

Making the most of previously developed land: Brownfield Land Registers (and Other Land Supply) Toolkit

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What is this toolkit for?

Brownfield land is, broadly speaking, land that has previously been developed, as opposed to greenfield land, which has never been built on, such as countryside, Green Belt, parkland or other green space). Communities are often keen to prioritise the redevelopment of brownfield sites to prevent unnecessary loss of countryside or urban green space or other harmful development, or to remove local eyesores. This toolkit aims to help people to tell their local council about brownfield sites that might be developed, and to get them included in the council’s Brownfield Land Register and Land Supply dataset. This will increase the chances of these sites being developed, and take pressure off less appropriate places.

What are Brownfield Land Registers and Land Supply datasets?

From 31st December 2017, all local councils are required to publish and update annually Registers of brownfield land. There are two parts, Part 1 records suitable sites, and Part 2 records sites with Permission in Principle.

To be included in Part 1 of a Brownfield Register sites must be suitable for housing, likely to be developed within 15 years, and “available” (meaning that the owner or developer has expressed an interest in developing or selling the land, or the council considers that there are no issues relating to ownership that might prevent development). Councils do not have to include sites which are smaller than 0.25 hectares (circa. 0.6 acres) or which are capable of supporting less than 5 homes, so relatively few of these smaller sites are included on most Registers. However, they can be included, and small sites can also form a part of the wider land supply dataset.

Part 1 sites can also be included in Part 2 of a Brownfield Register. These sites go through an additional process and as a result are granted ‘planning permission in principle’. This means that the location, type and amount of development that would be suitable for a site is set in advance. However, nationally relatively few councils have started adding sites to Part 2 so far.

Some brownfield sites (for example, those below the size threshold, or that are only partly brownfield) may not be included in Brownfield Registers. However, they can be included in the wider Land Supply dataset, which should include all land suitable for development. This dataset is also updated annually and is what councils use in preparing their development plans. Brownfield Registers are a subset of this wider dataset.

Why should I get involved?

Inclusion in the Brownfield Land Register and/or other Land Supply dataset should increase a site's chances of being brought forward for development. More comprehensive information will enable better use of all available brownfield land, and reduce pressure on greenfield land. Research by CPRE suggests that brownfield sites, particularly smaller ones, are still being missed out of these lists¹, and other previous research has also highlighted the difficulties faced by planning departments in identifying small sites and getting them built out². At the same time as Government is encouraging smaller developers and the use of smaller sites. Resource constraints make it harder for councils to get full, up-to-date intelligence about brownfield sites - especially smaller ones. Hence why CPRE recommends people engage in the process.

In order to increase the supply of brownfield land, increasing community participation in the process is essential. CPRE has developed this Toolkit to enable communities and planning departments to work together and in doing so maximise the potential for brownfield development in their areas. It will help communities make the best use of their on-the-ground knowledge to provide planners with the information they need. It will also help people better understand the process of allocating land for development.

How can I get sites registered?

First, check whether the land you're interested in is already on the register. Googling "<name of your council> brownfield register" should take you to it. If not, you should be able to find it on <https://data.gov.uk>. Registers must be published as .csv spreadsheets. These may look a bit daunting at first sight! However, Government requirements are for the 5th column of each spreadsheet to be a list of site names and addresses, and the 6th column to contain a link to a plan of that site, and these two together should enable you to identify the sites that are listed. Many councils also provide maps and/or summaries of their Registers, which make identifying sites easier. If the land you are interested in is not on the register, it may be worth checking with your council whether it has been considered and rejected, and on what basis.

The councils need certain information to help them establish the development potential of a site, and if a site is to be included on a Brownfield Register, this information must meet the Government's formatting requirements and criteria. The table below is intended to help you provide that information: evidence that will be of serious use in planning development. It is very much worth telling your council about a site even if you are not able to complete all the information. In fact, it would be unusual if you were able to fully complete the table for any given site, and professional planners would have to verify all the data provided anyway, but the more you can do, the better.

There is some guidance to help you answer the questions in the table at the end of this toolkit. If you click the link that says "guidance" under each question, it will take you directly to the relevant section; then click the "return to question" link to return to that section of the table.

¹ <https://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/latest-news-releases/item/4727-council-brownfield-registers-miss-land-that-could-provide-an-extra-200-000-homes>

² <https://www.lgiu.org.uk/report/small-is-beautiful-delivering-more-homes-on-small-sites/> and www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/housing/item/3785-from-wasted-space-to-living-spaces

CPRE Brownfield Land Register (& Other Land Supply) Toolkit

1. Name and address / site location Guidance	
2. Site Size, in hectares (approximate) Guidance	
3. Photo of site Guidance	
4. Existing land use of the site Guidance	
5. If vacant, what was its former use? Guidance	
6. Description of surrounding land uses Guidance	
7. Is the land greenfield, brownfield, or a mixture of both? Guidance	
8. Who owns the site? Guidance	
9. Developer interest - is there a developer interested in the site? Guidance	
10. Timescale - will development occur in the next 5 years? Guidance	
11. Planning Status - does the site have, or is it awaiting a decision on, planning permission? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If Yes, is it: <input type="checkbox"/> Full <input type="checkbox"/> Outline <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved Matters Guidance	Please add dates of any permissions granted, Reference Numbers, and any other details here
12. Planning history Guidance	
13. Housing Capacity - estimate the number of homes, and type of housing (and other) development that would be appropriate: <input type="checkbox"/> Terraced <input type="checkbox"/> Town houses <input type="checkbox"/> Low rise flats	Please provide estimated numbers and further details here

<input type="checkbox"/> Medium rise flats <input type="checkbox"/> Semi detached <input type="checkbox"/> Detached Guidance	
14. Is the site part of a larger site? Guidance	
15. Does the site (or larger site of which it is a part) cross a boundary with another council? Guidance	
16. Suitability for housing - why do you think the site is suitable for housing? Guidance	
17. Site Constraints - are you aware of anything that is likely to constrain development of the site? Guidance	
<p><i>17a - d Site Constraints</i></p> <p><i>17 a. Connectivity / capacity</i></p> <p>Telecommunications equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Mains water supply <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Waste water / sewage <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Gas <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Electricity <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Drainage <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Highways / accessibility <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>	Please provide further details here
<p><i>17 b. Land & buildings</i></p> <p>Topography (slopes etc) <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Ground conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Land stability <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Derelict structures <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Contaminated land <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>	Please provide further details here

<p><i>17 c. Natural environment & built heritage</i></p> <p>Wildlife / habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Trees / tree protection orders <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Hedgerows <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Woodland <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Landscape <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Heritage (e.g. listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments) <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Flood risk <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>	<p>Please provide further details here.</p>
<p><i>17 d. Health & amenity</i></p> <p>Recreation / open space <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Air quality <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Noise <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Vibration <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> <p>Pollution / contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>	<p>Please provide further details here</p>
<p>18. Harmful Impacts - Would development have adverse impacts on wildlife and nature, the built environment (especially historic features) or local amenity not detailed above? Guidance</p>	
<p>19. Any additional information Guidance</p>	

Local contact details

If you do a quick internet search for your council's brownfield register" you should find a link to take you to it.

If not, you should be able to find it on <https://data.gov.uk>

Further information

- Brownfield land registers & planning permission in principle FAQs:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/brownfield-registers-and-permission-in-principle/brownfield-registers-and-permission-in-principle-frequently-asked-questions>
- National Planning Practice Guidance - brownfield land registers:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/brownfield-land-registers>
- National Planning Practice Guidance - planning permission in principle:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/permission-in-principle>
- Brownfield land registers data standard:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/brownfield-land-registers-data-standard>
- The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/403/pdfs/ukxi_20170403_en.pdf
- Previously developed land (brownfield) definition:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary>

Completed toolkit tables can be emailed to the team in your local planning department that deals with Brownfield Registers and land supply, with any accompanying material (e.g. maps and photos). Their details should be available on your council's website or via their switchboard. It will be worthwhile explaining in a covering email what the information is that you are providing them and why: as much information as you have been able to gather regarding a potential development site for inclusion in the Brownfield Register and land supply dataset.

Guidance on filling in the toolkit table

1. Name and address / site location

Provide an address and/or description of the location of the site, which should be sufficient to identify its location, e.g. “36-40 Middleton Drive, Lancaster, LA1 1XX”, or “land off South Drive, between East Street and West Avenue, West Lancashire”. Include the name of your Local Planning Authority, for the avoidance of doubt. In the next step you will also create a boundary map of the site, which will help you to identify it precisely. [Return to question](#)

2. Site Size

Free interactive map app www.scribblemaps.com automatically measures the size of any polygon that you draw on it. Go to the website, click on “Create map”, and either close the dialogue box that appears, or watch one of the training videos it offers. Then, after closing it, type the post code or road you want in the box in the upper left of the screen. You will probably want to change the type of map to “road”, in the box in the bottom right of the screen. Use the cursor to move around the map, and the buttons on the top right to zoom in or out, until you have a clear view of your site. Click on the “draw polygon” tool (5th from the right on the top row of the menu bar). This will enable you to draw the boundaries of the site on the map: hold down the mouse button to draw a line; release it when you come to a corner; hold it down again to draw the next side; and then double click to finish. Then click on the edit/measure tool (far left on the menu bar), and hover the cursor over the shape you have drawn - that will give you the site size in m². Record this in the toolkit. Then click on the ‘menu’ button, and on ‘save image’. This will allow you to save the site outline map to your computer, which you can then send to your council along with this completed toolkit. [Return to question](#)

3. Photo of site

You can either send a jpg or other digital image that you have taken yourself with the completed toolkit, or you could include a link from a ‘street view’ website such as <https://www.instantstreetview.com> or <https://mapstreetview.com> in this section, if it is sufficiently up to date. To do this, go to the website. Type in the postcode of the site. Navigate around the image until it is showing the view that you want, from the position you want. Copy the URL (the text in the address bar, starting with ‘https://www’). Paste this into the right-hand column of the toolkit. This will also indicate the approximate position of the site on a map. [Return to question](#)

4. Existing land use of the site

For example, housing, offices, industry and warehousing, community use, open / vacant land etc. Include general condition of existing buildings, eg derelict, sound, capable of conversion to housing). [Return to question](#)

5. If vacant, what was its former use?

For example, housing, offices, industry and warehousing, community use, retailing, etc. Be as specific as you can, especially if it was the sort of use that may have led to any contamination of the land, eg petrol station, industrial units. [Return to question](#)

6. Description of surrounding land uses

For example, housing, offices, industry and warehousing, community use, open / vacant land, parkland, etc. Details such as approximate heights of adjacent buildings, broad topography (is land flat or sloping) etc would be helpful. [Return to question](#)

7. Is the land greenfield, brownfield, or a mixture of both?

Greenfield land is land that has never been built on. Brownfield land is, broadly speaking, land that has previously been developed. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) defines it more precisely as follows:

“Previously developed land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.”

[Return to question](#)

8. Who owns the site?

If you don't know who owns the site, the owners of neighbouring properties or businesses may do. You can also search on [HM Land Registry](#), although there is a £3 fee for this. A key issue for councils is often whether a site is owned by a Public Authority or not, so even just providing this information (Not / Owned by a Public Authority) would be helpful. [Return to question](#)

9. Developer interest

If you know of any developer interest in the site, it would be helpful if you could provide contact details. If you are in contact with the owner they may be willing to give you this information. [Return to question](#)

10. Timescale - will development occur in the next 5 years?

The National Planning Policy Framework, (2012) Paragraph 47 states in footnotes 11 and 12 (see extract below) that site should be deliverable and developable. This is a judgement. You can help the planners reach their judgement, by considering whether there are any obvious reasons why development might not be able to take place within 5 years, for example:

- Is the site available now, or is all or part of it still in use?
- Is it a suitable location for this type of development now, or will it only become suitable in future (i.e. with a new access, or existing uses cease)?
- Is the land obviously or likely to be contaminated?
- Are there multiple owners or disputes about ownership?
- Is it easily accessible or would it require major works to get to?
- Are there any conflicts between the intended use and current surrounding uses?
- Are there any constraints on the potential use of the site (see question 17)

NPPF, Paragraph 47 extract:

“Note 11 To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable. Sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years, for example they will not be viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans.

NPPF, Paragraph 47, NPPF Note 12 To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and”could be viably developed at the point envisaged.” [Return to question](#)

11. **Planning Status** - does the site have, or is it awaiting a decision on, planning permission? You can find this out by contacting the development management team at your local council. Most councils will also have an online map or postcode based register for checking whether sites have planning permission. This varies between councils. [Return to question](#)

12. **Planning History**

Do you know of any other previous planning applications, allocations in plans or permissions granted? As with the previous question, the development management team at your local council should be able to tell you this. [Return to question](#)

13. **Housing Capacity** - estimate the number of homes, and type of housing (and other) development that would be appropriate:

The average density for housing is 40 dwellings per hectare, but at central town and city locations and near to public transport hubs, densities should be encouraged to be higher. In suburbs and rural areas densities may be lower. Your Local Plan, available on your council's website, should provide guidance. The type, number and density of homes will depend on the site's surroundings, context, and constraints, such as:

- surrounding uses (e.g. residential or commercial),
- height, density, massing and design of nearby properties - new development should maintain or enhance the character of the area.
- any effects on the amenity of nearby properties (e.g. shading or blocking sunlight should be avoided).
- an indicative list of potential constraints is provided in question 17.

[Return to question](#)

14. **Is the site part of a larger site?**

If it is part of a larger site, please describe that site, including where its boundaries are, and why you are only suggesting part of it for development. [Return to question](#)

15. **Does the site (or larger site of which it is a part) cross a boundary with another council?**

If the site crosses a council boundary, please name the adjacent council. [Return to question](#)

16. **Suitability for housing** - why do you think the site is suitable for housing?

Set out here why you think the site should be developed for housing or other uses. This may be due to its location, its surrounding uses, proximity to public transport, retail, employment or other facilities. You may want to make reference to its current condition and/or uses. Contribution to an area's regeneration may also be important. Planning policies in your council's Local Plan and any spatial planning documents at the city-region scale produced by the Combined Authority if established in your area may also provide support for development in certain places or types of places (eg those that are accessible by public transport). [Return to question](#)

17. **Site Constraints** - are you aware of anything that is likely to constrain development of the site? [Return to question](#)

Please refer to known constraints. This may relate to policy, physical or other constraints, such as ownership. The NPPF, Paragraph 14 Footnote 9 states where development should be restricted: *"Note 9 For example, those policies relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives (see paragraph 119) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park (or the Broads Authority); designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion."* The definition is to be broadened to include veteran and ancient woodland.

17.a-d Site Constraints

Please tick boxes in sections 17a - 17d to indicate whether you have reason to believe the presence, absence, or particular nature of any of the listed features may limit or prevent development of the site. For example, if you know that there is no electricity supply to the site, or if there are derelict and potentially unsafe buildings, or if protected plants, animals or habitats are present, these could all potentially be constraints.

Constraints do not necessarily prevent a site from being developed, but may indicate that particular care or mitigation is needed, or that additional work needs to be done to get the site ready, or that only part of the site should be developed.

Where appropriate, please provide further details explaining any constraints you have identified in the adjacent column.

- 17 a. You may be able to infer the presence or absence of utilities from the current or previous use, or by surrounding uses. Highways / accessibility refers to whether there could be safe and easy access from the site to the road and whether traffic generated by any new development would cause problems for the local road network
- 17 b. A visual scan and inference from previous known uses should be all you need at this stage
- 17 c. Your Local Plan Proposals Map / Policies Map (available on your council's planning web pages) should show whether the site is, or is part of, or is next to, any area designated for conservation value (eg a Site of Biological Importance (SBI), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), or Conservation Area); whether it contains any nationally listed heritage assets; and if it is at risk of flooding. The council may also hold a list of locally designated heritage assets. You should include in the details column any known planning designations within or adjacent to the site. However, your own observations may also show the presence of natural features not previously identified.
- 17 d. Your own observations should be enough to flag up any issues at this stage

[Return to question](#)

18. Harmful Impacts

Please describe here any impacts that development could have on the surrounding area, and on people living or working nearby, as well as on the site itself. [Return to question](#)

19. Any additional information

Please include any other information here that you think would be helpful in determining whether or not this site is suitable for development, what kind of development it would be suitable for, why it is suitable, etc. [Return to question](#)

Please contact info@cprelancashire.org.uk if you have any queries concerning this toolkit.