



## Securing the Future Supply of Brownfield Land

### **Government Response to English Partnerships' Recommendations on the National Brownfield Strategy**



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# Foreword



The re-use of Brownfield land lies at the heart of a wide range of Government policies and English Partnerships' work in developing a National Brownfield Strategy is an important step towards achieving our ambitious targets for housing growth and underpins our policy for the revival of our towns and cities and for achieving more sustainable patterns of development. We therefore welcome wholeheartedly the over-arching principles and the proposals presented to us by English Partnerships. This document sets out the Government's detailed response against each recommendation.

Much has already been achieved but this is a long term initiative and although we have made a good start much remains to be done. We need to ensure that the regulatory framework offers the right level of protection but does not impose unnecessary burdens on the industry. The proposed new planning and pollution control protocol will allow the regulatory bodies to work more closely together.

Recycling land helps protect the countryside and enhance its quality rather than creating urban sprawl, easing the pressures on our green belt. But the strategy is not just about development it is about the reuse of brownfield land in the widest sense including green end uses. The greening of previously derelict land removes blight and brings with it important social and health benefits. However it is vital that once derelict sites have been brought back into use, maintenance regimes are put in place to ensure that these sites do not return to a blighted state.

English Partnerships has played a key role in developing the strategy and will continue to be an important partner until the formation of the new Homes and Communities Agency. The new Agency will put brownfield land at the heart of its work. It will have the power to acquire and develop any type of land, but its main priority will be the regeneration, or bringing about the more effective use of land – which will include acquiring derelict land for the provision of a community facility or new housing. The Housing and Regeneration Bill, which establishes the Homes and Communities Agency, reinforces Government policy that brownfield land should be developed before greenfield.

A key element of the strategy is to ensure that both the public and private sectors have the right skills available in order to bring forward brownfield sites. A draft brownfield skills strategy is being published alongside this document and I would urge all of you to read it and to engage in the consultation process.

This is not just a strategy for Government; it is a strategy for everyone. We all have a part to play: English Partnerships, the Regional Development Agencies, the Environment Agency, Local Authorities, voluntary sector organisations, non-government organisations and the private sector must all play their part for the Strategy to be delivered.

I would like to thank Paul Syms and his team in English Partnerships for their work in developing the National Brownfield Strategy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Flint', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Caroline Flint MP**

Communities and Local Government

# Introduction

In 2003 the Government tasked English Partnerships to work with Government departments and a wide range of stakeholders to develop a comprehensive National Brownfield Strategy for England, to help understand and overcome the problems preventing brownfield sites from being brought back into use. The strategy was to consider brownfield use in its widest sense including all types of development as well as various green end uses.

Since that time much has been achieved and Government policies are successfully encouraging the reuse of more brownfield sites reducing pressure for development on our greenfield land. Currently about three quarters of new development takes place on brownfield land, compared with less than sixty per cent ten years ago. The successful remediation and reuse of brownfield remains a priority for this Government.

The publication of *The Brownfield Guide – A Practitioners Guide to Land Reuse in England*, in late 2006, was an important first step in developing the strategy and this was followed by a set of policy proposals in the form of a set of overriding principles and a number of policy recommendations that drew upon the wide consultation process undertaken and a series of stakeholder workshops. This document sets out the Government's response to those recommendations.

# The Government's Approach

Government departments have worked closely with English Partnerships since 2003 to ensure that policy development has been taken forward in the light of the strategy and good progress has been made in respect of some of the specific recommendations as detailed in the following sections of this document.

Getting the regulatory framework right is vital, and we have made progress. The Mobile Treatment licensing system introduced by the Environment Agency has been welcomed by the remediation industry. Communities and Local Government and Defra are discussing with the Environment Agency and the Local Government Association a jointly-badged protocol setting out expectations on collaborative working across the planning/pollution control interface. The protocol would be supported by joint Communities and Local Government and Defra guidance. Government has also been working extensively with stakeholders on the technically complex guidance for regulating risk to human health which forms a central component of identifying and managing contaminated land. We hope to announce significant improvements to this in spring 2008.

Planning is critical to protecting the countryside and our environment, building sustainable homes and communities, and supporting growth and prosperity. The Planning Bill, introduced in November 2007, will ensure that we have an efficient planning system which produces fair and transparent outcomes on decisions which are vital both to the local communities they most affect, and to the long term challenges facing us as a nation. The Housing Green Paper *Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable* sets out proposals for more homes to meet growing demand, to make housing more affordable, and to create places and homes that people want to live in. The Green Paper includes proposals for further reforms to the planning system to aid the delivery of this ambition.

National planning policies are set out in Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), which are gradually replacing Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs). PPS3 on housing put in place a new national policy framework for planning for housing at the local and regional levels and reaffirmed the Government's annual target that at least 60 per cent of new housing should be provided on previously developed land. PPS3 requires local authorities to identify suitable sites for housing development and to do this by carrying out a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This assessment must consider the environmental impact of housing development taking into account limitations such as contamination, flood risk and to encourage biodiversity. These considerations are set out in detail in PPS25 on development and flood risk and PPS9 on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system.

PPS4 on sustainable economic development (currently in draft and out to consultation) seeks to ensure that local authorities take into account the potential economic benefits of new developments as well as relevant environmental and social implications. It will require local authorities to identify and maintain a supply of land which caters for existing employment and business needs whilst also delivering the infrastructure and housing we need and ensuring good design. PPS23 on planning and pollution control ensures that amongst other things the planning system plays a key role in determining the location of development which may give rise to pollution either directly or indirectly, and in ensuring that other uses and developments are not as far as possible affected by major existing or potential sources of pollution. It advises that controls under the planning and pollution control regimes should complement rather than duplicate each other.

The Environment Agency is seeking to encourage land contamination to be dealt with without the need for regulatory intervention. This complies with modern regulatory principles. It is developing generic advice on dealing with land contamination issues to provide improved clarity and transparency to the industry on the approach and standards required for compliance with environmental legislation. This advice builds on the CLR11 Model Procedures and will be actively promoted for use by service providers (such as Specialists in Land Contamination – SiLCs) working in the Brownfield sector. If successful, it should minimise costs and delays to projects by speeding up the consultation process.

English Partnerships and CL:AIRE (Contaminated Land: Applications in Real Environments) have been developing a pioneering new approach to remediating contaminated land. Entitled CLUSTER this initiative has been launched as a pilot with the potential to significantly speed up the restoration of groups of contaminated sites. The first CLUSTER project has now been given the necessary clearances by the Environment Agency and the local Planning Authority allowing work to start. Contaminated soils will be moved from the donor sites within the next few weeks for bioremediation and will be returned as non waste in early spring. The CLUSTER project is more fully described in the case study later in this document. CL:AIRE and English Partnerships are now working to identify further potential groups of sites that could be tackled using this approach and guidance on how to set up a cluster will be included in the web-based *Brownfield Guide*<sup>1</sup> when the guide is updated later in the year.

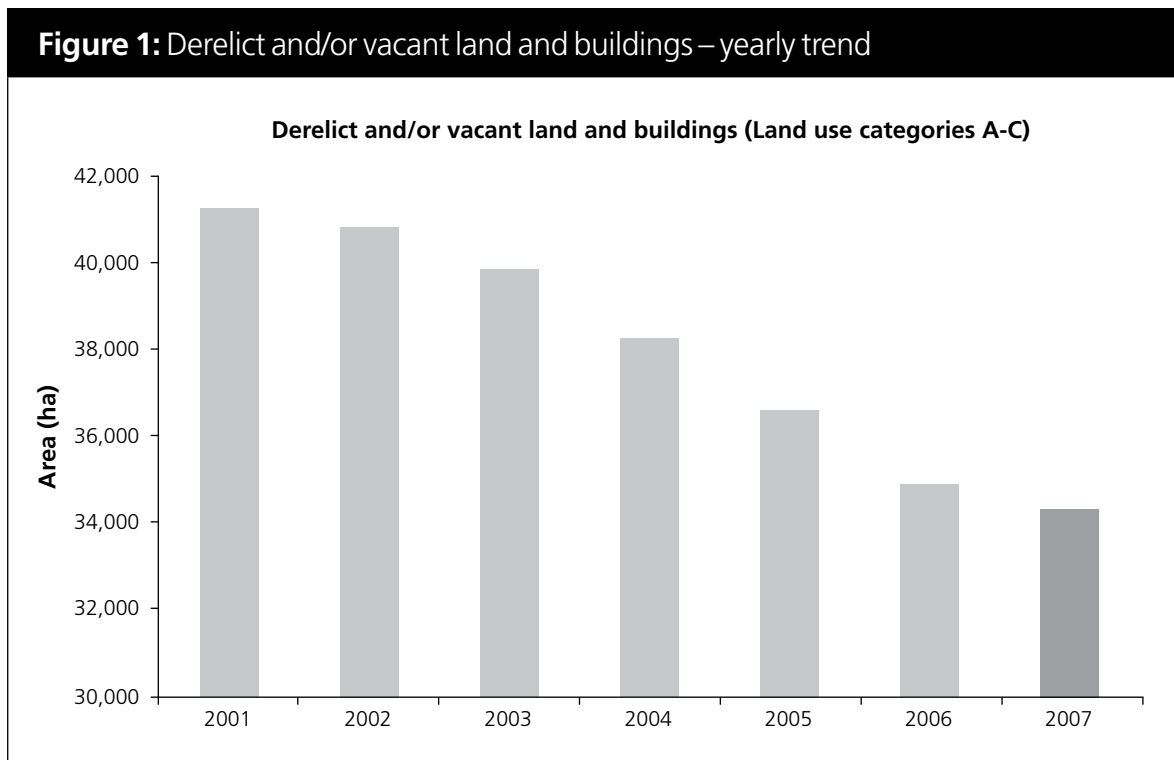
New technologies are continually coming onto the market and CL:AIRE's independent assessment of new technologies gives regulators and practitioners confidence in clean up techniques and thereby encourages the remediation of contaminated sites. Similarly the SiLC scheme, (see para 31) helps ensure that accredited professionals are available to become involved in remediation projects which should increase confidence in the remediation methods used. Both SiLC and CL:AIRE remain key partners in the Government's Brownfield Strategy and we will continue to work closely with both organisations.

<sup>1</sup> [www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/publications](http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/publications)

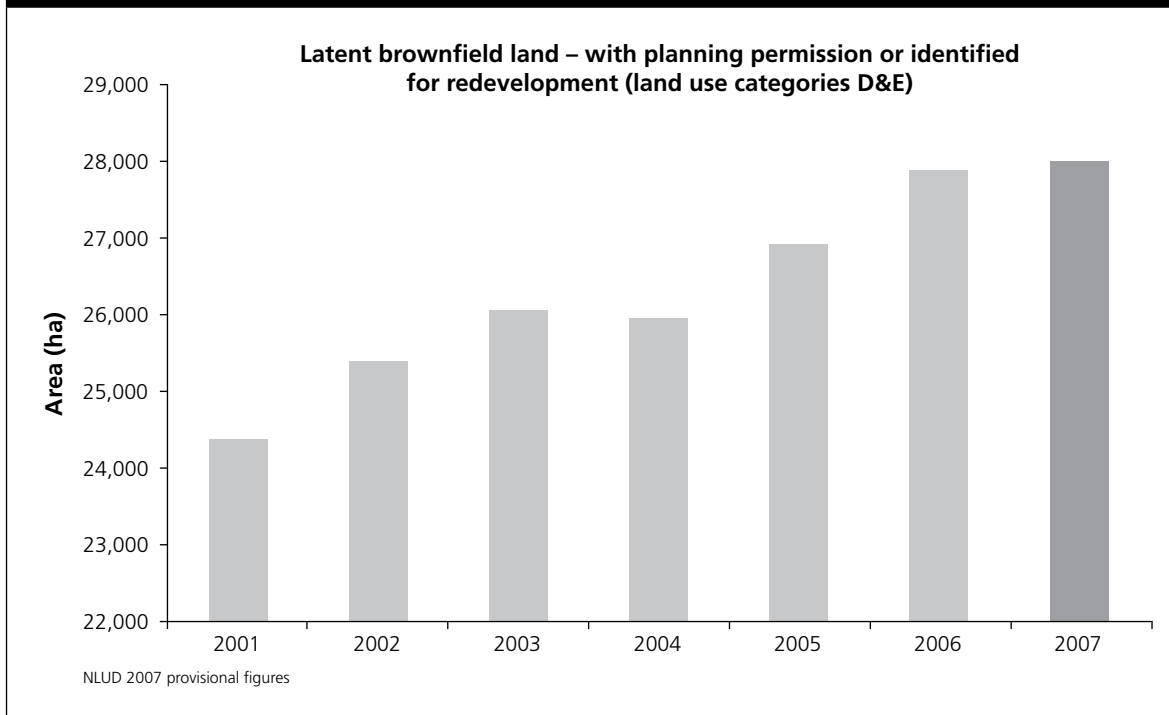
The draft brownfield skills strategy, published by English Partnerships and the Academy for Sustainable Communities (ASC) alongside this document sets out proposals that will help ensure that the supply of brownfield sites will not be constrained by a lack of relevant skills. Government urges all stakeholders to engage with the consultation process.

The National Brownfield Strategy is beginning to have an impact. The National Land Use Database (NLUD) shows that although there are still significant areas of brownfield land to be tackled, the stock of derelict and vacant land has been decreasing (Figure 1). At the same time Local Authorities have been successful in identifying further potential development land, so called 'latent brownfield' (Figure 2).

Our aim is to continue the year on year reduction in derelict and/or vacant brownfield land. We will also encourage local authorities to continue to identify potential new 'latent' brownfield land but also to ensure that the land identified as having development potential is being brought forward for development. English Partnerships and subsequently the new Homes and Communities Agency will continue to report performance against these targets through the annual statistical release from the NLUD system.



**Figure 2:** 'Latent' brownfield land i.e. land with planning permission or identified for redevelopment – yearly trend



Perhaps the most important lesson from our work to date is the need for a more joined up approach, not just by Government departments, but by all the stakeholders involved in brownfield regeneration. The case studies such as those illustrated here and those in more detail in the *Brownfield Guide* between them hold the key to unlock a large number of derelict sites. Government will work with English Partnerships and with independent groups such as CL:AiRE and SiLC to develop an active network of regulators and practitioners to exchange knowledge and to disseminate best practice. Proposals for a new National Brownfield Forum (para 34) will become the focus for developing an implementation plan for the strategy and monitoring progress.

# Detailed Response to the Recommendations

English Partnerships set out a four strand approach to implementation and the nine recommendations (A-I) are captured under each of the strands as follows:

## Strand One – identifying, assessing and preparing Brownfield land for reuse

To ensure an adequate supply of land when it is needed

**Compile Local Brownfield Strategies in areas of greatest need, providing an input to Local Development Documents using NLUD-PDL 2006 and the policy baseline (A)**

1. PPS3: Housing requires local planning authorities to plan for the long term by identifying developable sites for housing. It maintains a continuing focus on recycling land, retaining the national target that at least 60 per cent of new homes should be built on brownfield land. Local authorities will need to continue to prioritise Brownfield land in their plans and set their own targets to reflect available sites and support the national target. PPS3 and the Housing Green Paper require local authorities to take stronger action to recycle more land by requiring them to prepare Local Brownfield Strategies. Government recognises that English Partnerships has a key enabling role to play in helping local authorities with this work.
2. English Partnerships is focussing on assisting those local authorities in the eight English regions other than London with the greatest concentration of brownfield sites relative to deprivation. More than 20 per cent of brownfield sites recorded on NLUD PDL is found in the 10 per cent most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) in England. SOAs are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. Focussing in this way resulted in approximately 130 local authorities being identified for support.
3. A series of workshops has been held between October last year and February this year; as a result 74 local authorities are receiving English Partnerships' assistance with technical support including contamination searches and assessments of infrastructure needs.

4. English Partnerships is also working with the London Development Agency and ARUP in carrying out a comprehensive review of brownfield land for all London authorities through which comprehensive London specific guidance will be produced identifying brownfield sites with the potential for redevelopment.
5. Consultants have been commissioned by English Partnerships to work with authorities in the South East and the Thames Gateway outside London to identify why in use latent brownfield sites are not coming forward. This study will include detailed studies of 200 latent brownfield sites in 17 local authority areas (around 45 per cent of the stock of latent brownfield land in those areas).
6. English Partnerships' work is not only helping with the development of local brownfield strategies, it is also assisting in formulating the evidence base to underpin the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments and will provide important information for the development of our brownfield policies.

**Assess the physical, regulatory and market problems needing to be resolved in order to return Brownfield land to reuse (H)**

7. The work being undertaken by English Partnerships and local authorities developing Local Brownfield Strategies will identify brownfield land that can be developed and delivered to meet the country's future land use needs. Land identified in this way will need to be assessed to determine the barriers that may hinder its reuse.
8. Government has asked English Partnerships to extend its support to all local authorities for site assessments through the provision of specialist technical advice to assist with the preparation of tender documents and desk studies and intrusive site investigations. English Partnerships is currently working with 74 local authorities on 16 detailed Local Brownfield Strategies which will be assessed and prioritised to determine opportunities for further support.

**Taking steps to prepare the most seriously damaged Brownfield sites and make them ready for the most appropriate forms of reuse (I)**

9. Local Brownfield Strategies will help to identify the extent of the problems which need to be addressed to remediate the most seriously contaminated sites. Government recognises the importance of sustainable methods of preparing land for reuse including remediation technology.

10. CL:AIRE (Contaminated Land Applications in Real Environments) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation, established with the support of Government to stimulate the regeneration of contaminated land in the UK by raising awareness of, and confidence in, practical sustainable remediation technologies. CL:AIRE helps the industry to accelerate the take up of sustainable remediation technologies to bring contaminated land back into use and reduce the quantity of soil back to landfill. CL:AIRE fulfills the need for objective, scientifically robust appraisals of remediation technologies and methods for monitoring and investigating sites. Government will continue to work closely with CL:AIRE.
11. Government welcomes the excellent progress made by English Partnerships in the delivery of the National Coalfields Programme, one of the most successful brownfield regeneration programmes in Europe. This programme includes some of the most contaminated sites in the country but is on track to bring some 4,000 hectares of derelict land back into use creating some 42,000 jobs. Through the programme English Partnerships works with many partners and local communities to find creative and sustainable ways of rebuilding communities. The objectives of the programme are being achieved with high standards of sustainability, and through devising and encouraging innovation in remediation. This work will continue to be delivered through the new Homes and Communities Agency.

**Case study – Westoe Tyne and Wear**

Westoe Colliery at South Shields, near Sunderland was opened in 1909 and closed in 1993. At peak of operation in 1980, it was employing more than 2500 people.

As part of the National Coalfields Programme, the site (approximately 17 ha) has been redeveloped and transformed into new homes and a new community. The colliery is being developed as a modern urban village with approximately 700 new houses being built together with a community centre and a new school. The school opened in Sept 2004.

Westoe is a project between English Partnerships, One NorthEast Regional Development Agency, South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council, and the Prince’s Foundation, together with George Wimpey Homes.

Source: English Partnerships – [www.englishpartnerships.co.uk](http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk)

12. The Local Brownfield Strategies will give a much clearer view of the range of issues preventing brownfield sites being brought back into use. Some sites may have a combination of problems that could only be tackled by an approach similar to that taken through the National Coalfields Programme. Where these sites have a

strategic importance it may be appropriate for Government to take direct action through its delivery partners to ensure that the sites are brought back into use. English Partnerships will report back to Government on the extent of strategic sites of this nature.

## Strand 2 – safeguarding the environment

To ensure appropriate levels of regulatory control and the efficient and effective reuse of land.

**Ensure that the environment is adequately safeguarded when land is being reused whilst simplifying and streamlining where possible the regulatory procedures that have to be observed. (B)**

13. Government recognises that the interface between planning and pollution control regimes is complex and developers can be subject to overlapping requirements. Communities and Local Government and Defra have undertaken a joint review to identify options for making this interface work better, in particular during both brownfield development and the delivery of new waste infrastructure.
14. The review recommends that a change in the regulatory culture rather than the regulatory framework is needed, and that this should be based on a more integrated approach reflecting the fact that both planners and the pollution control authority are making decisions as part of one process on the same development proposal.
15. The Government is discussing with the Environment Agency and the Local Government Association a jointly badged protocol setting out expectations on collaborative working across the planning/pollution interface. The aim is to deliver decisions on projects in the most streamlined and effective way. Joint guidance from Communities and Local Government/Defra would complement and support the protocol and provide more detailed advice on its implementation. The practice guidance will be developed in close consultation with stakeholders, and we hope to publish the guidance later in the year.

**Recognise that not all brownfield land is suitable for development purposes but can nevertheless make a contribution through encouraging biodiversity and the alleviation of flood risks (C)**

16. It is recognised that planning, development, and regeneration should have minimal impacts on biodiversity and enhance it wherever possible. PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation sets out the Government's objectives and planning policies on the protection of biodiversity.
17. Recognising the importance of many brownfield sites for biodiversity, the revised UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) list of priority species and habitats (approved by Ministers in August 2007) included 'Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land' for the first time. Defra aims, through the work of the Towns, Cities and Development work stream of the England Biodiversity Strategy, to:
  - Provide a clearer agreed definition of the UKBAP priority habitat type to aid 'identification on the ground';
  - Provide a comprehensive list of species of conservation importance which are associated with this habitat type, including UKBAP priority species;
  - Develop and apply a methodology to determine the extent, distribution and quality of all the land in the UK that falls within that definition;
  - Develop an action plan for the 'Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land' habitat type.
18. Developers need to do more to assess the environmental implications of their proposals for brownfield sites at an early stage, in consultation with appropriate agencies. They should be prepared to take account of the environmental and resource impacts of development on such sites, and mitigate where appropriate. The actions outlined above should help with this.
19. PPS25: Development and Flood Risk promotes strategic consideration of flood risk at all stages of the planning process, to locate development away from flood risk whenever possible. PPS25 says that planners should use opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding. Regeneration of brownfield land, whether as part of a development or where the site is not suited to development, offers opportunities to improve the management of flood water and reduce risk to communities.
20. Through positive strategic planning, the use of brownfield land can achieve multiple benefits: reducing flood risk; enhancing the public realm; and encouraging biodiversity.
21. Creating sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) such as swales and retention ponds manages water at source to lower flood risk downstream whilst also providing pleasant open space to enhance the amenity of an area and encouraging biodiversity.

22. Open spaces, the connections between them and layout of roads and paths that are designed to transmit floodwater safely as part of a Surface Water Management Plan can play a major part in reducing flood risk.
23. We can make space for floodwater by using brownfield land for flood storage in the floodplain. This open space can be used for recreation when not holding floodwater and can support a variety of different habitats for wildlife.

#### **Case study – Diglis Water Worcester City Council**

Diglis Water is a mixed use development with over 400 dwellings on a brownfield site on the edge of the River Severn close to Worcester City Centre. It is an important regeneration site bringing derelict and contaminated land back into use.

The scheme was subject to a flood risk assessment (FRA) and an environmental impact assessment (EIA). Negotiations between the developers, Taylor Woodrow, the owners British Waterways, the Environment Agency and Worcester City Council has created a development which passes the stringent flood risk policies of the Council and improves the management of the floodplain.

Flood mitigation measures include the lowering of the sheet piling on the riverbank, lowering levels and setting back the line of development to create a riverside park. This will significantly improve flood flow at a pinch point in the flood plain. Buildings are at floor levels to accommodate risk and climate change and dry access has been provided.

Source: Communities and Local Government – [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

### Strand 3 – enhancing communities

Through the removal of blight and by ensuring the long term maintenance of restored land contributing to sustainability

**Improve local communities by tackling the visual and economic blight associated with small brownfield sites that may not be economic to reuse on their own (D)**

24. English Partnerships and CL:AIRE have been developing a pioneering new approach to remediating contaminated land. Entitled CLUSTER this initiative has been launched as a pilot with the potential to significantly speed up the restoration of groups of contaminated sites. It is an innovative approach with the potential to deliver substantial cost savings and environmental benefits.

25. This approach involves identifying the site (hub) to act as a centre for processing and treating contaminated soils. It is then possible to clean –up and redevelop a number of local smaller sites by sending contaminated soils to the hub site for treatment and then returning the cleaned up soils for reuse as part of the development works at the smaller sites. This is an exciting start and one which we hope will encourage the identification of sites in other areas where this approach can be replicated.

#### **Case study – Neepsend Lane**

The pilot (CLUSTER) site is situated at the former Neepsend gas works site on Neepsend Lane (Upper Don Valley, Sheffield). It is the first of its kind and an example of sustainable development in practice in the field of rehabilitation of contaminated land. It will also provide English Partnerships and Sheffield City Council with a valuable new tool to help regenerate sectors of the city faster and more cheaply with substantial environmental benefits.

Source: CL:AIRE – [www.claire.co.uk](http://www.claire.co.uk)

#### **Secure the treatment and long term maintenance of amenity land and other sites that are lacking development potential (E)**

26. The Land Restoration Trust was established as a pilot in 2004 by English Partnerships, the Forestry Commission, the Environment Agency and Groundwork in recognition of the need to ensure that land restored was maintained and that appropriate mechanisms were in place for the management of newly created open space. An evaluation of the work the Trust has undertaken in its pilot phase has reinforced Communities and Local Government's view of the need for the long term sustainable restoration and management of derelict land with no development potential. It also articulates the need to work with local delivery partnerships, community groups and local authorities to empower communities to have an active role in managing the local environment and creating sustainable and thriving communities. Government policy supports the transfer of assets to community trusts to help build and strengthen communities but it is crucial to ensure that these communities are not deterred from involvement and interaction with brownfield sites (suitable only for use as open space) due to the financial and environmental liabilities associated with brownfield land.
27. The Government published *A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests* its revised policy for woodlands and forestry in England, in June 2007. The Forestry Commission, in co-operation with Natural England, are leading the preparation of a Delivery Plan for England's Trees, Woods and Forests. Consultation with key stakeholders on a draft Delivery Plan will take place in the Spring and we anticipate publication of the final Plan in the Autumn.

28. Consideration of proposals for the integration of trees, woodland and associated green infrastructure within regeneration and brownfield restoration will be guided by the principles of the National Brownfield Strategy.

**Case study – The Newlands Project**

Newlands (New Economic Environments through Woodlands) is a unique £23 million scheme which transforms derelict land into thriving and durable community woodlands. With objectives to create more than 400 hectares (ha) of community woodland in the Mersey Belt, it supports the social and economic regeneration of the area, improves access to open space, improves public health, promotes community cohesion, reduces crime and antisocial behaviour and creates local enterprise.

This regeneration of brownfield land to woodland supports the aims of the England Forestry Strategy in providing open spaces for Tourism and recreation, improving quality of life, improving conditions for wildlife and assisting community development and neighbourhood renewal.

Source: Forestry Commission – [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

## Strand 4 – accreditation and skills

Meeting the need for appropriately qualified and experienced Brownfield practitioners with the public, private and voluntary sectors working together to disseminate best practice

**Strengthen and improve the process of preparing land for reuse through the accreditation of suitably qualified and experienced practitioners ensure that new practitioners are provided with the necessary skills and training (F)**

29. In order to bring forward brownfield sites a wide range of skills will be required. Government welcomes the work carried out by the Academy for Sustainable Communities and English Partnerships in assessing the skills gaps in the brownfield sector. An initial consultation entitled *Brownfield Skills Strategy Unlocking the Potential – enhancing brownfield regeneration skills* was issued in October 2007 and resulting from that a draft brownfield skills strategy is published alongside this document.

30. It is recognised that in order to meet the ambitious targets set out in the Housing Green Paper it is important that the Construction Industry has an adequately skilled workforce. Government is developing a skills strategy to meet these demands and will work closely with English Partnerships and the ASC to ensure that sufficient people with the right skills are available to deliver our ambitious brownfield agenda.
31. Government recognises the importance of the SiLC (Specialist in Land Condition) accreditation scheme. The scheme was established in response to the recommendations of the Urban Task Force to enable individuals who meet the defined requirements to join the register and achieve professional accreditation of the skills and competences they have. The scheme is a well recognised mechanism for demonstrating competency in brownfield remediation and while there is no statutory requirement to become a SiLC, the involvement of accredited professionals can give regulators greater confidence in the quality of proposed remediation projects. The SiLC PTP (Professional and Technical Panel) is developing proposals to increase the number of accredited SiLCs, and different levels of accreditation, to meet the future demands of the industry.
32. Government will work with the SiLC PTP to embed the scheme into the developing brownfield skills strategy. It is important to retain SiLC's independence, but it is acknowledged that some additional help may be required initially to allow the further development of the scheme and to align it more closely to the brownfield skills strategy.
33. We have asked English Partnerships and the Academy for Sustainable Communities to look at the level of resources required to support the development of brownfield skills, in partnership with academic institutions, industry and other stakeholders.

**Ensure a more joined up approach to brownfield land reuse on the part of Government and other stakeholders (G)**

34. The development of the National Brownfield Strategy and the successes that have already flowed from it has demonstrated the importance of making the right linkages between Government, the regulators and the practitioners both nationally and locally. In order to secure better coordination at the national level, Communities and Local Government and Defra have agreed to sponsor a new national body to take the place of the current English Partnerships Brownfield Forum and Defra's Contaminated Land Forum. Government will establish a new National Brownfield Forum. The Forum will bring together Whitehall Departments, the Environment Agency, the Health Protection Agency and industry stakeholders with the aim of promoting a more cohesive and inclusive approach to policy development and to encourage the exchange of best practice and knowledge. The Group will be co-chaired by Communities and Local Government and English Partnerships. The Forum will oversee the implementation of the National Brownfield Strategy and will report annually on progress.