

8. Brownfield Land

- 8.1.1. Planning should promote the effective use of land to meet housing and other needs, while protecting the environment and ensuring healthy living conditions. Policies should prioritise previously developed or brownfield land and set clear strategies for meeting assessed needs.
- 8.1.2. A key theme to emerge from the January 2021 Local Plan consultation process was a request for a greater emphasis on the use of brownfield sites and buildings to minimise greenfield development. This reflects national policy to make effective use of land. National policy also has a brownfield first policy in relation to the release of Green Belt.
- 8.1.3. The definitions of 'previously developed land' and 'brownfield land registers' are outlined in national policy²². In summary, previously developed land (often referred to as brownfield land) is land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (the boundary around it), and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. Previously developed land excludes land that has since blended back into the natural landscape such as restored quarry workings. It also excludes parks, recreation grounds, allotments, agricultural or forestry buildings and resident gardens in built up areas.
- 8.1.4. We have explained in more detail below how we have sought to identify previously developed land in the area and explore the opportunities to provide development on this brownfield land to meet the area's needs, including the need for homes and employment land.

8.2. Brownfield land register

- 8.2.1. Our brownfield land register provides an up-to-date and consistent list of brownfield sites that we consider are appropriate for residential development.
- 8.2.2. As well as being previously developed land, to be entered onto the brownfield register sites must also be over 0.25ha in size, suitable, available and achievable for residential development.
 - To be suitable for entry onto the register, sites must be either allocated in a local development plan, have planning permission for residential development, have a grant of permission in principle, or be, in the opinion of

²² National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024, Glossary

the local planning authority, appropriate for residential development, having had regard to any adverse impact on the natural and local built environment including heritage assets. In assessing potential brownfield sites, local planning authorities must consider the NPPF and have regard to relevant policies in their development plan documents.

- To be available, the relevant owner or developer has expressed an intention to sell or develop the land, or in the opinion of the local authority, there are no ownership issues that might prevent residential development from taking place.
- To be achievable, the development is likely to take place within the next 15 years.

8.2.3. These assessment criteria mean that many previously developed sites don't qualify for entry on the Brownfield Land Register and the sites that have been entered are likely to already benefit from planning permission and therefore already contribute towards housing land supply.

8.2.4. We also identify regeneration opportunities on previously developed land through the Dorset Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). This identifies sites of at least 0.5ha that meet the national definition of previously developed land. Delivery of these sites is less certain but due to their larger size, greater opportunities exist for planning interventions such as master planning, site remediation or for funding opportunities.

8.3. Brownfield land delivery

8.3.1. National planning policies suggest that local plans and planning decisions should give substantial weight to the reuse of suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other uses that will contribute toward meeting identified needs.

8.3.2. A common argument is that brownfield land should be developed in advance of greenfield sites. This expectation is however not realistic as the overall need for housing in the short term (next 5 years) far outstrips the supply of brownfield sites available in Dorset. By way of illustration, Dorset Council must grant permission for at least 16,000 homes over the next five years while the Dorset Council Brownfield Land Register only contains sites with capacity for around 2,500 homes. Consequently, any brownfield first phasing policy would simply constrain the supply of land and exacerbate the current housing crisis.

Question 29: How else can we encourage development on brownfield land, whilst also planning positively to meet our needs for homes and employment land?