

Invitation to Tender

Brownfield Economic Gaps Research

May 2025

Introduction

CPRE, the countryside charity, is looking to commission research to understand the economic benefits of brownfield development and the economic disbenefits of greenfield development, in order to encourage the government to adopt a brownfield first approach via mandatory targets and greater use of brownfield registers.

The deadline for expressions of interest is Thursday 26 June 2025.

For further information, please contact **Paul Miner** at paulm@cpre.org.uk or policy@cpre.org.uk

About CPRE, the countryside charity

CPRE is the countryside charity that campaigns to promote, enhance and protect the countryside for everyone's benefit, wherever they live.

Founded in 1926, CPRE believes in countryside and green spaces that are accessible to all, rich in nature and playing a crucial role in responding to the climate emergency. As well as our national office in London, we have 60,000 members and supporters and 41 local CPRE groups across England.

Background

We commissioned a rapid evidence review of the economic benefits of brownfield redevelopment for housing in September 2024, undertaken by the University of the West of England, to understand where the potential gaps in evidence around brownfield development lie. There is limited published evidence related to the economic impacts of brownfield regeneration in terms of cost benefit or return on investment. We would like to commission further work to address these gaps.

The review provided the following recommendations for further analysis:

- First, there is limited economic evidence available to quantify how much the removal of a nuisance is worth in monetary terms and what the return on investment of regeneration might be to the developer or the state.
- Second, and related to this, there are very few studies that look across the development process from pre-development to post-completion. A longitudinal study design would allow pre-development data (e.g. health, neighbourhood satisfaction, income) to be compared with post-development data to fully understand the implications and benefits of brownfield re-development.
- Thirdly, arguments for brownfield redevelopment often centre around sustainability, and the unsustainable nature of greenfield development. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that promised improvements to existing amenities and public transport are not delivered. So,

there is a lack of evidence about whether brownfield developments are genuinely more sustainable than greenfield development.

What are we looking to commission?

The research will seek to address the gaps in the evidence base around the sustainability of brownfield development, the presence of both contaminated sites and land in town centres that are otherwise suitable for development due to locational sustainability, and whether there are significant economic benefits to regeneration compared to large-scale greenfield development. It will also seek to address arguments against brownfield development, including economic barriers (remediation costs).

We are also interested in understanding vacancy rates across town and village centres within rural England to get a greater picture of the level of regeneration required and approximately how many new homes could be accommodated within existing settlements.

The appointed consultants would need to agree the exact methodology with CPRE before commencing work.

The overarching objective for the research is: to help CPRE make a credible case for the economic and sustainability benefits of brownfield development over greenfield.

Outputs

We envisage a technical paper that can be presented to civil servants and key stakeholders, alongside a research briefing with key headlines and recommendations.

Outcomes

We intend to use the research to evidence our case for brownfield targets in national policy and to push back against arguments that brownfield development is uneconomical.

Intended Audiences

The research will be used by CPRE to advocate for the continuation of Homes England's regeneration remit, for additional grant funding for brownfield remediation and for brownfield targets within national planning policy.

We anticipate sharing the research with our network, peers and other stakeholders, Homes England and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

We also anticipate some form of communications/media output.

Budget

The budget for this research is £27,000 inclusive of expenses and VAT.

Timetable

The research would be commissioned, carried out and delivered over a 2 month period, once commissioned, to be completed in September 2025.

The appointed consultants are expected to comply with key dates highlighted in bold below:

- Brief issued: Monday 2 June 2025
- Deadline for submission: Thursday 24 June 2025
- Shortlisted organisations interviewed: Thursday 3 and Friday 4 July 2025
- Inception meeting: Tuesday 8 or Wednesday 9 July 2025

Suggested reference materials:

- **CPRE/University of West England brownfield literature review, September 2024.**
- **CPRE State of Brownfield Report, 2023**

CPRE

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