

Contaminated Land News - September 1999

The contaminated land industry is awaiting guidance with baited breath. Although at the time of writing there was still no sign of THE guidance, one piece of guidance has been published and two draft guidance documents have been issued for consultation - the revised Draft Code of Practice for the Site Investigation of Contaminated Land was released by the British Standards Institution and the Environment Agency and NHBC released a consultation draft of *Guidance for the safe development of housing on land affected by contamination*.

The *Desk Reference Guide to potentially contaminative land uses* (ISBN 0 9029 1303 4) was written by Professor Paul Syms and published by ISVA. It is a simple summary of many of the (former) DOE industry profiles. It is aimed at 'non-specialist' professionals (sic) advising landowners on sale or redevelopment of land or on environmental liabilities. As such it must be welcomed by the contaminated land management community as it will raise awareness of the issues involved and effort needed to adequately assess and mitigate the risks that land contamination poses. Syms has summarised existing guidance and there is no longer any excuse for the surveyors to continue to be ignorant of the extent of technical guidance that exists. Lets us hope that this translates into adequately commissioned and funded investigations of potentially contaminated land. The inclusion of an unhelpful, verging on the potentially dangerous so called 'risk-based classification of land uses' does raise the possibility that the publication could do more harm than good. For example the guide concludes 'intrusive investigation strongly recommended' for former Pharmaceutical Industries (including cosmetics and toiletries) but 'intrusive investigation optional' for dockyards and wharves! Nevertheless, used properly (perhaps by first tearing out the table on page 12) the Guide represents a useful contribution to the process of informing the property professionals of the issues to be considered on former industrial sites and Paul Syms is to be congratulated for producing it.

DD 175 was withdrawn by the BSI last autumn. The comments on last autumn's draft Code of Practice on the Investigation of potentially contaminated sites have been incorporated into a new draft which was circulated for comment earlier in the summer. The drafting committee made it easy for reviewers to see where changes had been taken on board or where they were not, to see the reasons why. It is likely that the final standard and the revised Code of Practice on Site Investigation (BS 5930) will be published together or nearly so sometime in the autumn.

The draft Environment Agency/ NHBC *Guidance for the safe development of housing on land affected by contamination*, prepared by CES, is aimed at housebuilders, developers and their planning advisers, designers, financiers and insurers. The two volume report presents a simple series of steps to follow in managing a housing development on land potentially affected by contamination. The report draws a clear distinction between *Part IIa* contaminated land and the broader category of land contamination. The first is the minimum standard to be met under the Environmental Protection Act, while the second involves a higher standard to be addressed on the basis of wider issues such as perception, marketing, corporate policy and so on as well as other legislation such as the Groundwater Regulations, Water Resources Act and the forthcoming IPPC regime. The report is full of helpful information including an

appendix of remediation technology summary sheets based on the ones prepared by Ian Martin and Paul Bardos for the RCEP report on soil. Volume 2 provides a series of brief summaries of the key features of 40 common contaminants with advice on which ones require specialist advice in the context of the guidance.

To end on a slightly parochial note, the University of Nottingham has appointed Paul Bardos as a Special Professor in the School of Chemical Environmental and Mining Engineering. This recognises Professor Bardos' contribution to the EPSRC IGDS sponsored MSc in Contaminated Land Management and his research efforts in the field of remediation and decision support.