

7. CONTAMINATED SOIL SUBCOMMITTEE

Officer responsible Property Manager	Author Rob Dally, Property Manager, DDI 371-1500
--	--

The purpose of this report is to formalise the Councillor Subcommittee, established at the time of the December 2001 Council meeting, to assist officers in working through the issues associated with soil contamination of Council/private owned land.

BACKGROUND

Councillors will recall the testing of land at the Council owned Lyn Christie Courts housing complex, undertaken to get a better understanding of soil conditions and the cause of building subsidence at the complex.

The test results indicated trace levels of methane gas, and elevated levels of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs).

Options to mitigate health and safety risks for the tenants were evaluated, and agreed, with significant assistance from the Medical Officer of Health (Crown Public Health), Environment Canterbury and environmental scientists, Montgomery Watson Harza.

Remediation work costing in the vicinity of \$130,000 will be completed by mid February 2002. That work has involved the removal of contaminated soil from all ornamental/vegetable garden plots to a depth of 0.5 metres and its replacement with fresh soil; new landscaping; a small boundary retaining wall and automatic irrigation to lawn areas.

Further Testing of Other Council Land

As a result of the Lyn Christie experience, it was felt prudent to similarly test other Council housing complexes which were:

- (A) Built on known former landfills.
- (B) Built on informal landfill.
- (C) Built on former gas works sites.

The sites tested were:

Weaver Courts
Angus Courts
Hennessy Place
Louisson Courts
Shoreham Courts
Walsall Street
Avonheath
Captain Thomas Courts
Sandilands

Of the above complexes, Weaver/Angus/Hennessy require no further action. The remainder require further testing and may require remedial action. Crown Public Health has advised that none present contamination profiles that raise immediate health concerns.

SANDILANDS

Whilst there are complexities with all sites tested, Sandilands is more complex in that the Council owned housing is interspersed amongst private residential dwellings, all of which are on a former Council owned landfill which was a total of around 12 ha. Preliminary tests have been conducted on Council land, and some privately owned nearby properties. The preliminary test results are inconsistent in terms of contamination levels/type, across the Council and private land tested.

Because of these complexities, a Councillor Subcommittee was established to assist officers to work through the issues. The Subcommittee comprises the two Sandilands Ward Councillors, Councillors Baker and Cox; the Chair of Community and Leisure Committee, Councillor Condon; the Chair of the Council's Housing Subcommittee, Councillor Anderton and the Chair of Strategy and Finance, Councillor James.

The Subcommittee has yet to meet formally although its members have attended tenant/property owner meetings.

All further testing on all the sites has been held in abeyance whilst officers complete desk top analysis of property records of Council and adjacent private property. Legal advice has also been sought and is on-going.

When the desk top analysis is complete, the Council will be able to respond consistently from both a property ownership/liability perspective and from a public health perspective.

It is now appropriate for the Council to ratify the Subcommittee and agree some broad terms of reference.

- Recommendations:**
1. That the Contaminated Soil Subcommittee comprise Councillors Condon, Anderton, James, Baker, Cox.
 2. That the Contaminated Soil Subcommittee work with officers to ensure that public health and safety risks and property liability risks are mitigated and minimised to the satisfaction of stakeholders including Crown Public Health and Environment Canterbury.
 3. That the Contaminated Soil Subcommittee report to the various Council Committees as appropriate.