A national strategy for brownfield land

• Although the National Brownfield Strategy and the recommendations accepted by Government only apply to England, the over-arching principles and policy recommendations are relevant throughout the United Kingdom

• The guidance documents, especially *The Brownfield Guide*, provide ideas and case studies that are of interest and will assist both brownfield practitioners and the wider audience

• Guidance on the costs involved in preparing contaminated and derelict land for effective and efficient reuse was published in March 2008 – EP’s best practice note 27

• The work undertaken with the Academy for Sustainable Communities, on the brownfield ‘skills gap’ is particularly relevant in the wider context
Background Data – brownfield land in England - NLUD 2006 mixed vintage

**Derelict and vacant brownfield land**
- 29,447 hectares (down 4.2 per cent on 2005)
- West Midlands, North West, Yorkshire
- Unused since 1998 or earlier
- Physical problems and market failure

**Brownfield land ‘in use’**
- 23,231 hectares (up 3 per cent on 2005)
- More evenly distributed
- Significant concentrations in London and the South East
- Generally smaller sites, often with status unchanged since 1998

Stock of Brownfield Land in England

- Vacant and/or derelict land and buildings
Stock of Brownfield Land in England

- Vacant and/or derelict land and buildings

- Land and buildings in use with planning permission or potential for redevelopment

Regional distribution of Brownfield Land

Vacant and/or Derelict
National Brownfield Strategy for England

- The need for a comprehensive brownfield strategy, to tackle the problems of long-term brownfield land was first identified in 2002
- English Partnerships charged with preparing a strategy in the Sustainable Communities Plan in 2003 and the RDAs with preparing Brownfield Land Action Plans
- Interim report, Towards a National Brownfield Strategy, published in September 2003 – this provided a comprehensive review and concluded that only around 11 per cent of brownfield land was available and suitable for redevelopment
- Since then further work considered the nature of the barriers to reuse to formulate a workable strategy
- Recommendations accepted by Government 4 March 2008
National Brownfield Strategy
Over-arching principles

- Redevelop or reuse land first, paying heed to PPS9 *Biodiversity* and PPS25 *Flooding*
- Regeneration agencies should focus efforts on urban land in towns and cities with infrastructure capacity
- All developers should take account of the *full environmental impact* when remediating sites
- When redevelopment is unsustainable developers or owners should *take steps to make sites safe and tackle blight*
- Apply the highest design standards compatible with the economic viability of the site
- Make brownfield reuse decisions in the context of full consultation with local communities

A Four Strand approach to implementation

- **Strand One** – identify, assess and prepare brownfield for reuse over the next 15 to 20 years, to meet demands for all types of land uses
- **Strand Two** – safeguarding the environment, by recognising that not all brownfield land is suitable for redevelopment
- **Strand Three** – enhancing communities, by tackling visual and economic blight, then ensuring that land is properly maintained in the future
- **Strand Four** – accreditation and skills, ensuring that that a more ‘joined up’ approach is adopted with regard to brownfield land reuse and that practitioners have the appropriate skillsets
Local Brownfield Strategies
– stage 1 of Strand One (identification)

To improve our knowledge of brownfield land (2007-09)

- English Partnerships is currently working with 74 ‘directly supported’ local authorities with high concentrations of brownfield sites relative to deprivation
- To inform planning policies, especially land for housing
- Drawing on experience gained from pilots
- Comprehensive approach to all 33 London authorities

Local Brownfield Strategies
Data Collection

Data Availability
Investigation

Assessment of Suitability of Data

Curation of Data

Data-Gap Assessment

Geographical Information Systems Mapping

Assessment & Prioritisation of Sites / Land Uses

Assessment of Sites within ‘Brownfield Sustainability Index’ context

South Eastern Region “In Use Brownfield” Study

London Region Local Brownfield Strategy with LDA

Feeds into ongoing work

National Land Use Database (NLUD) Scoping Study outcomes / revision

LOCAL BROWNFIELD STRATEGY
Local Brownfield Strategies

Types of Site

- **Characteristic Sites**
  - Brownfield Sites
  - Blackfield Sites
  - Greenfield Sites
  - Bluefield Sites

- **Land Uses**
  - Residential
  - Employment
  - Public Open Space
  - Flood Alleviation
  - Biodiversity
  - Public Amenity Services

Web enabled GIS – adding value

- Polygons
- Contextual information
- Simple spatial analysis tools
- Decision making tool not simply data presentation
- Report functionality
- Frequent updates
- Multiple access levels, EP/CLG, LAs, Developers, Public
Assess the problems and needs  
- stage 2 of Strand One

- Aiming to complete the identification stage by April 2009
- Having identified brownfield sites and determined when they are likely to be needed, assess work that is likely to be needed (2008-10)
- Remediation, removal of redundant services, ground stabilisation, new infrastructure
- Commission site investigations, market studies etc. as appropriate
- Take action where it is needed to reverse, or prevent, significant harm
- Tackle other issues when needed, not just about meeting immediate needs – 10, 15, 20 year strategy
- Take full account of environmental impact arising out of land reuse actions
- Costs shared between EP, RDAs and local authorities

Prepare the sites  
- stage 3 of Strand One

- Determine the nature of physical works required to prepare the sites for redevelopment or reuse
- Consider to what extent work should be undertaken in advance of need
- Consider remediation options and the nature of other works that may be required
- Assess whether public sector intervention required, and other mechanism that may be available
- Negotiate future maintenance arrangements
National Brownfield Strategy
- Strand Two

**Safeguarding the environment**
- Continue to work with Government departments, agencies and local government to improve regulatory systems
- For example the Mobile Treatment Licence; Definition of Waste; closer coordination of planning and environmental permitting

**Working with stakeholders**
- Recognise that not all brownfield land is suitable for development purposes
- Identify relevant environmental issues
- Work with appropriate agencies in formulating advice on land reuse
- Address flooding and biodiversity issues

National Brownfield Strategy
- stage 1 of Strand Three

**Tackle small sites that are uneconomic to reclaim**
- CLUSTER project brings together small sites
- Dereliction may be causing economic and/or visual blight
- Sites may be too small to reclaim on their own with modern technologies
- Landfilling may be too costly or environmentally unacceptable
National Brownfield Strategy
- stage 2 of Strand Three

Restoration and Long-term maintenance of sites with no development potential

- Important to deal with economic and visual blight
- Often no end use that requires planning permission
- English Partnerships will assist local authorities in finding the most appropriate solutions
- Joint research programme with the University of Manchester into social impacts

National Brownfield Strategy
- stage 1 of Strand Four

- Strengthening and expansion of the Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC) scheme, possibly introducing different tiers of membership
- Scheme at present endorsed and accredited by eight professional bodies
- Should organisations such as EP and major problem holders in both public and private sectors insist on their site investigation reports being signed off by a SiLC?
- Would a stronger, more widely recognised, accreditation scheme be accepted by the Environment Agency and other regulators?
- Working with the Academy for Sustainable Communities to assess the need for skills development and new courses/modules
National Brownfield Strategy  
- stage 2 of Strand Four

- Continue working to ensure closer links between Government Departments and Agencies involved with brownfield land
- Work with industry organisations, professional bodies and other private and voluntary sector representatives
- Create a National Brownfield Consultative Group, representing a broad spectrum of stakeholders, providing an interface with Defra’s Contaminated Land Forum and EP’s Brownfield Forum

Summary of the current position

Government has published a formal response document that illustrates, with case studies, how the National Brownfield Strategy recommendations are being implemented.

The Housing Green Paper *Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable* endorsed many of the Brownfield Strategy recommendations:

- The importance of environmental considerations has been acknowledged and is included in the Strategy
- Local Brownfield Strategies – English Partnerships is working with local authorities to develop brownfield strategies that will inform other aspects of planning policies
- Work with the Academy for Sustainable Communities has developed a draft Brownfield Skills Strategy
National Brownfield Strategy
- implementation focus

The Strategy provides a proactive approach to land reuse, focussing on:

• Land and buildings that are *derelict, vacant, possibly affected by physical constraints and in areas of market failure or low demand*

• Land and buildings that are *in use, either full or part, often for low economic purposes and possibly affected by regulatory constraints*

Doing so in order to achieve the primary objective of the National Brownfield Strategy -

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**English Partnerships**
**The National Regeneration Agency**

The National Brownfield Strategy will encourage widespread engagement in the process of returning brownfield land to beneficial use and ensure, where possible, a supply of land for a variety of hard and soft end uses

www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/brownfield