

## **VACANT AND DERELICT LAND AND EMPTY BUILDINGS**

Draft NPF 4 supports the reuse of vacant and derelict land and properties, as a means of contributing to climate change targets and sustainable economic growth. The planning system should prioritise the use of vacant land and properties including supporting appropriate temporary uses where proposals for permanent development are not imminent.

### **Planning policies should:**

- seek the re-use and development of vacant and derelict land and redundant buildings as a priority, encouraging creative proposals to re-purpose buildings and structures;
- support in principle, development proposals for the permanent or temporary re-use of vacant or derelict land and buildings;
- not support development proposals on greenfield sites unless allocated for development or explicitly supported by LDP policies and there are no suitable brownfield alternatives;
- support proposals for the re-use of existing buildings – demolition should be regarded as the least preferred option; and
- ensure that land which is known or suspected to be unstable or contaminated can be made safe and suitable for the proposed use.

### **Responses to the Position Statement**

There was support for the re-use of vacant and derelict land and empty buildings, with many respondents recognising the potential for redevelopment. This included specific support for a 'brownfield first' approach which would prioritise the development of brownfield sites over greenfield sites. The importance of this approach in reducing development pressure on green spaces, supporting climate change and other environmental objectives, and revitalising town centres was also noted.

An alternative view was taken by some respondents, arguing for the potential for 'greening' suitable brownfield sites to create urban open space assets, as part of a strategy that includes releasing greenfield land for development in order to meet economic targets.

Reference was also made by some respondents of the cost of making some brownfield land suitable for development, and the suggestion was made that significant public intervention would be required to facilitate the redevelopment of many brownfield sites.

## **Policy changes**

The proposals in Draft NPF4 build on the spatial strategy outlined in SPP and referenced in NPF3 by emphasising, and giving detail on, the re-use of vacant and derelict land and buildings in the context of development proposals generally. Draft NPF4 strengthens the link between the re-use of brownfield land and vacant buildings and the protection of valuable greenfield sites, giving both equal priority and encouraging planning authorities to express this in local development plans.