

# Perth and Kinross LDP3 2027- Evidence Report

## TOPIC PAPER NO. 010: Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings

July 2024



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# 1 Introduction

This topic paper sets out the key information relating to brownfield land and vacant buildings which will be covered by the Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan 3, as required under the provisions of Section 16B of the Act<sup>1</sup>. It will, alongside a range of other topic papers, contribute towards the preparation of the Council's Evidence Report, which is programmed to be submitted to the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division during November 2024 for the 'Gatecheck' process.

The purpose of an Evidence Report is to provide the local authority's interpretation of the evidence it has gathered and the likely implications of that evidence for the preparation of the LDP. The Report will provide a summary of what the evidence means for the plan, rather than contain all the detail of evidence collected.

## 1.1 Relevant Policies

This topic is covered by the following policies in National Planning Framework 4:

- Policy 9 Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings

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<sup>1</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019

## 1.2 Legal and National Policy Requirements / Expectations

In line with the requirement of the Act, this paper will provide important background information for the Plan area regarding:

- The principal physical and environmental characteristics of the district

Under this policy NPF4 expects LDPs to:

- Set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings

### 1.3 Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2022-2027

This topic paper links to the following priorities from the Corporate Plan:

- tackling climate change and supporting sustainable places,
- developing a resilient, stronger and greener local economy, and
- working in partnership with communities.

There is a particular need to consider how the LDP can contribute to the following key action from the stronger and greener economy priority:

- Support and promote business growth, business and place innovation and investment in both our urban and rural areas

### 1.4 Abbreviations used in this topic paper

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| LDP   | Local Development Plan                   |
| LHS   | Local Housing Strategy                   |
| NPF   | National Planning Framework              |
| SVCLS | Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey |

### 1.5 Data links

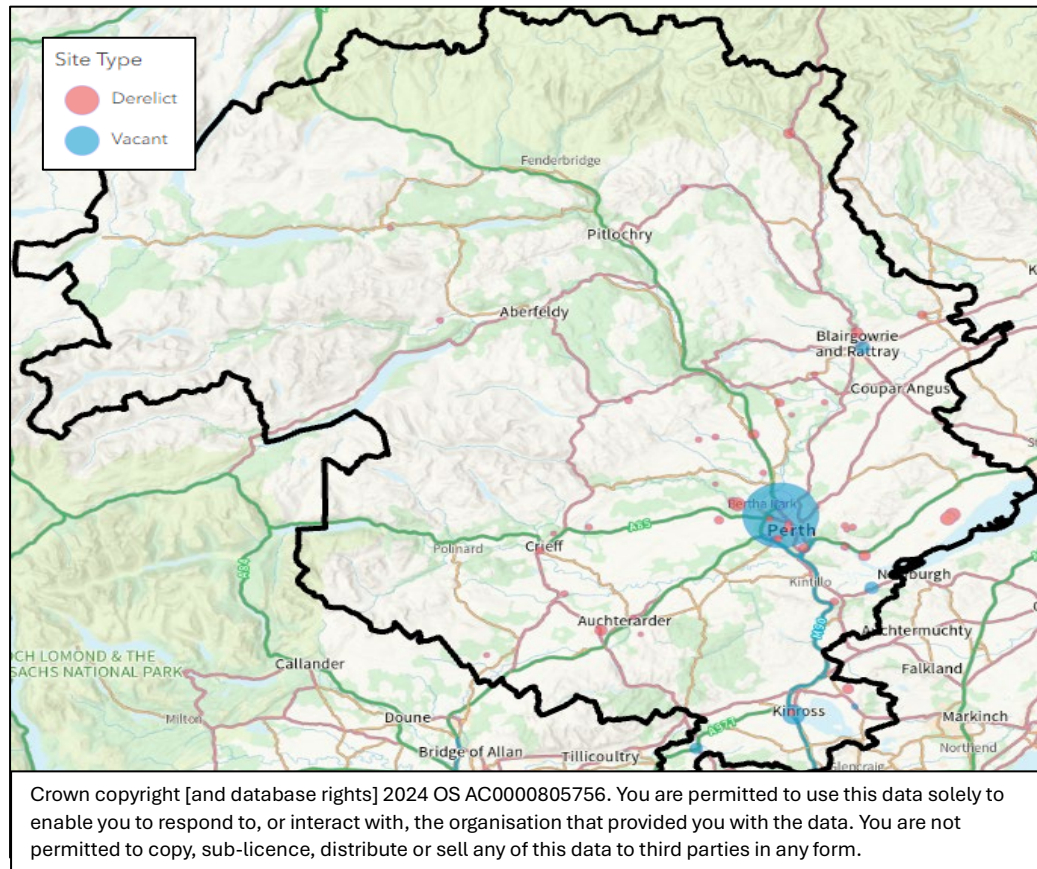
| Links to data  | Relevance of data and why it is required to inform the Proposed Plan                          |
|--|---|
| <a href="#">Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2022</a>  | Quantitative data on vacant and derelict land in Perth and Kinross collected annually         |
| <a href="#">Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland</a>  | Details of vacant buildings which are at risk in Perth and Kinross                            |
| <a href="#">Perth and Kinross City and Town Centre Retail Study</a>  | Details the change in retail floorspace between 2016 and 2022                                 |
| <a href="#">Perth and Kinross Local Housing Strategy Framework 2022-27</a> and <a href="#">Action Plan</a> | Specific action to maximise the potential of generating homes through brownfield regeneration |

## 2 Information Analysis

This section sets out the evidence which is needed so that the Proposed Plan can address the issues raised in the Act and in NPF4 and identifies any gaps or uncertainties in the evidence.

### 2.1 Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2022

The map below shows the locations of vacant and derelict sites across Perth and Kinross identified by the scale of the site.



Source: SVDLS 2022

Key statistics from the survey are:

- There were 24 hectares of derelict land across 44 sites (SVDLS table 2)
- There were 26 hectares of urban vacant land across 14 sites (SVDLS table 2)
- The total derelict land area reduced by 11.4% from 27 hectares in 2016 to 24 hectares in 2022 (SVDLS table 6)
- The total urban vacant land area reduced by 31.9% from 38 hectares in 2016 to 26 hectares in 2022 (SVDLS table 12)
- The total derelict and urban vacant land area reduced by 23.4% from 65 hectares in 2016 to 50 hectares in 2022 (SVDLS table 5)
- 43% of the derelict land in Perth and Kinross (15 sites) is located within settlements whilst 57% (29 sites) is in the countryside (SVDLS table 7)

Overall, less 0.01% of the Perth and Kinross area is derelict land (Annex 3) which would suggest that it is not a significant issue for the area. Although the overall land area is small, however, a key planning consideration is the percentage of the Perth and Kinross population which are living near to derelict land (SVDLS table 9):

- 65% are living 1,000m+ from derelict land
- 24% are living 500m – 1,000 from derelict land
- 11% are living less than 500m from derelict land
- 7.5% have been living less than 500m from land which has been derelict long-term (prior to 2006)

Having an up to date and accurate record of vacant and derelict land within the area helps identify the scale of the problem and any issues relating specifically to Perth and Kinross which may require a local policy response in LDP3. It will also assist in the identification of potential development sites for the Proposed Plan.

#### *Gaps or uncertainties in evidence*

Not all brownfield land and vacant buildings will be included within the SVDLS. Furthermore, the 2023 SVDLS data is not yet published on Scot Govt website and for Perth and Kinross it was only possible to carry out a refresh of existing sites rather than a full review for the 2023 survey return. The Proposed Plan will need to use the most up to date data available.

## 2.2 Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland

There are currently 114 at risk buildings within Perth and Kinross of which 13 are in ruinous condition, 15 are in very poor condition, 49 are in poor condition, 33 are in fair condition, and 4 are in good condition. 16 buildings are category A listed, 54 are category B listed, 20 are category C listed, and the remaining 24 are unlisted.

26 buildings are classified as being in a critical or high category of risk. 48 are in a moderate category or risk and the remaining 40 are in a low or minimal category of risk. Of the 114 buildings 15 currently have restoration in progress.

Nearly half of all at risk buildings are located in rural areas with a further 25% located in a rural settlement or small town. The

remaining 25% are within urban areas. The lowest proportion of at risk buildings are in the Kinross Divisional Area at around 5%. The remaining buildings are fairly evenly split between the other Divisional Areas (Eastern, Highland, Perth and Strathearn).

#### *Gaps or uncertainties in evidence*

None identified.

### 2.3 Local Housing Strategy Framework 2022-27 and Action Plan

The LHS identifies an action to maximise the potential to generate more homes through brownfield regeneration which encourages mixed developments and change of use for vacant properties (LHS Action 1.3). The aim is to deliver 50% affordable homes through brownfield regeneration and change of use for vacant properties, and to maintain a 53% / 47% split between urban and rural areas. Key to achieving this is developing a register of potential brownfield regeneration sites, and a register of potential sites that would be suitable as housing subject to change of use.

#### *Gaps or uncertainties in evidence*

A pilot exercise has so far been undertaken for a specific area of Perth and Kinross in relation to LHS Action 1.3. This considered vacant and derelict land, vacant properties, community land audit, car parks, underutilised open space, land in council ownership, land allocated for employment safeguarding in LDP2, land allocated in LDP2 and the housing land audit but not yet fulfilled, and officer identified sites. The main purpose is to identify sites for affordable

housing, including small sites that could be brought forward for development immediately or considered for the longer term via the LDP review process.

An initial assessment identified those sites which could be immediately discounted, for example, those which would not comply with planning policy for housing. A full site-assessment was then carried out on the remaining sites and these were then scored to identify:

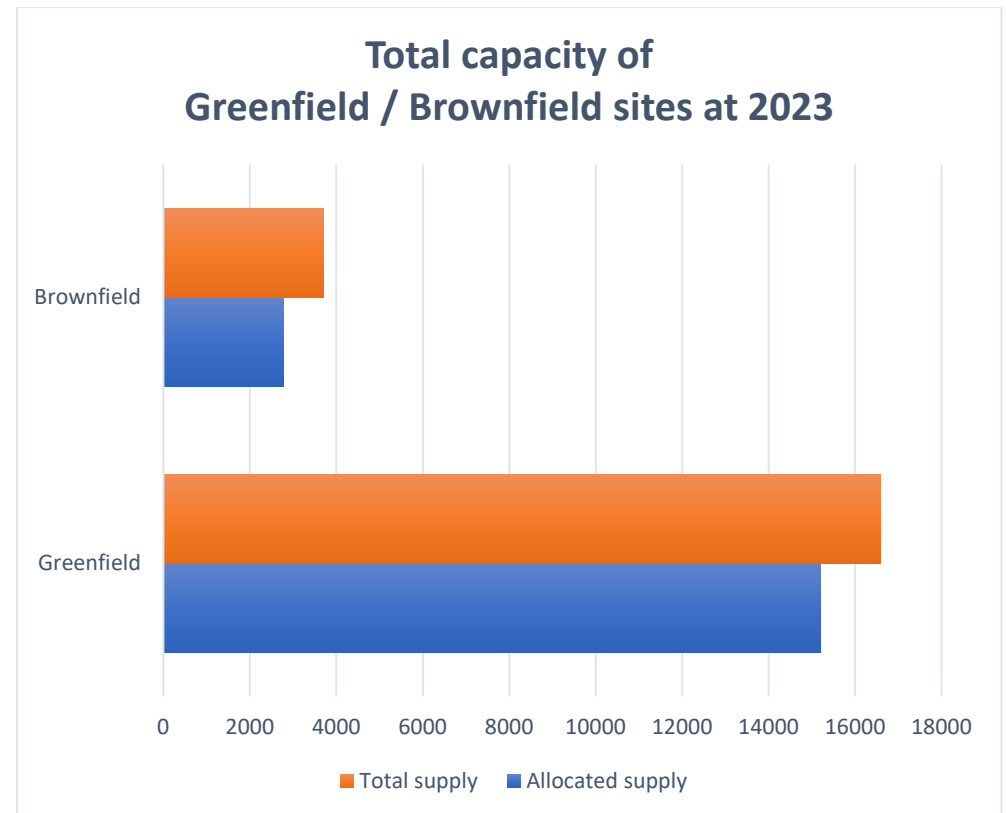
- green sites with few constraints and the potential for delivery in 1-2 years
- amber sites with a small number of significant constraints (or a large number of small constraints) that make feasibility less certain and where further assessment would be clarified via a planning application
- red sites which have significant constraints, and which would need to be considered through the review of the LDP

Partners, including development trusts are using the results of the pilot to engage with landowners and explore the development viability of green and some amber rated sites in more detail. The process has been reviewed and refined and will be rolled-out across the Perth and Kinross area. This study does, however, have the potential to amass a large amount of data. Of particular relevance to the preparation of the Proposed Plan will be the identification of 'red' sites which will require to be assessed through the LDP review process.

An additional output beyond identifying land with housing potential, is a register of Brownfield sites for development that have current planning policy and preliminary development risks assessed. In this there may also be scope to include other brownfield land, for example, land with no use currently, or land with potential for 'soft' uses such as open space. Having an up to date and accurate record of all known brownfield land within the area will help identify the scale of the problem and any issues relating specifically to Perth and Kinross which may require a local policy response in LDP3, as well as highlighting potential sites for development.

#### 2.4 Housing Land Audits

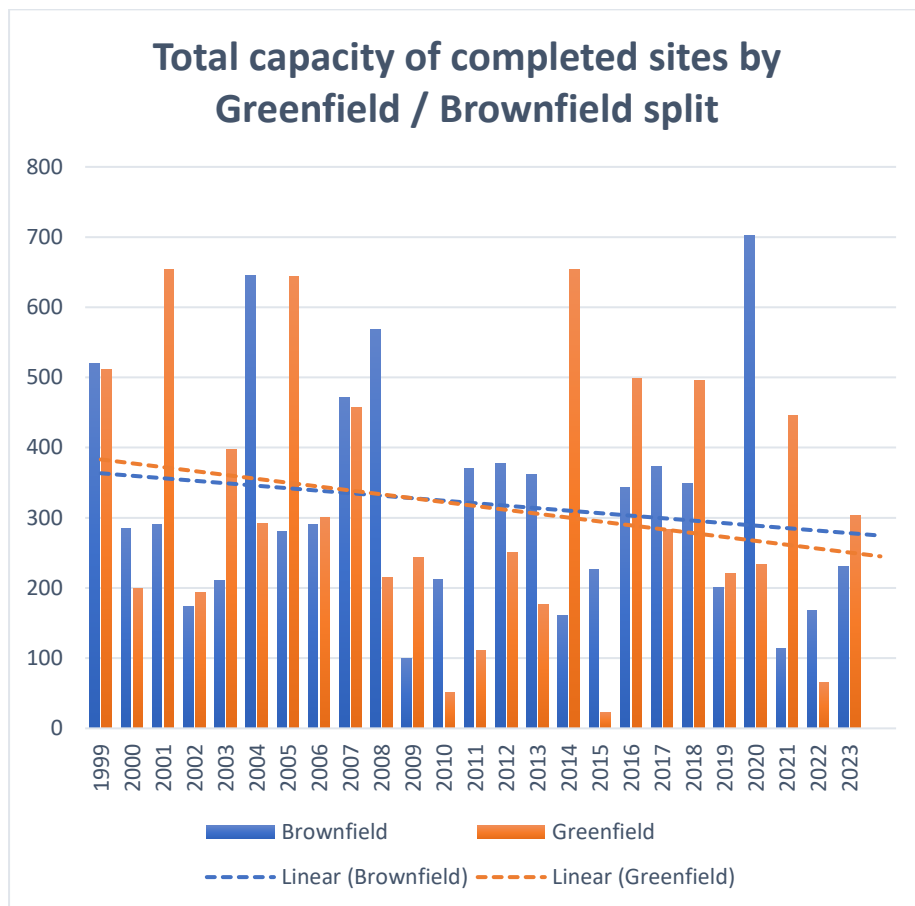
The annual housing land audit provides a statement of land supply within Perth and Kinross but it does not currently include in the published version the proportion of the housing land supply which is on brownfield land. This data has, however, been collected in the housing land database and is presented in the chart below. The greenfield figures are skewed somewhat by the inclusion of the large strategic land allocations to the west and northwest of Perth.



Source: Perth and Kinross Housing Land Database



The chart below shows the total capacity of sites by the year they completed split by greenfield and brownfield (please note these are total site capacities not annual completions).



Source: Perth and Kinross Housing Land Database

*Gaps or uncertainties in evidence*

None identified.

## 2.5 Perth and Kinross City and Town Centre Retail Study

The Study includes an assessment of the health and vitality of Perth city centre and Aberfeldy, Alyth, Auchterarder, Blairgowrie, Coupar Angus, Crieff, Dunkeld, Kinross and Pitlochry town centres. Key to the consideration of this topic is the breakdown of retail and other floorspaces in the centres, including the change in vacant floorspace.

| Centre       | 2016 vacant sqm gross | 2022 vacant sqm gross | Difference 2016-22 | % change |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Perth        | 18,470                | 21,321                | +2,851             | 15       |
| Auchterarder | 320                   | 762                   | +442               | 138      |
| Blairgowrie  | 610                   | 2,146                 | +1,536             | 252      |
| Crieff       | 3,720                 | 4,422                 | +702               | 19       |
| Kinross      | 1,250                 | 687                   | -563               | -45      |
| Pitlochry    | 1,480                 | 2,100                 | +620               | 42       |

Source: Perth and Kinross City and Town Centre Retail Study

Although the biggest increase in vacant floorspace has been in Perth, this only amounts to a 15% change. Proportionately the biggest increase has been in Blairgowrie where the amount of vacant floorspace was around 3.5 times higher in 2022 than it was in 2016. The only centre which has reduced its vacant floorspace between 2016 and 2022 is Kinross.

#### *Gaps or uncertainties in evidence*

A comparison of vacancy data is not available for the smaller town centres of Aberfeldy, Alyth, Coupar Angus and Dunkeld.

## 2.6 Big Place Conversation

The Council carried out its 'Big Place Conversation' exercise to kick start the LDP3 process across Perth and Kinross communities during most of 2023. This was a substantial exercise involving over 100 events throughout the Council area. The events ranged from drop-in information sessions, meetings, and online surveys to workshops and online sessions using the Place Standard Tool to capture the views of local communities about different aspects of their places. There were also targeted sessions held with schools, service user groups, and minority groups. The Place Standard tool includes a section on feeling safe. This can instigate discussion around empty and derelict properties and whether the presence of such properties or land can affect how safe a person feels in their place.

#### *Gaps or uncertainties in evidence*

The results of the Big Place Conversation will be summarised as part of a separate report on the outcomes and findings across the different locality areas. This summary of the results, and the identified place-based actions to be taken forward as part of the development of the Proposed Plan, will be provided as part of LDP3's Evidence Report under the required statement of steps taken by the Council in preparing the report to seek the views of various stakeholders, as prescribed by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

### 3 Implications for Proposed Plan

The initial implications of the evidence for the Proposed Plan which have been identified so far are set out below. This will be revised and updated following consultation on this Topic Paper.

The currently available evidence in relation to brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings in Perth and Kinross indicates that the overall proportion of such land is low. There will, however, be key localised impacts which the Proposed Plan will need to consider in developing a spatial strategy. Firstly, the impact on the percentage of the population which is living near to derelict land. In particular the 11% of the population of Perth and Kinross who are living less than 500m of derelict land. Secondly is the significant increase in retail vacancies in some town centres. This is particularly stark in Blairgowrie and Auchterarder although all of the key centres excluding Kinross have seen an increase in retail vacancy rates.

NPF4 expects LDPs to set out the opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings. The national framework also seeks to maximise the use of existing assets and minimise additional land take. The identification of sites and strategies for the potential reuse of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings will therefore impact on the spatial strategy for the Proposed Plan. Whilst the SVDLS is an existing source of information on vacant and derelict land, the Council's own Urban Capacity Brownfield Study

will provide a more comprehensive record of all land and buildings which have the potential for re-use or redevelopment.

In preparing the spatial strategy for the Proposed Plan there will also be linkages to other topics including:

- Biodiversity in terms of the contribution brownfield land can make to nature recovery and can in some instances be a better use of land than development;
- Design, Quality and Place and the role that the development can have in improving the quality of an area where brownfield or derelict land or buildings are having a negative impact on health and wellbeing;
- City, town, local and commercial centres and the increasing number of vacant units which some centres are experiencing

### 4 Stakeholder Engagement

Feedback is sought on this Topic Paper on whether stakeholders and other interested parties agree with evidence which we intend to use to prepare the Proposed Plan as set out above.