group are moving forward with the release of AGS 4.2 and progress is being made in the longer term for release of AGS 5.0 (including co-opting relevant industry stakeholders).

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

Future events include:

- [AGS Data Conference](#) - Discuss, Engage, Evolve (4 December, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum)
- [AGS Annual Conference 2026](#) (19 March, One Great George Street, London)
- Further information is available at: [AGS – Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists – AGS Event Programme 2025](#)

British Geological Survey (BGS)

BGS Geology maps (Version 9)

BGS has published Version 9 of BGS Geology (1:50k) mapping:

<https://hosted-metadata.bgs.ac.uk/geonetwork/srv/api/records/41a7362c-1d20-8197-e063-3050940adcc6>

For further information please contact enquiries@bgs.ac.uk

UK Geothermal Platform

<https://ukgeothermalplatform.org/>

The Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ)'s UK Geothermal Platform (UKGTP) is a freely available geothermal energy information hub. Summary layers provide a map overview of geothermal energy potential for four technologies, whilst a map explorer and a data access page enable you to view more detailed geoscientific datasets from several organisations. A user guide and examples are also provided.

Release of over 500 Scottish abandoned-mine plans

<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/release-of-over-500-scottish-abandoned-mine-plans/>

Digital scans of over 500 historical plans of abandoned mines (non-coal) have been released by the [National Geoscience Data Centre](#) (NGDC) as part of BGS's commitment to providing more open, accessible data for its users.

For further information please contact enquiries@bgs.ac.uk

New paper on applying in vitro dermal bioavailability to human health risk assessment

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2025.123176>

This paper reflects the culmination of many years of research on dermal bioavailability including 2 PhDs, numerous publications and two industry awards - largely funded by Nation Grid Property Holdings and the Natural Environment Research Council.

The paper provides new evidence to support the risk-based assessment of post-industrial contamination in urban brownfields being reused for new homes and infrastructure. It also supports the Government approach to evidence and risk-based spatial planning.

Highlights include:

- In vitro dermal flux for benzo[a]pyrene in soil is used to estimate daily exposure in humans
- In vitro dermal flux shown to present lower risk than generic dermal absorption coefficients
- Dermal flux data can be used to derived site-specific assessment criteria in human health risk assessment.

Common Ground Phase 2 – Proposal Summary

The [Common Ground Project](#) has received further funding from the [Government Office for Technology Transfer](#) to build on the pilot created in the previous phase. Phase 2 aims to develop a national-scale geotechnical database to help third parties better understand ground conditions across the UK. By providing access to reliable geotechnical data, it seeks to reduce planning risks and mitigate unforeseen hazards in construction, which currently contribute to an estimated 5% annual loss in a £120 billion industry.

The funding will enable BGS to undertake this initiative over the next 18 months. The project includes:

- Building scalable data architecture to automate the extraction and validation of AGS data for integration into the NGPD (National Geotechnical Properties Database).
- Developing a data delivery system with both a user-friendly web interface and an API for programmatic access.
- Establishing a sustainable financial and licensing model, informed by stakeholder engagement and benchmarking.
- Evolving the Common Ground platform from a Minimum Viable Product to a customer-focused offering ,through further market analysis and customer engagement.

Community of Interest – update

BGS (Hazel Napier and Susanne Sargeant) ran an online workshop on the role of the subsurface in climate change adaptation (CCA) in the UK for the Future of the Subsurface Community of Interest, on 31 July. 16 members of the Future of the Subsurface Community of Interest (CoI) participated.

The aim of the workshop was to consider how the subsurface impacts on all current outcome areas as described in the Climate Change Committee's 2025 report to Parliament on Progress in Adapting to Climate Change. This focuses on the progress being made on the implementation of NAP3 (the current National Adaptation Plan developed by the UK government). The objective of the workshop was to use the report as a starting point for discussing potential risks to adaptation if the subsurface is not considered and consider where more action may be needed. Outputs from the workshop will include a report and a two-page summary/policy brief of the issues raised, which will be shared with key stakeholders including the Climate Change Committee. [Will share with the NBF once finalised]. It is clear from the workshop discussions that the subsurface is a vital resource for climate change adaptation and work is needed to tackle the challenges that stand in the way of it being used effectively to deliver CCA outcomes. This will require a multi-sector, multi-stakeholder, cross-UK approach.

Brownfield Awards 2025 (shortlisting)

WSP, North Lanarkshire Council, and BGS have been shortlisted for a brownfield award for our work on developing a new mine gas risk screening tool in the category of 'Best Research or Application in the Advancement of Science, Technology or Digital Innovation in the Brownfield Sector'

Details at:

<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/new-tool-helps-identify-coal-mine-gas-risk-for-housing-developments-in-scotland/>

<https://digitalplanningdirectory.org/case-studies/coal-mine-gas-emissions-risk-screening-tool-a-web-based-solution-for-public-bodies/>

We will be presenting this work at this year's SoBRA/RSC annual conference in London on 10th December 2025.

Sand & sustainability in construction - new information resource

<https://arcg.is/Ln1mX0>

ESRI StoryMap about the qualification of construction materials in urban environments, with Malaysia case study.

Planned BGS data products

- A new “annual maxima groundwater level” dataset (product), hopefully this side of Christmas
- Mining hazard (not including coal) product is currently being updated and a new version will be released soon <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/geology-projects/hazard-and-resilience-modelling/mining-hazard-not-including-coal/>. The update will improve the methodology for vein and metallic commodities and bring the data in line with the latest geological mapping.

CIRIA

Soil

- CIRIA Soil Community of Practice second round table meeting will take place on 21 November. The number of the s table meeting can found here. https://www.ciria.org/SOILCOP/SOILCOP/News/SOIL/Copy_of_Protecting_soils_in_construction.aspx
- Both CIRIA Soil community of practice and the PFAS Forum are now preparing activities for 2026

New projects

- Redeveloping challenging site, a good practice guidance
- A good practice for microplastics in construction
- Implementation of odour management for brownfield projects

New publications

- A good practice guide for managing climate change geo-related impacts and liabilities for land development will be published in early 2026

CL:AIRE

Projects Update

Aggregates from Inert Wastes Quality Protocol

Continue to work closely with the Environment Agency on the update of the quality protocol.

DoE Industry Profiles

CL:AIRE has started to work with the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales and AGS on the next phase of this project. It will involve updating 10 additional profiles.

DoW CoP

CL:AIRE is continuing to work closely with the Environment Agency on updating the DoWCoP.

- **DoW CoP International**
CL:AIRE is promoting the use of DoWCoP principles outside of England and Wales and working with partners to use DoWCoP International.
- **International Soil Reuse Forum**
Partners continue to meet and look for collaboration activities.
- **The Earthbanks project**
CL:AIRE is working with academics and industry to work on proof of concept demonstration projects.

- HS2 – Align JV case study
A [case study bulletin](#) has been published detailing the staged declaration approach to MMPs on HS2 project.

Gas Protection Verification Accreditation Scheme (GPVS)

The interviews have now begun for the Autumn 2025 application window. We have received 9 applications (3 SGPV and 6 TGPV). Auditing for 2024 has concluded and [reported](#). Over 600 declarations have now been purchased since the scheme started.

National Brownfield Forum (NBF)

The National Brownfield Forum's Task and Finish Group [Report](#) and [Evidence Cards](#) were published and has been widely circulated, downloaded and received very positive feedback.

PFAS

CL:AIRE has created a dedicated PFAS web page to bring together information (resources and publications) and news items relevant to the understanding and management of PFAS. It is available at <https://claire.co.uk/pfas>

- Bulletins

A PFAS bulletin addressing implications on the management of excavated soils is awaiting Environment Agency approval prior to publication. A second bulletin is currently being developed on methods to detect and quantify PFAS.

- Lines of Evidence

CL:AIRE is working with the Environment Agency to disseminate the PFAS Lines of Evidence Approach Project. This will involve the publication of several fact sheets and some training slides.

- PRB and Soil Stabilisation Guidance for PFAS

CL:AIRE is working with the Environment Agency and Arcadis on the preparation of PRB and Soil Stabilisation guidance for PFAS. The project involves an industry consultation, workshop, literature review, remedial options appraisal, as well as the preparation of guidance bulletins.

Sustainable Management Practices Project

CL:AIRE is working on a second phase of the SMP project. It is quantifying the sustainability benefits across two hypothetical sites: a fuel depot and a mobility hub. The final report is being prepared and a CL:AIRE bulletin will be published to summarise the report.

Sustainable Remediation

The SuRF-UK steering group published the [updated framework document](#)

Training and events

The following training courses are currently being run, with some new additions for 2026. All courses are also now available to be delivered **in house**. Dates and booking will be live at the end of the month:

- 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
- 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
- Statistics for Land Contamination – classroom
- Groundwater Monitoring & Sampling – classroom
- Principles and Practice of Sustainable Remediation – classroom
- Developing Advanced Conceptual Models for Contaminated Sites – classroom
- Managing Contaminated Sites using MNA & NSZD – classroom
- Good Practice for Risk Assessment for Coal Mine Gas Emissions – virtual
- Soil and Groundwater Risk Assessment – eLearning
- Sustainable Remediation – eLearning

- Introduction to Brownfield Site Investigation – eLearning
- Asbestos Awareness for Land Professionals – Full & Refresher – eLearning
- Piling in land affected by contamination – virtual **NEW 2026**
- DoWCoP Awareness – classroom **NEW 2026**
- Verification of Gas Protection Systems – virtual **NEW 2026**

Further information on all courses will be available: [CL:AIRE Training](#)

CL:AIRE was involved in the following Conferences and Events:

- 20th Soils in the South East Workshop (Chatham, UK)
- Environmental Services & Solutions Expo 17-18 September 2025 (Birmingham, UK)
- RemTech Europe, 15-19 September 2025 (Ferrara, Italy)
- Sustainathon, 24-25 September 2025 (virtual)
- GeoEnviroPro 29 October 2025 (virtual)

Environmental Industries Association (EIA)

Firstly, we are very grateful to the NBF for accepting us as a member. We recognise that we are a new stakeholder in the sector, but our membership brings together a wide network of experts, consultants, and technology providers, adding meaningful breadth and depth of knowledge and experience

Remediation of Land and Groundwater Working Group

This group has been busy promoting Brownfield First policy and made a substantial submission to Land Remediation Relief consultation by HMT. EIA has engaged with CPRE, MHCLG, DEFRA and EA. We have also looked at PFAS and specifically risk mapping but note that not all PFAS are the same, and that any forthcoming legislation must reflect the scientific knowledge and understanding. The group is also engaged with HSE covering Asbestos and Radon issues. Early next year EIA will be having follow up conversations with the EA regarding Permitting and re-use of materials which has been an ongoing concern for the industry.

Environmental Analysis and Testing Working Group

This group has maintained ongoing discussions with UKAS to enable Members to address a range of issues affecting samples, including holding times, EU accreditation, and other key technical challenges. UKAS has committed to attending EIA meetings every six months, which will support more constructive and consistent dialogue between the industry and the accreditation body. The group is also continuing to advance work on the science of PFAS, microplastics, and coal tar.

Air Quality Working Group

This group is very active looking at WHO guidelines and EU Air Quality Directive with a view that the UK Government should adopt similar guidelines. The Group also looks at the National Air Quality Index. The group is developing a Air Quality policy manifesto, which also includes indoor air quality specifically black mould, radon, and asbestos air particles, as well as, PM emissions. This group also has close working relationships with Devolved Nations.

Sustainable Buildings Working Group

This group has been reviewing the delivery and changes to Energy Performance Certificates, and have had multiple meetings with MHCLG on the delivery of NPPF. We understand that Planning and Infrastructure Bill is delayed and that a further edition of NPPF will be forthcoming, so welcome any updates.

Water Resources Working Group

This group is working closely with multiple water companies around AMP8. It has also had update briefings from DEFRA, and the EA on water catchment management, flood and drought resilience, as well as delivery of SUDS reforms, and sewage infrastructure, monitoring and modelling.

Environmental Noise Working Group

This group has been assisting National Highways with standards on noise abatement of Strategic Road Network.

Climate Change Working Group

This Group is made up of all the other EIA groups and Chaired by former DEFRA Minister Rebecca Pow. Our next round of meetings will be occurring next year.

Environmental Industries Commission (EIC)

July 2025 – [EIC responded](#) to Defra's consultation on changes to the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regime for small, medium and brownfield developments. EIC has agreed with proposals to allow for the correct identification and classification of Open Mosaic Habitat (OMH) as well as allowing alternative habitat delivery for the loss of OMH.

14 July 2025 – Mike Smith and Jacob Hess from the Environment Agency, responsible for the DoW CoP, came to speak to EIC Contaminated Land Group members. They delivered an update on what can be expected from the next version of the DoW CoP and there was a discussion on areas of concern.

August 2025 – ACE/EIC signed a letter together with the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) in response to HMT's Landfill Tax Reform consultation opposing the government's proposal to converge the standard and lower rates of landfill tax. This proposal has now been revised, to reduce the impact on the industry - a policy win for ACE/EIC.

September 2025 – EIC launched a new report [Circular Economy or Bust](#) at the EIC Parliamentary Reception. We called, among other things, for “valuing natural resources by creating a circular economy for soil and water.”

15 September 2025 – HM Treasury hosted EIC members for a virtual roundtable to discuss the Land Remediation Relief Consultation. EIC submitted a [response to the consultation](#) calling for the following:

1. Accelerated tax relief for developers and housebuilders: Housebuilders can currently benefit from LRR only at the point of sale rather than the point of expenditure. Investors, on the other hand, can claim relief in the year of expenditure. This means that investors can receive the subsidy sometimes even decades earlier, creating an unfair system for housebuilders. We recommend resolving this unequal treatment by allowing housebuilders to claim relief in the year the expenditure is incurred.
2. Increase the value of tax relief to 200% for SME housebuilders developing brownfield sites of 25 or less dwellings: SME housebuilders play a significant role in unlocking more brownfield sites and therefore delivering more housing, especially the small urban sites which are often too small for large housebuilders. However, they are also under disproportionate financial pressures – and yet receive the same level of tax relief as large businesses. We recommend increasing the value of tax relief for SME housebuilders to 200%.

9 October 2025- EIC Contaminated Land Group meeting welcomed Trevor Howard from the Environment Agency presenting on the Joint Advice Note “Regulatory expectations for successful land quality management at nuclear licensed sites”. Also Liz Hart representing the National Brownfield Forum, joined the meeting to present on the recent report on “Interactions between Government policies affecting the planning and development of brownfield land in England.” The presentation was very well received and led to further exposure of this NBF work including Liz being invited to present at CLC (Construction Leadership Council).

October 2025 – EIC responded to the Autumn Statement Call for Evidence, calling for government to urgently simplify complex brownfield development taxes and permitting to deliver environmental standards, fast-track projects and build homes.

13 November 2025 – EIC Policy Director Marie-Claude Hemming and Policy Executive Laura Doanova [chaired panels](#) at Environment Analyst's Brownfield Summit in Manchester. Marie-Claude chaired a panel on grey belt development, focusing on how to make it sustainable, the need for clearer definitions, and balancing housing demand with investment in brownfield sites. Laura's panel highlighted the role of the Biodiversity Net Gain regime, the importance of bringing nature closer to communities, and the value of early engagement to address potential viability issues

26 November 2025 – the EIC Advisory Group was joined by Nick Barter, Deputy Director for Land Use Policy in Defra. Nick discussed the government's upcoming Land Use Framework.

3 December 2025 – EIC Contaminated Land Group meeting with Marc Casale, Deputy Director for Chemicals UK & International in Defra + colleagues Melanie Foster and Francis Wragg. We heard

an update on the chemicals section of the newly published Environmental Improvement Plan 2025, including plans for UK REACH, the PFAS Plan expected in 2026, and POPS.

Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES)

Recent activities for the Land Condition Community include:

- The IES's annual Dialogue Between Disciplines Conference took place on the 23rd June. A summary of the event [can be found here](#).
- The next [Land Condition Symposium](#) will be taking place on the 5th March, 2026 in Leeds.
- The Land Condition Community and Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) have release a new guidance document: [Good practice on air quality monitoring for brownfield projects](#)
- We published a [new resource](#) on the professional development opportunities available for Land Condition professionals
- The Land Condition Community have held a number of webinars including:
 - [The SILOtoSOIL tool](#)
 - [Wheal Jane: Operating and optimising the UK's flagship mine water treatment plant](#)
- The latest [IES journal focused on interweaving disciplines](#) and included an article on Collaborative land and water management through the Catchment Based Approach
- The [IES responded to call for Parliamentary inquiry topics](#), including proposing one on addressing the risks from closed landfill contamination.
- The IES responded to the call for evidence on a POSTnote on legacy landfills

Mining Remediation Authority

British Drilling Authority (BDA) have published a 'guide to drillers on permits in coal mining areas'. This is a restricted document not freely downloadable but colleagues that have BDA membership will have access to it.

See <https://www.britishdrillingassociation.co.uk/news/drillers-guide-to-permits-in-coal-mining-areas-guidance-from-the-bda/>

National Contaminated Land Officers Group (NCLOG)

NCLOG has had a busy few months, with an in-house radon training event on the 24th September and further NCLOG participation as part of the EPIC Conference on the 13th October and the Brownfield Regeneration Summit on the 13th November. Another in-house event on Part 2A at 25 is to be held on the 20th November, celebrating 25 years since the advent of Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The sessions will consist of a look at the past, how things are now and also looking to the future.

The latest State of Contaminated Land survey has been issued by the Environment Agency. NCLOG is keen to ensure that the Environment Agency receives as much information as possible from Local Authorities so that a meaningful report can be produced. This will be a difficult task for some Local Authorities due to varying approaches to Part 2A and the lack of support and resources in recent times. NCLOG will be providing support to all Local Authorities in completing the survey. Looking forward, NCLOG is excited to be participating in the SoBRA/RSC Winter Conference in December and is planning an event on lead in the spring next year. We also hope to release our work on planning conditions early next year.

National House Building Council (NHBC)

NHBC Standards 2026

A quick reminder that NHBC Standards 2026 will come into effect on the 1 January 2026 and these new Standards apply to every NHBC-registered home whose foundations are begun on or after this date, throughout the UK unless otherwise stated.

Assessing and Managing Your Ground Gas Risk Webinar

4 February 2026 10am to 1pm

Assessing and managing ground gas risks frequently creates difficulties on housing development sites. Following the publication of the NHBC Foundation document NF94 in 2023 this webinar aims

to provide further insight into the ground gas management process and the common issues that are frequently encountered.

Led by a panel of NHBC and industry experts, the webinar will explore good practice, pitfalls and the real world case studies in the following:

- Ground gas risk assessment.
- Design of gas protection measures.
- Installation of gas protection measures.
- Verification.

Whether you're a builder, groundworker, consultant or regulator, this comprehensive session will equip you with practical knowledge to help you understand, assess and manage ground gas risks on your sites.

SPEAKERS:

Stephen Moreby - NHBC

Mark Davies - NHBC

Alex Logan - NHBC

Amy Juden - Environmental Protection Group

Neil Salvidge - Neil Salvidge Training, Development and Assessment

SILC

The Chair of the SiLC Professional and Technical Panel (PTP) is Louise Beale and Lucy Bethell is Deputy Chair. Applications for a new Deputy Chair are open as Lucy will take on the Chair role in March 2026. 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 SiLC PTP met on 10th June 2025 (virtually) and 16th September 2025 (hybrid in Birmingham) and the next meeting is due on 2nd December 2025. There are currently 205 SiLCs and 160 SQPs with an application round (4 candidates) currently underway. We are continuing to offer free conversion to SQP for existing SiLCs. An Introduction meeting was held in June 2025 with 3 prospective applicants.

Other current areas of SiLC activity include:

A webinar titled A Trio of Synthetic "P"s: PFAS Polymers, Nano Plastics & Phthalate Plasticisers was presented by Paul Nathanail on 19th June 2025.

As part of its 25 year anniversary celebrations SiLC held a networking event at the Contamination and Land Remediation Expo on 17th September 2025. Six SiLCs presented, took part in or chaired panel discussions over the 2 days of the expo.

As part of its review of the SiLC application and assessment process the PTP is in the process of updating the SiLC Criteria. This includes linkage to the National Brownfield Skills Framework capabilities and competency levels. The purpose is to make the requirements clearer for applicants and ensure consistency in assessment.

The new SiLC website was launched in June making it easier for people to access the SiLC Register, find out about SiLC sub groups and activities and events. It includes an online form for new SiLC applicants and promotion of SiLC for future candidates.

The SiLC Employers scheme which endorses organisations committed to high standards of land condition competence in the UK was launched earlier in 2025. To be eligible organisations must employ at least one SiLC. So far seven organisations have signed up.

SiLC submitted a response to the government consultation of Reform of Landfill Tax in June.

The following articles have been published in the AGS magazine

- Bridging the Knowledge gap – climate change and sustainability – September 2025
- Celebrating 25 Years of SiLC: A landmark in professional excellence – November 2025

NQMS steering group meeting attended by Ian Evans in June.

SiLC continues to run the following subgroups:

- Climate Change & Sustainability
- Soils and Material Reuse

Coming up in 2026: preparations are underway for:

- Webinar titled “Excavated Materials – Reuse, Dispose, Recycle, recover or Extract?” on 28th January
- SiLC 2026 Annual Forum on 26th March

Society of Brownfield Risk Assessment (SoBRA)

Conferences/Events

The RSC Toxicology Group / SoBRA joint Winter Conference (and SoBRA AGM) is scheduled for Wednesday 10 December 2025 at Burlington House, London, and online.

Sub-groups

The active sub-groups are:

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

Publications

No new publications. Details of all recent publications are available at [SoBRA Reports](#).

Accreditation scheme

The second 2025 window was open during August. Four applicants were successful for RSoBRA. We have 633 current members. 113 are accredited, of which 51 are ASoBRA for one or more disciplines.

Next window will be open in February 2026.

Other activities/events

The early careers sub-group are organising another series of freely available webinars for 2026. To date:

- The SoBRA Accreditation Scheme – RSoBRA: 21 January
- Introduction to Coal Mine Gas Risk Assessment and Protection Design: 18 February
- Introduction to Acute Human Health Risk Assessment: 15 April
- PFAS Toxicology: 17 June
- Contaminant Distribution in Soil: 30 September

Upcoming:

- Assessing Risks to Surface Water Receptors from Land Contamination Sources: 25 November

Further webinars, to be confirmed, will be provided in 2026. Access to and details of all the previous webinar recordings can be found here <https://sobra.org.uk/resources/early-careers-webinars/>

We have recently awarded two Research Grant Bursaries – more information will be provided soon.

United Kingdom Environmental Law Association (UKELA)

Forthcoming events

- 25th November 2025: Annual Garner Lecture 2025

Join us for one of the highlights of the UKELA year. Our distinguished speaker is Baroness Barbara Young (hybrid/London, live streaming from Manchester and Bristol) on Tuesday 25 November. Timings: registration from 5.30pm, Lecture at 6pm to 7.30pm, followed by drinks and networking. A number of universities across the country are also hosting a live screening of the lecture, introducing students to UKELA and encouraging them to join as Student members

- 1st December 2025: Junior UKELA Fireside Chat with Natalie Prosser (CEO) and Sophie Tremlin, both of the OEP.

Join Junior UKEKA for an early evening meet up in our "Fireside Chats" series. This entails an informal interview between a junior practitioner and a more experienced practitioner where they answer questions and share insights about their professional experiences from their different perspectives. We are delighted to have Natalie Prosser and Sophie Tremlin from the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) joining us. Location: Landmark Chambers (in person / London). Timings: 5.45pm registration for a 6pm start to 7pm with drinks and networking

- 8th December 2025: UKELA Social Series 2025

THE UKELA Social Series is our bi-monthly networking evening series. Our Christmas social series is taking place in London (in person). Timings: 5.30pm onwards. Open to all - members and anyone interested in learning more about UKELA. Drinks are on the house. A big thank you to our generous sponsors, Ramboll and Cornerstone Barristers.

- 15th December 2025: UKELA Mooting Competitions Semi and finals day 2025

Join us in-person to watch the Semi-finals and Finals for this year's Mooting Competition at No5 Barristers' Chambers (London).

For more details and to book, please see UKELA's website.

Recent consultation responses:

Recent consultation responses which may be of interest (copies of which can be found on UKELA's website) are as follows:

- Response to the Defra consultation on the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) reform proposals
- Response to the Welsh Government's Consultation on consolidation on proposed legislation to consolidate planning law in Wales – The Planning (Wales) Bill and the Planning (Consequential Provisions) (Wales) Bill
- Response to the Scottish Government consultation on Scotland's fourth land use strategy
- Response to the Scottish Parliament's consultation on the Ecocide (Scotland) Bill
- Response to the Scottish Parliament consultation on the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill
- Response to Defra consultation on biodiversity net gain for nationally significant infrastructure projects
- Response to the Defra Consultation on Improving Implementation of BNG for Minor, Medium & Brownfield
- Response to HM Treasury consultation on reform of Landfill Tax in England and Northern Ireland
- Response to Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) consultation on Voluntary Carbon and Nature Markets (VCN)
- Responses, written and in person, to the Welsh Parliament consultation on the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill.

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

- WELLCOG met on the 11 September 2025 to a wider audience of officers, with representatives from other nearby authorities, NCLOG and other groups (Surrey, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, etc.). This provided interesting discussion and there was a broad hope that the DEFRA State of Contaminated Land Survey will raise the profile of land contamination.
- There were updates/presentations from Sally Shaw of NCLOG and Andrew Scott introduced the organisation and work of the National Brownfield Institute.
- The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Category 4 and Category 3 levels and lead modelling tool will be presented (and softly launched) at the SOBRA winter conference in December.
- A 'State of Contaminated Land in London Questionnaire' will be sent out before the next WELLCOG meeting on the 11th December. This is meant to complement rather than replace the similar EA questionnaire.

YALPAG

YALPAG's Land Technical Group meet twice a year with the last meeting being held on 15 October 2025. The 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 and it is anticipated that work will start on updating this document at the end of this year/early next year. The Verification Requirements for Gas Protection Systems guidance is currently in the process of being reviewed and updated.

a. Hot or emerging topics

Emma Tattersdill (ET) made NBF members aware of a recent court judgement that will affect the brownfield/development sector: [C G Fry & Son Ltd v Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#). The case relates to assessment of environmental/ecological habitats at different stages of the planning process and nutrient neutrality requirements. Further information is available here: https://supremecourt.uk/uploads/uksc_2024_0108_press_summary_fa0df0e3fb.pdf

NBF members were made aware that the Environmental Select Committee are carrying out an investigation into [Waste Crime - Committees - UK Parliament](#). This is on the back of the national waste crime survey reported in July 2025 [National waste crime survey 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

Also Northumbria University is carrying out research into lead exposure in children [Northumbria University leads pioneering research to tackle hidden lead exposure in children](#)

b. Brownfields in the Media

It was acknowledged that brownfield/contaminated land has been in the media again and especially PFAS. Panorama has a programme on 1 December 2025 [BBC One - Panorama, The Truth About Forever Chemicals](#)

There has been a lot written about PFAS in High Bentham, North Yorkshire. Angus Fire has a dedicated web page that has uploaded all reports : [Community Updates](#)

Hillhouse Industrial Estate in Thornton Cleveleys in Lancashire [Thornton families' cancer fears in shadow of 'forever chemical' plant - BBC News](#) and [Regulators overlooking toxic Pfas found around Lancashire chemicals plant | Pfas | The Guardian](#). [Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone - Thornton-Cleveleys – Wyre Council](#)

The Guardian Newspaper has also run a series of articles about potential “toxic” waste across Wales: [At least 45,000 sites in Wales could be contaminated with toxic waste, study says | Wales | The Guardian](#)

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

Liz Hart (LH) chair of the NQMS steering group provided an update on the NQMS. She explained the focus of the NQMS steering group is marketing the scheme. This includes updating all the presentational materials and creating more outward facing promotional materials which will include short recordings about the NQMS for different sectors. CL:AIRE is working with LH to update the NQMS website and a LINKED IN page has been created [\(2\) National Quality Mark Scheme: Overview | LinkedIn](#).

LH also confirmed that the steering group plan to increase the declaration fee to £150 + VAT. The fee has not been increased since the scheme started and is currently not covering its costs. LH will prepare some wording around the fee increase once the website is updated but it was felt an increase to £150 + VAT would bring it more in line with other fees and charges within the industry. Going forward the fee will be reviewed every two years at the same time as the terms of reference.

Finally, LH is going to prepare a letter for distribution across the NBF members asking for funds to put towards helping develop a marketing strategy. It was acknowledged that the scheme needs to market itself more broadly, more outward facing and so help with this to get the marketing correct would be welcome.

d. 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 available to [here](#)

Specific Knowledge Share

Presentation was provided by Professor Jack Hannam DB NRI University of Greenwich and gave an inspiring presentation on Soil Health.

Her presentation is available [here](#)

3. AOB

No further items were raised.

4. Date of Next Meetings

The next meetings will be confirmed following discussion with LH as the incoming chair and will be circulated.

DB thanked everyone and closed the meeting.