



National Developments – Response Form

Please use the table below to let us know about projects you think may be suitable for national development status. You can also tell us your views on the existing national developments in National Planning Framework 3, referencing their name and number, and providing reasons as to why they should maintain their status. Please use a separate table for each project or development. **Please fill in a [Respondent Information Form](#) and return it with this form to scotplan@gov.scot.**

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of proposed national development | VDL Priority Sites for Joint Action |
| Brief description of proposed national development | A list of Vacant and Derelict Land joint action sites should be collectively included as National Developments. These have been residents of the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Register (SVDLR) since 2000s or earlier, in urban settlements and should be priority sites for joint action. |
| Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available) | Sites are found across 30 Scottish local authorities but with particular concentrations in Glasgow and west central Scotland. GIS files available |
| What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent? | Work is underway to refine the list and identify planning status of these sites. |
| When would the development be complete or operational? | Development is defined broadly and takes into account a wide range of uses including green infrastructure. The completion of development on the site would be dictated by the type of end use and removed from the SVDLR. Work is underway to identify long-term derelict sites in urban areas that have naturalised or are currently in the process of naturalising. These can be part of statutory planning and be accounted for in green or open space audits. |
| Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc. | Work is underway to identify sites on the list of long-term derelict urban sites that are designated in planning or are included in a scheme. |

Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria (maximum 500 words):

The Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce has clearly identified a list of Vacant and Derelict Land (VDL) sites which have the potential to deliver the long-term aims of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The Taskforce has a list of long-term urban derelict sites which are the most persistent and problematic sites. More than two-thirds of these sites are in the bottom half of the SIMD data zones and can help develop resilient and thriving local communities and deliver against Scotland's National Outcomes.

These VDL sites should be prioritised for joint action as National Developments in NPF4. The collective benefits of bringing these sites back into use are nationally significant can help deliver against the following objectives:

Climate change

National Development designation demonstrates that land reuse is an important element of a creating zero-carbon, circular economy. Prioritising joint action VDL sites for development (inclusive of green end use) can support urban densification. Located within existing settlements, reusing these sites can help reduce transport emissions, improve connectivity and potential to help address and mitigate the effects of climate change in urban Scotland. Enhancing naturalised sites and developing green end uses can deliver biodiversity benefits and natural climate solutions including reducing pollution, allowing natural flood risk management and mitigate the effects of urban heating. Their location makes them suitable for local renewable energy initiatives.

Inclusive Growth

Derelict land disproportionately effects the most disadvantaged communities with 11% of people in Scotland's least deprived communities living within 500 meters of a derelict site but this increases to 55% in our most deprived neighbourhoods. The visibility and clustering of these sites can have a multiplier effect which exacerbates existing inequalities and perceptions of neglect. The proximity to VDL can impact investor perceptions and there may be a significant opportunity cost associated with continuing vacancy and dereliction.

These sites should be given priority status in statutory plans and local strategies. A proactive approach to reusing this land rather than waiting for the market alone to bring sites forward for development will improve confidence for investors and communities. The cumulative effect of prioritising a list of sites for joint action across Scotland would build resilient local economies and deliver wider, long-term economic benefits beyond GDP.

People & Place

Spatial interaction with VDL can contribute to poorer health outcomes, population health and community wellbeing. It can raise anxiety levels and increase the incidence of crime and antisocial behaviours¹. As National Developments, these sites can be taken forward as priorities for joint action to deliver on community needs and a range of uses, improving placemaking and cohesion. This provision enables community-led regeneration, simultaneously enhance physical and mental wellbeing for local residents and improve quality of place in urban areas so that local communities view these as assets to be proud of rather than blights on their neighbourhood.

¹ Peter Brett Associates (2019) Vacant and Derelict Land in Scotland: Assessing the Impact of Vacant and Derelict Land on Communities. Available at https://landcommission.gov.scot/downloads/5dd7d4dfa39b6_VDL%20in%20Scotland%20Final%20Report%2020191008.pdf

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Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce response to NPF4 Call for Ideas

Background

The Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce was set up in 2018 as a partnership arrangement between the Scottish Land Commission and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. Its membership consists of public, private and third sector organisations with wide and extensive experience of regeneration, planning and other built environment sectors.

The Taskforce sets out to transform Scotland's approach to tackling vacant and derelict land, create the conditions necessary for eradicating persistent dereliction in urban communities and realise the social, economic and environmental benefits of returning unloved derelict urban land back to productive use. The Taskforce's [Statement of Intent](#) was published in July 2019 and outlines its strategic priorities. It is developing detailed recommendations over the coming months and will seek to build on these ideas through further research, engagement and case studies.

Context

The Planning Scotland (2019) Act presents a major opportunity to deliver the changes needed to fundamentally rethink the way Scotland views and approaches Vacant and Derelict Land (VDL). Addressing Scotland's most derelict sites through National Planning Framework 4 and Scottish Planning Policy is an opportunity to act on climate change, strengthen local economies, tackle health and wellbeing inequalities and deliver inclusive growth.

Scotland's National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) notes the scale of the challenge, but also the opportunity and planning's role in the reuse of VDL Sites. NPF3 also 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". With over 11,000 hectares still registered by the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey in 2018 and almost 600 sites having been registered derelict from 2000s or earlier, we propose that NPF4 takes a new ambitious approach to tackling VDL.

With almost a third of the population living within 500 meters of a derelict site, a number that increases to 55% in the most deprived communities, Scotland is missing out on the productive potential of land that has transformative power for communities, the environment, economy and society. Bringing VDL sites back into use can contribute to the Scottish Government's National Outcomes by:

- Building new homes – supporting the Housing 2040 strategy,
- Providing new allotments and city farms- supporting local food growing and open space strategies,
- Creating new parks and green spaces- supporting environmental, health and wellbeing outcomes,
- Attracting new investment – creating jobs and wealth in parts of the country that need it most,
- Generate renewable energy- helping to tackle food poverty and helping reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

Specifically, bringing VDL sites into use can also have an impact on each of the 6 outcomes the NPF needs to meet as set out in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019:

- meeting the housing needs of people living in Scotland including, in particular, the housing needs for older people and disabled people,
- improving the health and wellbeing of people living in Scotland,
- increasing the population of rural areas of Scotland,
- improving equality and eliminating discrimination,
- meeting any targets relating to the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases, within the meaning of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, contained in or set by virtue of that Act, and
- securing positive effects for biodiversity.

Call for Ideas:

Strengthen the NPF so that policy prioritises brownfield sites for development.

Spatial strategies should consider a circular economy approach to site allocation and should prioritise development of brownfield sites for a wide range of end uses including green infrastructure. Bringing existing sites back into use can help deliver on net-zero carbon economy, regenerate local communities, reduce inequality and provide much wider societal benefits. To facilitate regeneration across different scales and support the principles of community empowerment, NPF4 and SPP should support community-led regeneration and proposals for scaling up delivery on small sites.

The Taskforce has for the first time clearly identified Scotland's most persistent and problematic VDL sites. These are sites that are persistent and problematic with productive potential that are most harmful to surrounding local areas. The collective benefits of bringing these sites back into use are nationally significant and can help develop resilient and thriving local communities, delivering against Scotland's National Outcomes.

It is these most persistent and problematic sites that should be prioritised in NPF4 in statutory development plans. The Taskforce has identified, using a methodology, a list of sites that have the potential to deliver the long-term aims of a spatial plan and aims of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Significantly, more than two-thirds of sites on this list are in the bottom half of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data zones.

NPF4 should deliver on VDL priority sites

Taking this further, the Taskforce is working on refining the list of VDL sites as priority sites for joint action. It is recommended that these sites should be collectively taken forward as National Developments in NPF4 (please see Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce National Development Form included in the submission). This means more certainty upfront and a reduction in the risk for investors and communities. Planning authorities should be required to take account of these joint action sites when preparing Local Development Plans and make these key spatial priorities in local strategies.

A national effort to coordinate and deliver these priority sites will be required. A Land Reuse Initiative should be established to drive forward delivery, with scope to share learning for VDL more generally and develop a wide range of end uses, ranging from green infrastructure to renewable energy, across different scales.

The nature of VDL means that the solutions to each site will be context specific however the [consequences of living with blight](#) that these that many urban areas face are common and require a plan-led, coordinated approach across agencies and organisations.

By taking a national approach to regeneration through NPF4 by focusing on VDL concentrated in largely the most deprived areas in Scotland would have transformative potential for people, place and biodiversity.

This initiative would be akin to and contribute to objectives of well-established national priorities such as the Central Scotland Green Network and the Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership. There is scope to link this to a national delivery vehicle focusing on land assembly and regeneration that has a coordination and assembly role which is subject to wider policy discussions.

Include VDL data on digital mapping tool and include information available to prioritise sites for reuse.

A repositioning the VDL register to inform the planning process would be welcome. The VDL register currently includes sites such as vacant sites that are likely to be part of overall land supply and tend to be reused in the short-term. This tends to mask a hardcore of sites that are persistent, problematic and are long-term occupants of the register which should be tackled as a national priority.

A reformed register and updated guidance for the Scottish VDL Survey can help improve the quantity and quality of information and transform the register from what is currently a statistical exercise into a meaningful and a useful planning tool. Presenting this data on a publicly accessible map-based opportunity portal would align with the Scottish Government's Digital Planning objectives and would more effectively inform the planning process.

To facilitate delivery, NPF4 should be supported by a Digital Planning strategy that creates a system of open, accessible data and resources for VDL that is readily accessible and usable by all stakeholders ranging from public bodies, local businesses to community groups. This should reinforce statutory development plan processes and support Local Place Plans allowing regeneration to happen across different scales.

Policy and mechanisms, such as Compulsory Sales Orders, should be introduced to enable regeneration and prevent sites from being abandoned.

Looking ahead to 2050, in order to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest, a commitment to socially responsible land reuse needs to be embedded in planning system so that it becomes unacceptable for surplus land to become derelict and prevent more sites from being used indefinitely.

Landowners should be encouraged to adopt a responsible approach to land reuse through voluntary. If necessary compulsory measures such as Compulsory Sales Orders could be used to bring sites back into productive use. This is reinforced by the principles of the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (2018) which advocates that land rights, responsibilities and public policies should promote, fulfil and respect relevant human rights in relation to land, contribute to public interest and wellbeing, and balance public and private interests.

Include an outcome measuring the impact of VDL in the new Planning Performance Framework.

New guidance is being produced by the Scottish Land Commission to understand and realise the wider economic benefits that can be delivered through regeneration. This will provide a framework for assessing the long-term societal, environmental and health potential of reusing VDL. It makes the case for the importance of VDL in the overall land supply for development and increased patient capital. The new Planning Performance Framework should consider these measures as it has the potential to inform spatial strategies and investment decisions.