

Hackney Environment Directorate

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Our ref: N/A
Your ref: N/A
Date: 08 March 2005

Re: Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 78: Determination of Contaminated Land

Dear Allotment Holder,

The London Borough of Hackney is committed to finding the most effective method to remediate contamination found at the Aden Terrace, Church Walk, Spring Hill and Queensbridge Road allotments.

We are currently in the process of identifying the most effective remediation method available in terms of the removal of potential risk to human health and environmental sustainability and have therefore adopted a multi-disciplinary approach in the search for the most effective solution.

This multi-disciplinary approach involves consideration of all methods of remediation including conventional dig and dump, raised beds and other "soft" options such as consideration of the bio-availability of metals in the soils and the feasibility of changing soil pH and other physico-chemical properties of the soils.

Given our reliance on other agencies to provide us with expert advice on available remediation options, we can not say with confidence when all relevant information, required to make a reasoned, informed decision will be available to us.

We will of course consider, at a public meeting, this information with the Hackney Allotment Society, with whom we are committed, in partnership, to finding the most effective remedial solution.

Only after we have made a decision on what remediation option to adopt, can we then submit our application to DEFRA. Again we can not say with confidence that we could expect to receive a response to our application from DEFRA before the start of this growing season.

Therefore, we propose to undertake remediation work after this growing season, when we are confident to have received a response to our application to DEFRA. Therefore allotment holders can use their allotments during this growing season.

We have spoken with the Health Protection Agency, who do not consider there to be a significant risk to human health from the following activities, given that the Council plan to remediate the allotments after this growing season:

- Consumption of vegetables and fruit grown at the aforementioned allotments – provided that the items are thoroughly washed and peeled before consumption
- Planting of flowers and shrubs

However the Health Protection Agency does recommend the following:

- Wear gloves when gardening
- Wash your hands after working in the allotment and before handling food

- Wash your children's hands after playing or working in the allotment and before handling food

Remediation will ensure that the allotments will continue to thrive and flourish, providing an important amenity to the people of Hackney, to which we are totally committed and are grateful for your cooperation on this matter.

If you require any further information, or require further clarification about this letter please do not hesitate to contact me at 020 8356 4827, and I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely

Donal Fitzgibbon
Contaminated Land Officer
Environment Division