



National Planning Framework 4 Early Engagement – Policies

VACANT AND DERELICT LAND

Scottish Planning Policy 2014

Vacant and derelict land is included in the definition of “brownfield sites”. Paragraph 40 confirms that when directing the right development to the right place the planning system should consider the re-use or re-development of brownfield land before new development takes place on greenfield sites.

NPF3 confirms that most of Scotland’s vacant and derelict land lies in and around cities, particularly in west central Scotland. NPF3 notes the scale of the challenge, but also the opportunity and planning’s role in the re-use of sites. NPF3 notes the continuing environmental challenge and long-standing disadvantages arising from past industrial activity, and promotes a “step change in environmental quality.. to address disadvantage and attract investment, whilst sustaining and enhancing biodiversity, landscape quality and wider ecosystems”

What has changed since 2014?

- Protecting Scotland's Future: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2019-2020¹ recognises that there is still too much unused and unproductive land in Scotland, including long-term vacant and derelict land which blights some of our most disadvantaged communities. The Scottish Government will continue to tackle this through the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund and are exploring ways to accelerate investment to grow industrial and commercial capacity across Scotland’s most disadvantaged areas.
- Publication of the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey: 2018² shows the total amount of derelict and urban vacant land in Scotland has decreased by 716 hectares (6%) from 11,753 hectares in 2017 to 11,037 hectares in 2018.
- The establishment of a Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce by SEPA and the Scottish Land Commission in September 2018. The Task Force aims to achieve a substantial reduction in the amount of long term vacant and derelict land in Scotland, through removing systemic barriers and realising productive opportunities, in the broadest economic, social and environmental senses.
- Ryden was appointed to provide support to the Task Force. Its first report³, published in June 2019, looks at the main characteristics of sites on Scotland’s vacant and derelict land register. It is intended as a foundation document for further work by the Task Force and partner organisations actively engaged in dealing with vacant and derelict sites. The report recognises the substantial expertise already within the public and private sectors, and that many successes exist, while examining the possibility of accelerating the re-use of sites.

¹ [Protecting Scotland's Future: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2019-2020](#)

² [Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey: 2018](#)

³ [Vacant and Derelict Land Task Force: Phase One Report](#)

- Research⁴ published by the Scottish Land Commission in September 2019 on the Impact of Vacant and Derelict Land on Communities found that derelict sites can affect a community's health, environment, economy and social cohesion.

Key objective of NPF4: To prioritise the use of vacant and derelict land so that viable development takes place on appropriate sites ahead of greenfield land as part of priorities to deliver inclusive growth and sustainable places and responding to the climate emergency.

Issues to consider:

- What more can NPF4 do to support and encourage appropriate opportunities for the redevelopment of vacant and derelict land?
- Can more be done to ensure that the re-use or re-development of brownfield land is considered before new development takes place on greenfield sites?
- Are there circumstances where it would be appropriate for developers to be asked to provide evidence that development on brownfield land is not viable?

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⁴ [Assessing the Impact of Vacant and Derelict Land on Communities](#)