



## State of Brownfield 2020: Executive summary

Brownfield land – land previously built on – that is suitable for housing is a valuable resource because it provides an alternative to losing precious greenfield land to development. In turn, greenfield land can continue to provide many benefits in terms of fair access to green space near to where people live, space for nature and people, and mitigation of the climate emergency.

Understanding how much brownfield land there is in England and how this land is being used is vital to ensuring that this resource meets its full potential. The re-use of brownfield land for residential development has many benefits, including often being close to where people already live and work, with infrastructure such as public transport, schools and shops already in place. Ultimately, brownfield allows for the provision of the homes we need, where we need them. The government has identified capacity for 1.3 million homes on local authority brownfield registers, which is an increase of 19% over the figure of 1.077 million figure we reported in our 2019 research. Of the 1.3 million homes identified, more detailed analysis of brownfield registers by CPRE, the countryside charity has uncovered the following:

- Brownfield registers show that there is enough brownfield land for **1,061,346** housing units over nearly **21,000** sites, covering almost **25,000** hectares.
- There is currently planning permission for **565,564** units, or **53%** of the total brownfield housing capacity.
- There is currently land provision for over **1.5 million** homes using brownfield land and other land with planning permission, providing enough land to meet the government's **300,000** homes a year target for the rest of this parliament.
- Brownfield sites that have begun being developed and have since been omitted from the registers provide an additional housing capacity of **78,000** units. Bringing the total brownfield housing capacity to **1,144,665** units.
- Since the first registers, a total of **7,383** sites have been added and **4,694** sites omitted from the registers. Of these, **2,844** or **61%** could be matched with development projects.
- There have been **2,689** net additions to the registers since their conception, providing an additional **145,206** housing unit capacity.

### Recommendations

- The introduction of a stronger 'brownfield first' policy in any new planning system is crucial to ensure that these 1.3 million sites are built out before any development on greenfield land. The retention and improvement of brownfield registers and the development of a national brownfield map will be crucial in continuing to identify and harness this valuable resource.
- Housing investment funding should be reformed to encourage the regeneration of the Midlands and the north of England, allowing for the plentiful brownfield land resource to be effectively harnessed in areas of particular regeneration need.
- Local communities should be provided with sufficient time and stronger mechanisms for bringing brownfield land forward as a source of land supply, such as increased compulsory purchase powers. Local authorities should also have increased control of the order in which development land is built so that suitable brownfield sites are developed first.
- Brownfield sites should be developed to high design standards and with a substantial proportion of genuinely affordable homes to meet local needs, as well as the use of modern methods of construction which allow homes to be built more quickly.