The Suffolk Environmental Protection Group
Contaminated Land Sub Group (SEPG-CL)

Guidance for developers and consultants on the importation of soils
July 2007

Introduction

This guidance has been produced to help developers ensure that they can demonstrate that soil materials brought onto a development site for garden plots or soft landscaping areas are suitable for use and do not present harm to human health, the environment and property.

The guidance is intended for contaminated land sites which are regulated through the planning regime. However, the advice contained in this note is equally valid whenever imported soils are used on development sites.

As part of a planning permission condition a remediation strategy/scheme will have been produced, agreed with the Council; this may involve the placement of imported soil which is to act as a barrier to contaminated land or involve the replacement of soil removed from the site.

In order to demonstrate that suitable soil has been brought onto site, the following requirements should be met:

Imported Recycled and Topsoil Material

1. Details on the supplier and confirmation on the source(s) of soil material should be supplied to the Local Authority (LA). The soil should be free from metals, plastic, wood, glass, tarmac, paper and odours associated with contaminated soils as specified in BS 3882:1994 – *Specification for Topsoil*. A description of the soil materials should be forwarded to the LA based on BS5930 *Code of Practice of Site Investigations*.

2. Materials may be brought onto the development site and stockpiled until its use has been approved by the LA. Independent sampling and analysis of the stockpile is required and this must be carried out by a suitably qualified person. If the site has insufficient space for stockpiling, sampling may have to be undertaken following emplacement

   Please note that sampling and analysis certificates submitted by the supplier of the soil material will not be acceptable. i.e. independent sampling and analysis must be carried out.

3. Sampling should comprise 2 random samples for every **15m^3** of soil from a single source (see soil source definition below) for residential gardens. For larger amounts of soil from a single source and for soft landscaping areas the sampling frequency can be reduced by agreement with the LA.

   Soil Source - the location at which the soil was loaded onto the truck prior to delivery at the development site.

4. The samples shall be sent to an independent accredited laboratory on a quick turnaround for an analytical suite which should include as a minimum Metals, PAH (speciated), TPH (Total) and pH. Additional parameters such as asbestos maybe required if deemed necessary by the LA.

5. The results should to be forwarded to the LA for approval before the soil can be placed (unless agreement has already been given by the LA for emplacement). The results will be compared to CLEA Soil Guideline Values (SGV) or levels which have been previously agreed in the remediation strategy. If the results of the analytical testing show concentrations of contaminants which may be a risk, then the soil must be removed off site or remediated with the approval of the LA.

   Please note - the Environment Agency will be notified by the Local Authority if suspected controlled waste is being deposited in contravention of the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994.

Imported Naturally Sourced Quarried Materials

Materials derived from quarries may be deemed suitable for use as subsoil if they are certified to be clean. This does not include naturally sourced topsoils, which shall be treated as recycled soils.

In order to satisfy the LA, details on the supplier, confirmation on the source(s) material, a certificate that the material is naturally sourced from a quarry and a description of the soil based on BS5953 *Code of Practice of Site Investigations* shall be forwarded to the LA.

Depth of Soil Layer

The recommended depth of imported topsoil/subsoil should be specified in the remediation strategy for the site and agreed with the LA prior to emplacement. The required depth will be dependant upon the type and concentration of contaminant(s) that remain in-situ and the proposed future use of the site.

In areas of soft landscaping, or in residential gardens where minor contamination is present, a soil depth of 600 mm (two spade depths) will be required. In residential gardens where major residual contamination is still present, a soil depth of 1000 mm will be required. The increased depth will act as a barrier between the contamination and the resident, which is necessary to protect the resident from coming into contact with the contamination during potential future excavation works e.g. pond installation.

Please note that if a marker layer is installed between the contamination and the imported soils, a reduced depth of soil may be acceptable by agreement with the LA.

References:

British Standard BS 3882:1994 *Specification for Topsoil*

British Standard BS 5930 *Code of Practice of Site Investigations*

BRE *Cover Systems for Land Regeneration* March 2004

NHBC Engineering *Guidance on Validation of Imported Topsoil and Retained/Re-used Topsoils* – June 2004