



Date: November 2010 Issue 1

Site Investigation Newsletter

Furnace Close, Cinderford

Forest of Dean District Council has a duty placed on us by central government to inspect land in our district to test the quality of soils to ensure that we are looking after people's health and the wider environment.

This can involve us testing soils in residential gardens.

This newsletter has been produced by the Council to provide information for local residents and hopefully answer your questions.

However, if this does not answer your questions then you can find contact details of someone who can help you at the back of this leaflet.



Forest of Dean
— DISTRICT COUNCIL —

Site History

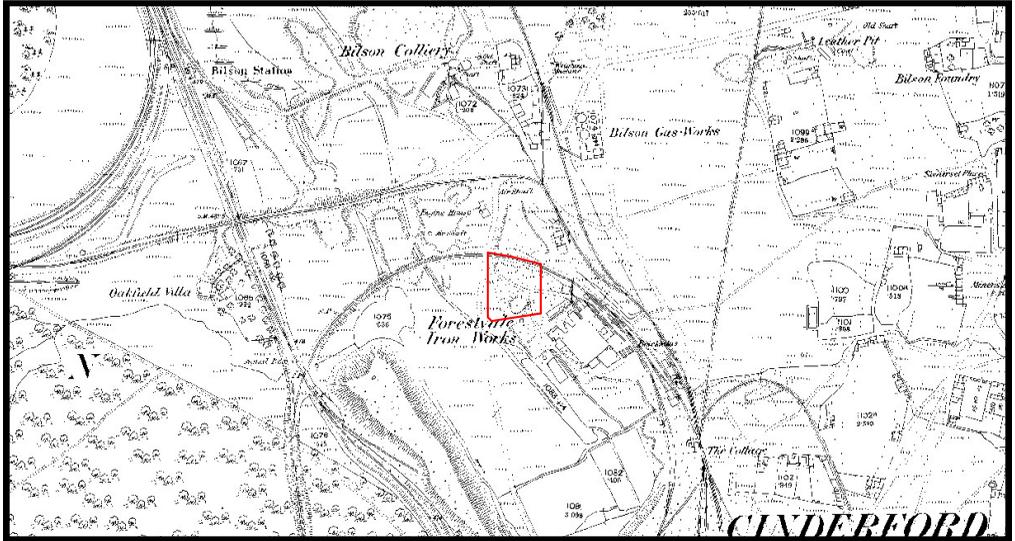


Figure 1 : 1880's Historical Ordnance Survey Map of the Area Showing the Iron Works and Colliery

1880's - Site is shown on part of the Forest Vale Iron Works site as well as being in close proximity to Bilson Gas Works to the north east and Bilson Colliery to the north

1900's - Site is now disused. Prospect Land and Prospect Deep Coal Pits, now disused, are located to the north and west of the site, respectively

1920's - Site is disused, however, embankments or mounds can be seen on maps from this time

1960's - Site is disused, several engineering works are present to the north.

1980's - Houses have been built on the site.

The Site Investigation

Investigations of the site are due to commence in mid November 2010. The Council has brought in ESI Ltd who are an independent specialist consultancy firm, with vast experience of this type of work. They will need to undertake site investigation works within your gardens, which will comprise the following:

- Digging pits to take samples
- Drilling small boreholes in communal areas
- Monitoring gases and groundwater within the boreholes over approximately a two month period

We do not expect any damage to be caused to your property as a result of this investigation. A member of the Council's Environmental Health team will be in contact with residents to arrange a suitable appointment and provide further details. You do not need to be present during the activities at your property, as long as there is access to your rear garden, however, you are welcome to be present during the works.

ESI will then assess all the data gathered during the works and provide us with details on whether any land quality issues exist and what areas, if any, need to be cleaned up.

We hope to publish the results in February 2011 and although these dates are estimated, you will be notified in writing as soon as we have the final results. They will be also be available on the Council's website at a later date (go to Contaminated Land Investigation on the A-Z list).

Please refer to the 'Your Questions Answered' section for further details.

Your Questions Answered

Why have you contacted me?

In 2001, the Council put in place its plan to deal with land quality issues within our district. We are now at the point where we are investigating sites to see if they have been affected by their historical use. Your property is in an area where we need to carry out testing to make sure your land is not affected. We expect most sites we visit will be fine, but to meet government guidelines, we must inspect any sites which we think may have potential issues.

Do I have to grant you access to my land and property?

We would prefer to access your land with your permission, however, the Council has legal powers to enter your land under Section 108 (6) of the Environment Act 1995, although we'd much prefer not to do this.

Who will undertake the work?

ESI Ltd will be undertaking the work. More information can be found on their website (<http://esinternational.com/land-quality-services-2.html>). ESI and the Council will be working closely together.

What does the investigation involve?

Prior to any work commencing, ESI will knock on your door to let you know they have arrived and you can talk to them about what they are going to do and where they will be taking samples. To test the land, a small hole will be made in the top metre of the soil in your garden. A sample will be taken. Once finished, they will let you know, or if you are not in, they will leave a compliment slip to let you know they have visited your property. Your property should remain unaffected by the sampling.

What does the investigation involve?

Additionally, three boreholes will be drilled in selected front gardens of three properties, which will comprise a hole drilled in the earth to look at the type of soil present and to collect samples. Groundwater and gas monitoring will also be undertaken from these boreholes.

Do I have to be at home for soil sampling?

No but you may be if you like. Photographs will be taken to ensure the garden is left as it was before sampling.

How long will you need to be in my garden for sampling?

The sampling should take less than two hours.

When will I know the results?

Based on the findings from the tests and the advice from ESI, we will decide whether any clean up work is required. If the tests show that substances are below an acceptable level, then no further action will be needed and we will send you a letter to confirm this. If there are higher levels of substances then the land may have to be determined officially as 'contaminated land' and will need cleaning up.

Is there a current risk to residents?

Living on land affected by soil considered contaminated does not mean that the soil will affect your health and for the vast majority of sites, the health impacts will be low or non-existent. Even though risks to health are very low, the risks can be reduced even further if simple hygiene actions are followed, as shown in the 'Do's and Don'ts - Some General Tips' section.

Do's and Don'ts - Some General Tips

Do

- Continue to enjoy your house and garden
- Wash hands and muddy skin thoroughly after working or playing in the garden and before handling food. Make sure children follow good hygiene practices as well
- Wear gloves when gardening
- Generally try to minimise dirt and dust carried into the house
- Wash and peel any home grown fruit and vegetables before eating them.

Don't

- Let children eat the soil
- Let children play with the soil
- Dig very deep (below topsoil level) in the garden. Speak to us if you are thinking of carrying out building works
- Wear soiled clothes around the house.

The health effects of any substance depend on a variety of factors including the amount that enters the body, the length of time they are exposed to and how often.

We will continue to consult with the Health Protection Agency at every stage of the investigation. We will contact you with further information and advice throughout the investigation, if necessary.

Your Questions Answered

How will it affect the value of my property?

There will be no long term effect on house prices as either the tests will show that the soil is acceptable or the site will be cleaned up to a suitable standard.

Who is paying for the investigation?

The investigation is being paid for by Defra (the government department responsible for the environment).

If a problem is found, how will it be dealt with?

This will depend on the type and amount of any contamination found. However, it is too early on in the investigation to say what type of work may be involved to clean up the site, if any is needed at all.

Who is responsible for the clean up?

There is a chance that some clean up work may be required to ensure the continued safety of the residents on site. The law states that those responsible for causing the contamination (i.e. those who operated the iron works or colliery) should have to pay for the clean up of the land. However, there is the possibility that the company cannot be traced. If this happens, then in some cases, the owners of the land may be responsible for the cost of the works. In some cases, the Council may also chase the house builder to pay for the clean up as they should have developed the site in a safe manner. At this stage, we hope that no such works will be needed but we will not know this until we have the results from the investigation.

Further Information

Further information can be found on the Council's website:

<http://www.fdean.gov.uk>

Under Contaminated Land Investigation on the A-Z section of the website

Contact Details

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