

# National Brownfield Forum

## Meeting Notes

15<sup>th</sup> July 2021, 11.00am – 2.00pm Teleconference



### FINAL

#### Present:

Paul Nathanail ( <i>Chair</i> )	GHD
Nicola Harries ( <i>Secretariat</i> )	CL:AIRE
Rachel Boulderstone & Graeme Duggan	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Richard Boyle	Homes England
Matthew Llewellyn	Natural Resources Wales
Angela Haslam	Environment Agency (EA)
Edward Lewis	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
Simon Cole	Society of Brownfield Risk Assessment (SoBRA)
Ian Evans	Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC)
Seamus Lefroy Brooks	Chair of NQMS Steering Group
Tim Elliott	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
David Rudland	Environmental Protection UK
Stella Keenan	Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Pollution Advisory Group (YALPAG)
Rebekha Norbury	National Contaminated Land Officers Group
Jane Thrasher	Environmental Industries Commission (EIC)
Vivien Dent	Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists (AGS)
Emma Tattersdill	UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA)
Max Tolley	Royal Town Planning Institute
Lucy Thomas	Home Builders Federation (HBF)
Joanne Kwan	CIRIA

#### Apologies:

Andrew Williams & Joanne Smith	Welsh Government (WG)
Anisha Patel	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)
John Cleland	Geological Society
Frank Evans	Soil and Groundwater Technology Association (SAGTA)
Steve Edgar	The Society of Remediation Practitioners (REMSOC)
Caroline Thornton	Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
Rachael Davies	Flintshire Council & Welsh Contaminated Land Working Group
Hallan Sambrook	Staffordshire Contaminated Land Officer Group

#### Corresponding Members:

Darren Beriro	British Geological Survey
Eddie Tuttle & David Philp	Chartered Institute of Building
Julia Thrift	Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)
Philip Ridley	Planning Officers Society
Euan Hall	Land Trust

## Agenda

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Introductions of represented organisations
3. Review of previous minutes & actions
4. Update from Government Departments and Environment Agencies
5. Standards Update
6. Sub Group – National Quality Mark Scheme Update
7. Roundtable Update from Industry Groups
8. AOB
  - 8.1 Gasworks United and the All Party Parliamentary Groups on Gasworks
  - 8.2 Feedback from EU Common Forum Meeting
  - 8.2 HSG 248 & UKAS
  - 8.3 Defra PFAS Workshop Outputs
  - 8.4 ICE Specification for Ground Investigations Consultation
9. Date and location of next meeting

## Meeting Notes

### 1) Welcome & Apologies

Paul Nathanail (PN) welcomed everyone and apologies were given.

### 2) Introductions of represented organisations

Introductions were performed.

### 3) Review of Previous Minutes & Outstanding Actions

PN 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.

### 4) Update from Government Departments and Environment Agencies

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

Edward Lewis (EL) attended the meeting on behalf of NIEA and DAERA as Berni Corr (BC) was unable to attend the meeting but provided an update on behalf of NIEA and DAERA. She has recently replaced Brian McVeigh to cover Theresa Kearney's role while Theresa Kearney remains on secondment. EL confirmed the following:

- DAERA staff are still reviewing the next steps regarding the potential implementation of Part iii of the Waste and Contaminated Land Order (Northern Ireland) 1997 following the publication of the risk assessment report;
- Planning consultations figures received by NIEA relating to land contamination were slightly down overall for the year 2020/21 and are now returning to expected levels. Similarly engagement with local authorities on larger area plans had been reduced in the same period but are likely to increase moving forward;

- The Developers Guide for Land Affected by Contamination is due to be published on the DAERA web site in July 2021. (Post meeting note: this has now been published at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/development-land-potentially-affected-by-contamination> )
- The final classification of groundwaters under the Water Framework Directive has been completed and submitted to the NIEA Integrated Catchment Management team for inclusion in the second cycle of the River Basin Management Plan due to be published by March 2022. Statistics on the classification updates will be released in autumn 2021 on the DAERA website.
- Under the Regulatory Transformation Programme (RTP) within NIEA, DAERA policy will be undertaking a public consultation on the new policy for Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) in Northern Ireland by March 2022. NIEA is moving forward with its pre-operational delivery work plan to align with the new EPR including digital transformation of processes, drafting of standard rules for permits and undertaking a strategic review of fees and charges.

### **DEFRA**

Graeme Duggan (GD) introduced himself as a new member of the DEFRA Soils team. He provided a brief update on behalf of DEFRA. He confirmed that their main activities recently have been feeding into the spending review. They are also looking at updating the Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction sites. National Brownfield Forum (NBF) members confirmed that they are keen to feed into this piece of work.

### **Environment Agency (EA)**

Angela Haslam (AH) provided an update on behalf of EA. AH confirmed that the EA and NRW are working on joint guidance which covers the Environmental Permitting Regulations aspects of land contamination. This will include information on the most common types of remediation techniques. In addition, the EA is updating the H5 Site Condition Report guidance and is currently drafting the guidance in the same format as LCRM for publication on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) later in the year.

The EA is also continuing the ongoing PFAS work. Phase 2 has now been completed which focussed on the development of a GIS prioritisation model. Phase 3 will further refine the GIS model and include case studies and a regional study as well as engagement with key external stakeholders such as MOD and the Fire Service. Additional groundwater monitoring will also be undertaken as well as landfill leachate monitoring at a number of historic landfill sites (this work could not be completed in Phase 2 due to COVID restrictions). This work is going to be supported by a new full time project manager.

The EA was encouraged by NBF members to publish any guidance and data directly online as the PFAS information arena is rapidly changing globally. It was agreed that any GIS systems should be compatible with existing open source systems for practitioners to be able to use and access. AH confirmed the GIS system being developed is for internal EA use only. The EA will shortly be publishing a report on PFAS sources, pathways and environmental monitoring data.

It was also noted that laboratories are starting to offer PFAS screening but they are seeking guidance from industry and regulators on what compounds they should be including in a suite of PFAS contaminants.

AH also confirmed that the EA and DEFRA have been in discussions with CL: AIRE regarding landfill remediation. The EA is currently preparing internal EA guidance clarifying the waste regulation requirements when remediating historic or permitted landfills so officers can give consistent advice.

## **POST MEETING NOTE:**

The report, *PFAS: sources, pathways and environmental data* was published on 26<sup>th</sup> August. It is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/poly-and-perfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-sources-pathways-and-environmental-data>

## **MHCLG**

Anisha Patel (AP) was unfortunately unable to attend the NBF but sent the following update on behalf of MHCLG.

- Currently MHCLG are consolidating advice on the role of brownfield and looking at exploring the best ways to encourage more use of brownfield sites in the planning system. AP would welcome any previous advice/papers from the Forum in this regard.
- MHCLG are continuing to work on the consultation responses, as well as recently considering the Housing Select Committee's recent report on planning reforms.
- MHCLG is working closely with the Planning Advisory Service to provide a programme of support for Local Planning Authorities over the next year covering urban regeneration.

## **Welsh Government – Planning and Environment**

Welsh Government representatives confirmed that there was no update to provide the NBF at this meeting following recent elections and new ministers coming into post.

## **Natural Resources Wales (NRW)**

Matthew Llewellyn (ML) provided an update on behalf of Natural Resources Wales (NRW). He confirmed that the International Mine Water Conference is currently on in Wales but virtually. It will be returning in 2023. A new member Sarah Poulton has joined the NRW groundwater team. She is also now the CL:AIRE Technology and Research Group (TRG) representative. ML also confirmed that they are working with the EA on updating the H5 guidance.

## **Welsh Land Contamination Working Group (WLCWG)**

ML confirmed that the WLCWG are starting to work on a Technical Advisory Note on developing on land affected by contamination to sit alongside the Welsh Planning Policy Guidance. The purpose is to raise the profile of land contamination. The current Developers Guide will also be revisited and updated now Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) has been linked to from NRW website.

## **Homes England (HE)**

Richard Boyle provided an update on behalf of HE. He confirmed that further information on all the initiatives he has summarised can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/homes-england>, and he only provided a selection of recent activities.

## Homes England Senior Position Changes

Homes England has a new Chief Executive to join the new Chair. Peter Denton will join HE shortly as Chief Executive, following the departure of Nick Walkley in February. Peter joins from Hyde Group, where he was Chief Executive.

Homes England's new Chair, Peter Freeman, has given his first significant speech since joining the agency, when he addressed the Inside Housing Development Summit following a review of the Agencies activities and priorities. More will be released on this later in the year, but the speech can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/peter-freemans-speech-to-the-development-summit>

Homes England is also recruiting for up to three Non-Executive Director positions for the Board. In particular, it is looking for a senior leader from the following areas; housebuilding and development, affordable housing, local government, or construction. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/homes-england-seeks-strategic-leaders-to-join-board>

#### New Homes England Housebuilding Statistics Revealed

On 22nd June 2021, Homes England housebuilding statistics were revealed. This showed that housing programmes resulted in 37,330 new houses starting on-site and 34,995 houses completed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.

Housing programmes delivered by Homes England saw an overall decrease in starts and completions in 2020-21 compared to the previous year, according to official statistics released on 22 June, mainly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, which affected:

- Proportion of affordable homes started and completed was down on the previous year; and
- Reduction in both starts and completions of market houses.

Between April 2019 and March 2020 there were 47,965 new houses started on site and 40,452 houses completed. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-homes-england-housebuilding-statistics-revealed>

#### Local Government to Receive Enhanced Support for Home-Building Efforts

On 17th May, Homes England launched the Local Government Capacity Centre, to give targeted and enhanced support for Councils to up their home-building efforts.

As part of the initiative, HE launched the Summer Learning Programme aimed at sharing knowledge on topics ranging from effective project management to principles of market failure, as well as an introduction to dealing with brownfield sites.

As part of the centre's work, Homes England is making it easier for local government to access relevant information, including:

- streamlining access to resources online;
- offering a one-stop shop of information about funds available to help deliver more homes; and
- creating a library of guidance and best practice tools on GOV.UK

See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/local-government-to-receive-enhanced-support-for-home-building-efforts>

#### Homes England Preparing to Launch New Dynamic Purchasing System

Housebuilders will soon find it easier than ever to access Homes England land, following a revamp in the Government's delivery agency's approach to land disposals.

On 1 September 2021, Homes England will launch its new Delivery Partner Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), marking a significant shift in the way the agency procures housebuilders, as well as increasing flexibility and accessibility.

For the first time, housebuilders will be able to join the agency's list of preferred developers whenever they choose. The Delivery Partner DPS is replacing the existing Delivery Partner Panel (DPP3), which housebuilders and developers are currently only able to join when it is renewed, once every four years.

Information on how to apply to join the Delivery Partner DPS can be found on our Guidance Page at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-join-the-delivery-partner-dynamic-purchasing-system>

### **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) & Scottish Government (SG)**

Unfortunately Caroline Thornton (CT) was unable to attend the meeting in person but provided the following update on behalf of SEPA and SG.

#### SEPA Cyber-attack update

Ongoing updates on the legacy from the SEPA cyber- attack and resultant service status for all areas of SEPA can be found [here](#)

#### Scottish Government Consultation on Protecting Scotland's Groundwater from Pollution:

This consultation closed on 31<sup>st</sup> March and related to:

- revised environmental standards;
- an updated list of groundwater hazardous substances;
- greater clarity about the circumstances where remediation is required and an improved approach to prioritising areas of land contamination for remedial action.

The consultation included SEPA revised guidance on:

- WAT-PS-10, on Assigning groundwater assessment criteria for pollutant inputs
- Land contamination and impacts on the water environment.

SEPA and Scottish Government acknowledges and thanks all for their responses.

Following the cyber-attack, SEPA has not been able to assess the responses as quickly as we would normally, however an overview is provided below.

The responses have generally been in favour of our proposals for groundwater standards. The exception to this was including taste and odour criteria to derive standards. We therefore propose to broadly proceed with the proposed standards and are considering the use of the taste and odour criteria.

The responses on the land contamination aspects were less positive, with many respondents disagreeing with the proposal to require a register of sites meeting exemption criteria and to alter the legislation to allow SEPA to highlight to local authorities that sites may be special sites. We therefore don't propose to take forward these aspects at this time.

We are working on a more detailed response to comments and will be able to provide this in due course. We would also like to thank respondents who offered to participate in further discussions on comments made, should this be helpful. We will keep this in mind as we further work through the responses.

SEPA is working on revisions to their guidance 'Land contamination and impacts on the water environment' and 'WAT-PS-10- Assigning groundwater assessment criteria for pollutant inputs' to take account of your comments.

#### Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Fund

Scottish Government has established a capital programme - the £50 million low carbon Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme (VDLIP) i to run over the next 5 years. The programme is currently open to applications for funding in 2021 to 2022.

The funding will support place based approaches to tackling persistent vacant and derelict land, delivering regeneration and sustainable inclusive growth as part of the green recovery. It will help promote equality, health and wellbeing across Scotland, especially in more disadvantaged areas where persistent vacant and derelict land tends to be most concentrated.

The fund is open to all 32 Scottish local authorities and Clyde Gateway Urban Regeneration Company.

In order to assess funding applications Scottish Government has set up an advisory panel which includes representation from a number of relevant, impartial organisations, including SEPA.

5) Update from Industry Groups

**CL:AIRE Update**

Nicola Harries provided an update on behalf of CL:AIRE. She confirmed the following:

DOWCOP

New Version of DoWCoP is still being reviewed by the EA. Work is also underway to create a new administrative platform to make reporting the DoWCoP easier and more accurate. Currently CL:AIRE is advertising for a standards officer to help support auditing and administrative tasks associated with the DoWCoP. Training is also continuing both virtually and classroom based.

Landfill Remediation

CL:AIRE is continuing its discussion with Defra and EA with regards to how to approach remediation when the site is identified as a former landfill. The next meeting is in mid September.

Gas Protection Verification Accreditation Scheme (GPVS)

Following the launch of the GPVS in January, 9 Specialists in Gas Protection Verification (SGPV) have now been awarded and 4 Technician in Gas Protection Verification (TGPV). Further applications are currently progressing. A number of GPVS presentations have been made to various local authority groups to raise the awareness of the scheme. Declarations are now being purchased.

Training is planning to resume in the Autumn to support the scheme.

Sustainable Remediation

The SuRF-UK steering group has recently been working on updating the Sustainable Management Practices document and Excel spreadsheet to bring it up to date with the latest Environment Agency land contamination risk management guidance. The document has been reviewed by the CL:AIRE TRG and CL:AIRE is now getting it ready for publication..

The Tier 1 qualitative assessment tool has been updated by AECOM in light of SuRF-UK's 2020 publications - Supplementary reports SR1 and SR2 and has now been published on the SuRF-UK website.

[https://www.claire.co.uk/component/phocadownload/category/16-surf-uk-bulletins?download=405:surf-uk-tier-1-sustainability-assessment\\_feb21\\_final](https://www.claire.co.uk/component/phocadownload/category/16-surf-uk-bulletins?download=405:surf-uk-tier-1-sustainability-assessment_feb21_final)

SuRF-UK ran a special session on the recent publication of SuRF-UK at Aqua Consoil, and has also submitted an abstract on the SMP guidance for SustRem 2021 in November 2021..

SuRF International continues to have their regular calls and will be supporting SustRem 2021 in South Africa, SustRem 2022 in USA and SustRem 2023 in Australia/New Zealand.

At RemTech, CL:AIRE is supporting the organisation of a Sustainathon - speakers talking every time zone over 24hours on how their country is meeting one or all of the UN SDGs.

Category 4 Screening Level Project

Three C4SL reports (VC, TCE and PCE) were published in May along with a webinar placing the C4SL project in context. More reports are moving through the production process and are with the Steering Group for sign off or with the PM team to make amendments.

### Monitored Natural Attenuation (MNA) Guidance

The MNA Guidance is currently being reviewed by the TRG, with comments expected back soon. CL:AIRE will then be working with the authors to prepare the final draft.

### Good Practice for Risk Assessment for Coal Mine Gas Emissions

The TRG has reviewed this guidance and CL:AIRE is currently reformatting it to be in the CL:AIRE style. This will then be published and made freely available.

### CONCAWE – Sustainable Remediation Case Studies

CL:AIRE has recently been successful in winning a research project with r3 Environmental technology ltd to gather together a series of case studies demonstrating sustainable remediation technologies. Further information is available [here](#).

### **AGS Update**

Vivien Dent provided an update on behalf of AGS. She confirmed the following:

- Sally Hudson was elected as its new Chair
- Since the last meeting the following documents have been published:
  - Assessment and Control of Asbestos Risk in Soil Part 1 and 2
  - LPA 71 Duty to Warn on a Construction Project – Managing the Risk
  - Article on ‘Expectant and New Mothers in Construction’ was published in the April / May issue of the AGS Magazine
  - Article on underpinning ground movements published in the April / May issue of the AGS Magazine
- The following documents have been approved for publication:
  - Training Paths documents
  - Client’s Guide to the Selection of Geotechnical Specialists
  - Client’s Guide to the Selection of Geoenvironmental Specialists
- The revised UK Specification for Ground Investigation has been issued for comment
- All working groups now have an early careers professional
- UKAS accreditation in relation to the inspection of land for contamination by asbestos: The Contaminated land working group issued the results of their poll to UKAS – Thank you to everyone who contributed.
- The labs group have reviewed the recently published HSG248 publication. Both appendices 2 and 7 contain elements which if are to be adopted will cause both significant changes to the laboratory operational practice and also have far reaching implications for the wider industry.
- The geotechnical working group produced a counter argument article for Ground Engineering in response to an article regarding factors of safety in design, which cast ground engineers as unprofessional
- Upcoming events:
  - Laboratory Assessment and Sampling Practice webinar took place on 30th June
  - Annual Conference 2021 – 22nd September (in person)
  - Net Zero Carbon – 6th October 2021

### **SILC Update**

Ian Evans provided an update on behalf of SiLC. He confirmed the following:

- There are 198 SiLCs and 127 SQPs.
- 2 new SiLCs and SQPs passed the 2021A exam round.



- A SiLC/SQP introduction day recently delivered online to 16 attendees, with a further day due to take place in September (Date to be confirmed).
- SiLC issued an open letter to relevant government departments raising concern with inconsistency in the use of DoWCoP and waste recovery permitting and requesting a solution/way forward is provided.
- SiLC is seeking a CIEH Director for the SiLC board

### **RTPI Update**

Max Tolley provided an update on behalf of RTPI. He confirmed the following:

The latest update from the RTPI is a blog that was published last week on what we would like to see in the draft planning bill.

<https://www.rtpi.org.uk/blog/2021/july/richard-blyth-what-the-rtpi-wants-to-see-in-the-draft-planning-bill/>

We have also recently responded to the MHCLG call for evidence on local authority remote meetings, where we recommended that local authorities should be able to continue to hold at least some of their meetings virtually <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/news/2021/june/virtual-council-meetings-should-continue-say-the-uk-s-town-planners/>

### **Geological Society – Contaminated Land Specialist Group**

John Cleland provided an update on behalf of the Geological Society Contaminated Land Specialist Group. He confirmed that due to COVID there have not been many activities. He is hopeful that the remainder of the year will provide opportunities. We are continuing with the development of education materials and video profiles that were mentioned at previous meetings.

### **SOBRA update**

Simon Cole provided an update on behalf of SoBRA. He confirmed the following:

#### Conferences:

Our summer conference was held on Wednesday 16th June. Held virtually it attracted 125 attendees and featured eight great talks around the conference theme of emerging contaminants, and some good Q&A sessions. The speakers presentations are now available to SoBRA members on the SoBRA website and the recording of the event is due to be released next month. The organisation of the Winter conference in December has now started and we are hoping that it will be an in person event at the traditional venue of the RSC library in Burlington House. We are also exploring the possibility of holding as a hybrid virtual + in person event to maximise the reach of the event to our members.

#### Sub-Groups:

The active sub-groups are and include the newly active early careers and climate change sub-groups:

NAPL

Asbestos

Vapour Intrusion

Ground Gases

Early Careers

Climate change

New sub-groups in the process of being formed:

CSM & sampling

#### Publications:

No further publications since the last NBF update.

### Accreditation Scheme:

The first accreditation window for 2021 opened and closed in January and of the six applicants, 4 were awarded registered status and 2 accredited status. The second window for 2021 opens on 1st August and closes on the 31st August, with interviews in October.

### Other activities/events:

The early careers sub-group is organising a series of free webinars via zoom that are open to members and non-members. The current schedule for these is:

Human Health – Simon Firth 1st July 1PM

Controlled Waters - Alex Lee 5th August 1PM

Ground Gas – Steve Wilson 2nd September 1PM

Vapours – John Andrews 7th October 1PM

Asbestos – Simon Cole – date and time TBC (October)

NAPL – David Holmes 4th November 1PM

Accreditation – Chris Taylor 2nd December 1PM

The webinars will each run for an hour, including a Q&A session, and will all be hosted jointly through Ground & Water Limited. Joining links for each webinar will be uploaded onto the SoBRA website as well as circulated on social media/emails in due course. The maximum occupancy for each webinar is 100 people on a first come first served basis, but all webinars will be recorded for upload onto the website too.

### **National Contaminated Land Officers Group (NCLOG)**

Rebekah Norbury provided an update on behalf of NCLOG. She confirmed the following:

NCLOG has been very productive since the last NBF meeting. Two members of the Steering Committee presented at SiLC's Annual Forum on NCLOG and a CLO's Perspective on the NQMS Scheme. Following the presentations, we had a very interesting discussion with attendees, with plenty of food for thought for NCLOG to take away.

Our membership has increased over the past few months running up to our AGM on the 20th May. This was very well attended by over 70 members from across the UK. In addition to the AGM that day, we also heard three technical presentations on a variety of current topics, which were well received by members and generated good discussions. As a result of the AGM, the Steering Committee is planning to survey NCLOG members on topics or issues that are most relevant to officers, and proceed with looking at some of the most popular topics going forward.

One topic which is already being progressed by a technical sub-group is developing guidance on cover systems and their verification. It is hoped that this guidance will be released in the next few months.

Discussions are also currently underway with regards to producing a series of briefing notes on particular topics of interest. One of the first briefing notes is proposed to be on the subject of the discharge of land contamination conditions and the implications of not obtaining full approval of these conditions. It is likely that this briefing note will be of interest to Planning and legal professionals, as well as land contamination specialists.

### **CIRIA Update**

Joanne Kwan provided an update on behalf of CIRIA. She confirmed the following:

### Soil community of practice

This has started and will create a single point of independent reference to encourage good and sustainable soil management practice and provide opportunities for sharing knowledge and experience in tackling common issues. and connect different organisations across the sector to discuss their concerns which will improve mutual understanding.

### Climate change and contaminated land interest group

CIRIA has received more interest in this recently and will determine the scope of this later on in the month.

CIRIA has launched a number of LACL members only events and new benefits for the network. CIRIA PFAS virtual seminar will take place on 21 July 2021. [https://www.ciria.org/CIRIA/Navigation/Events/Event\\_Display.aspx?EventKey=E21304](https://www.ciria.org/CIRIA/Navigation/Events/Event_Display.aspx?EventKey=E21304)

### **British Geological Survey (BGS)**

Darren Berrero provided an update on behalf of the BGS. He confirmed the following:

As part of a project to widen the availability and benefit of the Brownfield Ground Risk Calculator with Groundsure, BGS are conducting research into early-stage indicative foundation and engineering cost estimates for brownfield sites. More information and our public questionnaire is available at: <https://forms.office.com/r/GtxbWjHX6S>. Research into remediation costs as per our earlier NBF update is ongoing. Collectively this work is improving an early-stage understanding of contamination and geotechnical risks on brownfield sites. We will publish anonymised results of our research. For more information contact Darren Beriro (darrenb@bgs.ac.uk).

BGS have released a new version of our geological software, Groundhog Professional, in collaboration with Land Quality Management, which includes new CSM features as well as updates to functionality included in the Groundhog Community (free) version. More information is available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/posts/groundhog-geological-software-introduction-to-bgs-groundhog-v23-activity-6813845948234551296-cMKZ>. This work is helping practitioners process, visualise and understand ground conditions at different scales.

The BGS is due to start a collaborative EPSRC funded research project with Imperial College London and University College London to develop an innovative digital service for future water management. Our focus is on applied Manchester and London case examples. More information is available at: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/bgs-collaborates-on-new-1-million-epsrc-funded-digital-research-project-to-help-make-urban-growth-more-sustainable/>. This work will support efforts to make urban growth more sustainable.

### **Environmental Protection UK (EPUK)**

David Rudland provided an update on behalf of EPUK, He confirmed the following:

An on-line seminar on management of waste soils planned for June has been postponed until later in the year.

EPUK has a range of publications for the use of local authorities and members of the public covering land and air quality and other matters of public concern. A team is working on a radical revision of our 2013 guidance for local authorities on Air Quality (AQ) & Climate Change (CC). EPUK is seeking grant funding to support the revision of the AQ & CC Guidance.

EPUK is working with the UK Clean Air Champions to present a single evidence-based voice to the Government for action following the Coroner's report on the death of Ella Kissi-Debrah, linked to traffic air pollution.

## **RICS**

Tim Elliott provided an update on behalf of RICS. He confirmed the following:

RICS Guidance Note published this summer. HSE were involved in the early stages of the steering group for the Guidance Note. It is available here:

<https://rics.org/uk/upholding-professional-standards/sector-standards/building-surveying/asbestos-and-its-implications-for-surveyors-and-their-clients-4th-edition/>

## **EIC**

Jane Thrasher provided an update on behalf of EIC. She confirmed the following:

### 'Brownfield First' report

EIC has drafted a report setting out the link between 'brownfield first' policy and the levelling up agenda. The report includes case studies and policy recommendations to incentivise brownfield, including changes to tax relief, and the role of the National Infrastructure bank and the Levelling Up Fund. EIC will run a webinar in September to promote the report and the issues it raises.

### DoWCoP

EIC remains concerned that the increasingly restrictive interpretations of DoWCoP seen in recent years risk undermining reuse of material and circular economy thinking. We have had discussions with both the EA and Defra on this subject and note that others such as SILC have also raised concerns.

### HSG248: Asbestos Analysts Guide

HSG248 has been released and the EIC laboratories group has a lot of concerns about HSG248 and the laboratory methods, with the labs need urgent resolution if they are going to retain UKAS accreditation for asbestos in soils. The core concern is that it seems to be leading us in the direction of completely different laboratory methods for analysis of asbestos in soils depending on whether the purpose is 'Asbestos Survey' (including 'depth survey') under CAR or contaminated land investigation. The HSG248 analysis method may not give the information we need for contaminated land assessment, risk assessment and waste disposal. This has the potential to lead to confusion, inconsistency and extra cost – and is interlinked with the UKAS initiative on accreditation.

### Levelling Up

EIC's sister organisation, the Association for Consultancy & Engineering, is undertaking research on the built environment 'stock' that is typical in different types of 'left behind' places. This will lead to a report to be published in the Autumn.

## **UKELA update**

Emma Tattersdill provided an update on behalf of UKELA. She confirmed the following:

We continue to respond to government consultations on environmental legislation and relevant publications. Recent examples include consultations on the extended producer responsibility for packaging (response by our waste working party) and the draft Environmental Principles Policy Statement (response by our Governance and Devolution Group in May 2021).

We held our (virtual) annual conference from Monday 14th to Friday 18th June 2021. The week-long conference included a series of working party sessions, legislation and caselaw updates and plenary sessions on topics including climate litigation, the role of specialist environmental courts and tribunals and governance in the UK post Brexit. The keynote address was given by Tom Burke, UKELA Patron and Chairman of E3G, on the subject of Democracy, Law and the Environment.

Details of UKELA's forthcoming events can be found on our website. Highlights include the following:

On 26 July the Wales Working party will be holding an online event "regulating Coal Tip Safety in Wales". The Law Commission's consultation paper, which considers current legislation relating to coal tip safety and makes provisional proposals for a new regulatory framework in Wales, was published on 9 June 2021. The consultation is open for 3 months. At UKELA's event, the project team will present their provisional proposals and offer the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the proposals.

Our annual Scottish conference takes place on 23rd September 2021 (again, online) covering themes from COP26 through to Environmental Standards Scotland.

Finally, on Thursday 18th November 2021 we will hold the annual Garner lecture. The event is expected to be held online and starts at 6pm. Our guest speaker is Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta who, last year, was commissioned by HM Treasury to lead a global independent review on The Economics of Biodiversity. The review was published in February 2021.

#### **YALPAG**

Stella Keenan (SK) provided the update on behalf of YALPAG. She confirmed that the Land Technical Group meet twice a year with the last meeting on 10 March 2021. There are also 3 sub-regional groups. She confirmed the following:

YALPAG guidance documents on planning, verification of cover systems and verification of gas protection measures are continuing to be reviewed and updated as and when necessary.

The training sub-group arranged webinar training on 7 July 2021 which included presentations on the Gas Protection Verification Accreditation Scheme and the CL:AIRE stats guidance.

#### 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-2021?download=811:nbf-standards-july-2021>

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

Seamus Lefroy-Brooks (SLB) provided an update on the NQMS. He confirmed that the steering group met in late June 2021 where they discussed the proposed auditing process which SiLC and CL:AIRE will look to roll out once signed off. They also discussed the increased number of declarations which have increased and how to try and raise its profile with MHCLG. SLB confirmed that a meeting has now been secured with Head of Planning of MHCLG.

## 8) AoB

### 8.1 Gasworks Communities United and the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Gasworks

PN informed NBF that he and NH have been made aware of a APPG that has been established recently on Gasworks remediation and there is also a number of community groups across the country that have come together under the umbrella of Gasworks Communities United. PN and NH are sent their regular newsletters. Further information is available: [Gasworks Communities United](#)

### 8.2 Feedback from EU Common Forum Meeting

PN informed NBF members of the recent EU Common Forum meeting. This is the EU soil and groundwater regulator forum. PN actively encouraged representatives from EA & Defra to engage with the Common Forum. Although the UK has left EU politically, the Common Forum are keen to engage with the UK government departments and regulators. At present only PN on behalf of Cabernet and NH on behalf of CL:AIRE attend as invited guests. The Common Forum currently are discussing similar subjects that the UK are discussing such as PFAS, reuse of soil, circular economy etc, so it would be advantageous to share thoughts.

### 8.2 HSG 248 & UKAS

AGS and EIC laboratory working groups wished to flag to NBF members the concerns that they have with regards to the recently published HSG 248 and the potential impact that this could have on the brownfield industry. There is particular concern on what is written in Appendix 2 and Appendix 7. The brownfield industry has tried to engage with the HSE over several years without much success and flag the potential impact of updating HSG 248 to include a soil sampling chapter. NBF members briefly discussed their underlying issues, but felt that a separate meeting in early August should be held for interested NBF members to carry out a more technical deep dive into the key issues and come to a consensus. A plan of how to approach HSE would also be agreed and fed back to NBF members.

**ACTION: NH to convene a meeting of interested NBF members and a summary of outcomes from the meeting will be shared.**

NH wanted to make NBF members aware that following previous presentations given by UKAS at NBF meetings regarding the potential for an accreditation scheme being developed for asbestos surveying on contaminated sites, UKAS has confirmed that following the publication of HSG248 there will now be a period of reflection to allow people to review and understand the new guidance. UKAS has confirmed that they have listened to the brownfield industry and the concerns that they raised about a potential accreditation scheme. UKAS will be collecting further evidence to be able to understand and differentiate between the role of asbestos surveyors and the geoenvironmental industry to ensure that they can make appropriate decisions. UKAS will be back in touch with the NBF in the Autumn.

### 8.3 Defra PFAS Workshop Outputs

NH wanted to flag to NBF members that she attended a two day workshop on PFAS hosted by Defra and the outputs are now available [here](#) The workshop covered a range of PFAS topics from risk assessment to key PFAS policy questions and shared the work and thinking that DEFRA Chemicals Policy, the Environment Agency and other Government bodies have undertaken on PFAS.

### 8.4 ICE Specification for Ground Investigations Consultation

NH wanted to make NBF members aware that the Ice specification for ground investigations is currently out for consultation. Further information is available [here](#). Consultation closes on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

9) Date and location of next meeting

NH confirmed that the next meeting will be 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021. The location is yet to be decided whether face to face or virtually.