

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on PE1943: Help prevent the destruction of greenfield sites by providing financial incentives towards the remediation and reuse of brownfield sites, submitted by Victoria Mungall

Background

Brownfield land has the following specific definition in the context of the Scottish planning system:

“Land which has previously been developed. The term may cover vacant or derelict land, land occupied by redundant or unused building and developed land within the settlement boundary where further intensification of use is considered acceptable.”

The [Scottish Planning Policy](#) (SPP) sets out the key principles that underpin the operation of the Scottish planning system. One of these principles is that “Planning should direct the right development to the right place”. In support of this principle, the SPP requires those making decisions on planning matters to consider “the re-use or re-development of brownfield land before new development takes place on greenfield sites”.

Scottish Government Action

The Scottish Government operates the [Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme](#), a five year, £50m capital investment programme that began in financial year 2021-22 with the aim of

“...tackling persistent vacant and derelict land and supporting place based approaches to delivering regeneration and sustainable inclusive growth, as part of a ‘just transition’ to net-zero by 2045.”

This builds on the previous Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Fund, which allocated funds to five central Scotland local authorities for derelict land remediation. The Scottish Government also operate a number of other funding programmes which can be used for the regeneration of brownfield sites, e.g. the [Place Based Investment Fund](#).

The draft version of [National Planning Framework 4](#) (NPF4), the final version of which will supersede the SPP, sets out six spatial principles for Scotland in 2045, the first of which states:

“Compact growth. We will limit urban expansion where brownfield, vacant and derelict land and buildings can be used more efficiently. This will safeguard land to provide the services and resources we will need in the future, including carbon storage, flood risk management, green infrastructure and biodiversity. By increasing the density of settlements we will reduce the need to travel unsustainably and strengthen local living.”

This principle forms the basis of NPF4 policy 30 (vacant and derelict land), which includes the following direction to planning decision makers:

“Proposals on **greenfield sites** should not be supported unless the site has been allocated for development or the proposal is explicitly supported by policies in the development plan, and there are no suitable brownfield alternatives.”

Scottish Parliament Action

The Scottish Parliament has not previously considered the issue of brownfield land remediation in any detail.

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