SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION

VACANT AND DERELICT LAND REUSE: PROGRESS REPORT

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Ryden

01
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ryden was appointed by the Scottish Land Commission (SLC) to report on progress with the **reuse of Scotland's vacant & derelict land** (VDL). Building upon the reduction of VDL as a policy priority, SLC and SEPA's VDL Taskforce were established in 2018, Ryden reported in detail on Scotland's VDL in 2019, and the Taskforce's recommendations were published in 2020.

1.2 Annual assessments of VDL are provided by the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Surveys. When the VDL Taskforce was established in 2018 there was 11,037 hectares of VDL. The most recent survey (2022) reports and analyses 9,236 hectares of VDL. The country's industrial past and urban change mean that half of Scotland's population live within 1,000 metres of a derelict site. Ryden's 2019 report found that the positive, ongoing reuse of VDL – most commonly for housing - masked some long term, problematic derelict sites. The report's recommendations led to further work on assessing the harms and benefits of reusing VDL and the funding landscape to support reuse.

1.3 The 2020 VDL Taskforce recommendations sought the productive reuse of sites and a preventative approach to prevent an inflow of sites and an increase in new VDL. The recommendations covered sites information, regeneration, communities, public sector decision-making and land ownership, corporate social responsibility national policy, funding and taxation, biodiversity, small sites and green infrastructure.

1.4 The 2024 study presented in this report assesses whether there is evidence of a positive change in the reuse of VDL, as well as a reduction in the creation of new sites. The report is structured as follows:

- The policy context for VDL is reviewed in Section 2.
- Section 3 provides a review of the funding landscape to support the reuse of VDL.
- The VDL sites analysis including comparisons with the 2019 report is set out in Section 4. The analysis includes the reuse of VDL sites. It uses the annual SVDLS survey and supporting data kindly provided by the Scottish Government, and develops that using a range of quantitative and qualitative research.
- Section 5 provides a progress update on sites in focus:
    - a 60-site sample used in the 2019 report
    - the 'DUSTES', a classification which has been widely adopted to describe urban sites which have been derelict over the longer term, since 2000 or earlier
    - new case studies and a thematic summary of a wide range of existing SLC case studies
- Section 6 reports the finding of project consultations and an online survey of Scotland's local planning authorities who compile the VDL sites information.
- A summary of the research evidence and conclusions on Scotland's progress with its VDL sites are in Section 7.
- Appendices covering a sample of 60 sites (A), suggested sites from the survey (B) and the project's consultees and consultation topic guide (C).

02

POLICY CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

2.1 This section identifies where vacant and derelict land is a theme in national and regional economic strategies, planning policies and cross-cutting regeneration initiatives. The extent to which these promote and prioritise the reuse of VDL is discussed. As a comparison, a high level review of VDL policy in England is also provided in order to establish whether it is also evolving to become more of a priority.

ACHIEVING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: REGENERATION STRATEGY

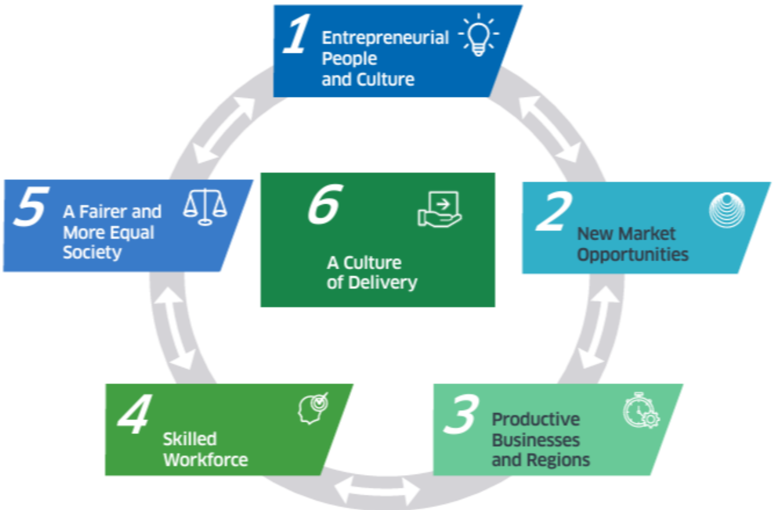
2.2 Published in 2011, the Scottish Government's Regeneration Strategy includes the vision of *"a Scotland where our most disadvantaged communities are supported and where all places are sustainable and promote well-being".* The Strategy recognises that this vision can only be delivered if regeneration is approached in a holistic way by addressing the economic, physical and social needs of our communities.

2.3 In terms of VDL, one of the key actions within the strategy was the introduction of new legislation on community empowerment. The Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) was introduced in 2015, creating important new opportunities for communities to drive local regeneration through Right to Buy. Since the Strategy was published, Local Place Plans have also been introduced in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and there is much greater importance placed on community-wealth building. These opportunities are not yet reflected in the strategy. One of the Taskforce's recommendations was for this strategy to be updated however a refresh has not yet occurred. There have however, been other policy developments which are discussed throughout this section.

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

2.4 In March 2022, the Scottish Government published its National Strategy for Economic Transformation. The ten-year strategy sets out the Government's priorities and actions for achieving a wellbeing economy, which is defined as one that delivers economic prosperity across social, economic, and environmental dimensions. To achieve this the Scottish Government emphasises the need to capitalise on key economic opportunities such as the transition to a net zero economy and the importance of reducing socio-economic inequalities between parts of the country. The ambition of the strategy is for 'Scotland to be successful' over the next decade and it focuses on 6 programmes of action shown in the Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION POLICY PROGRAMMES



Source: Scottish Government National Strategy for Economic Transformation 2022

2.5 VDL and buildings represent opportunities for investment which can help develop both the national and local economies. Former large scale power station or industrial sites can offer opportunities for new technologies associated with net zero and renewables. Investment in these locations can support a wellbeing economy by opening up opportunities for employment and training for local people. It can also strengthen local supply chains and support local businesses and communities. However, it is important to maximise the potential of all our assets including smaller VDL sites. These sites could instead be assets for their communities including providing local work space. A focus on place-based regeneration and land reuse is an important part of the circular economy as is a move towards more responsible land ownership.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

2.6 The Scottish Government has adopted the internationally recognised Community Wealth Building (CWB) approach to economic development as a practical means by which it achieve its wellbeing economy objectives outlined in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (see above).

2.7 CWB is designed to harness the economic leverage of local ‘anchor’ organisations (such as local councils, health, universities, colleges, housing associations, or large local private sector employers) to tackle long standing systematic challenges and structural inequalities within communities. It seeks to transform local and regional economic systems to enable more local communities and people to own, have a stake in, access and benefit from the wealth our economy generates. CWB can deliver more and better jobs, business growth, community-owned assets and shorter supply chains creating greater resilience and supporting net zero ambitions. CWB aims to ensure the economic system builds wealth and prosperity for everyone.

2.8 There has been significant progress in implementing CWB in Scotland over the past few years. Much of this has been led by local authorities, often in partnership with their community planning partners. The Scottish Government is working with partners in 5 pilot areas to build capacity and drive forward the implementation of CWB at local and regional level. Bringing VDL back into more productive reuse is part of the action plans for these areas and the Scottish Government has committed to supporting all of Scotland’s local authorities to develop their own CWB action plans. The Scottish Government is considered introducing CWB legislation to accelerate its delivery and address blockages identified by the areas and organisations leading implementation. A consultation exercise was conducted in 2023.

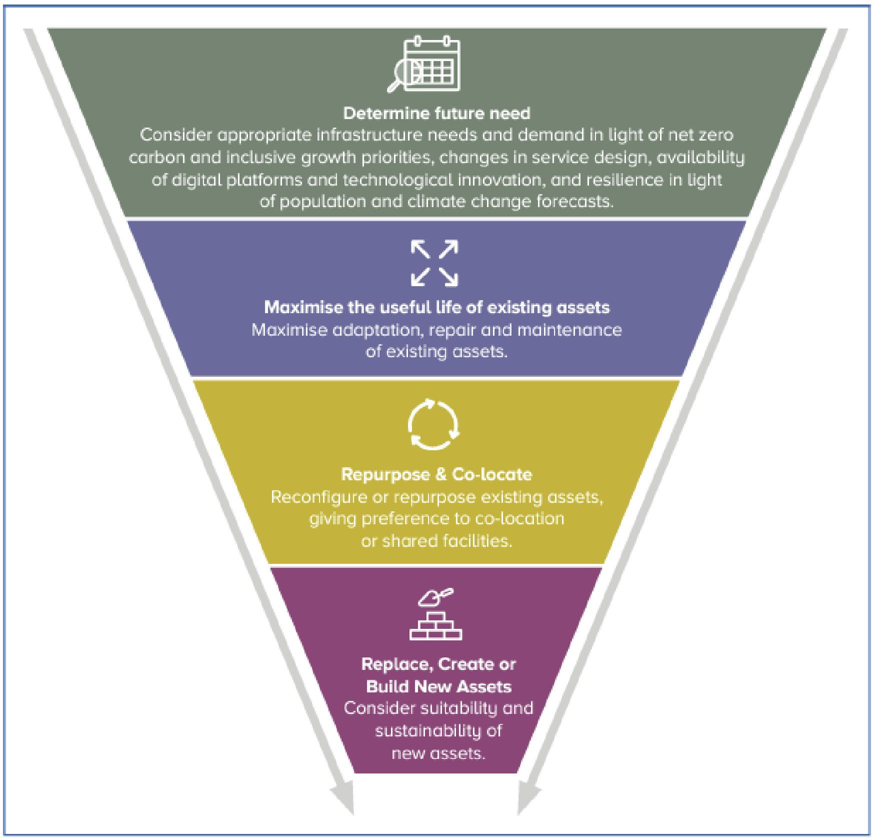
INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN 2021-2025

2.9 Infrastructure has an important role to play in the delivering Scotland’s economic objectives. The Infrastructure Investment Plan seeks to deliver the Scottish Government’s National Infrastructure Mission commitment to boost economic growth by increasing annual investment in infrastructure by 1% of 2017 Scottish GDP by 2025-26. Its 3 themes are: enabling net zero emissions and environmental sustainability; driving inclusive economic growth; and building resilient and sustainable places.

2.10 One of the key investments noted in the Plan is £50 million for a programme of investment supporting reuse of VDL as part of a fair, green recovery (this became the £50 million Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme described here in Section 3). Unfortunately, due to cuts to the Scottish Government budget this fund is currently suspended.

2.11 A further key part of the Plan is a new common investment hierarchy which prioritises enhancing and maintaining assets over new build, which it states is needed to protect the environment and ensure value for money. The Scottish Government-wide common hierarchy (see Figure 2) aims to aid planning and decision-making relating to public sector infrastructure investment over time. In practice, the hierarchy means that each step would need to be considered, in turn, before deciding on the right approach. For example, something new might only be built if there is still a demonstrable service need for a facility and an existing asset can’t be repurposed. In the future, a higher proportion of investment is likely to be directed towards the initial steps in the hierarchy than in previous years.

FIGURE 2: SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT HIERARCHY



Source: Scottish Government Infrastructure Investment Plan 2021-2025

2.12 This now places greater emphasis on land and building reuse and preventing a legacy of further abandoned sites. This is carried forward into National Planning Framework 4, below.

NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4

2.13 NPF4 is the national spatial strategy for Scotland. It sets spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy and focuses on creating places that are sustainable, liveable and productive. Its 6 overarching spatial principles are:

1. A just transition to net zero emissions by 2045
2. Conserving and recycling assets by making productive use of existing buildings and services and building a circular economy
3. Local living and improving community health and wellbeing
4. Compact urban growth to optimise the use of land to provide services and resources
5. Rebalanced development to create opportunities for communities and investment in areas of past decline
6. Rural revitalisation encouraging sustainable development.

2.14 The Framework includes national planning policy 9 in relation to brownfield land, VDL and empty buildings and aims to facilitate reuse and help reduce the need for greenfield development. The policy outcomes are:

- Development is directed to the right locations, maximising the use of existing assets and minimising additional land take

- The contribution of brownfield land to nature recovery is recognised and opportunities for use as productive greenspace are realised where appropriate

- Derelict buildings and spaces are regenerated to improve wellbeing and transform our places

2.15 Within their Local Development Plans (LDPs), local planning authorities are required to set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including VDL and empty buildings. Policy 9 states:

- Development proposals that will result in the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including VDL and buildings, whether permanent or temporary, will be supported. In determining whether the reuse is sustainable, the biodiversity value of brownfield land which has naturalised should be taken into account.

- Proposals on greenfield sites will not be supported unless the site has been allocated for development or the proposal is explicitly supported by policies in the LDP.

- Where land is known or suspected to be unstable or contaminated, development proposals will demonstrate that the land is, or can be made, safe and suitable for the proposed new use.

- Development proposals for the reuse of existing buildings will be supported, taking into account their suitability for conversion to other uses. Given the need to conserve embodied energy, demolition will be regarded as the least preferred option.

2.16 In addition, policy 18 aims to encourage, promote and facilitate an infrastructure first approach to land use planning, which puts infrastructure considerations at the heart of place making. LDPs and delivery programmes should follow this approach.

2.17 A number of the national development priorities also cut across the theme of VDL as follows:

- Central Scotland Green Network – a green infrastructure project which could see the reuse of VDL and buildings for greening and nature-based solutions

- Stranraer Gateway – place based regeneration of this important gateway town including reuse of VDL and buildings, including the regeneration of Blackparks industrial estate

- Clyde Mission – an area of under-utilised land assets and long standing inequalities. Proposals seek to bring forward assets and sites that are ready for redevelopment to sustain a range of uses.

- Hunterston Strategic Asset – re-purposing of Hunterston port and the former nuclear power station site

- Chapelcross Power Station Redevelopment – reuse of a significant area of brownfield land

Other important projects are noted at VDL sites including Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc (Dundee), the Eden project (St Andrews), Ravenscraig (North Lanarkshire) and Ardeer (North Ayrshire).

2.18 Overall, NPF4 encourages the redevelopment of VDL, helping to reduce the negative impacts these sites can have on communities. As recommended by the Taskforce, there is now a stronger focus within Scottish Planning Policy on place-based regeneration, VDL and long-term stuck sites.

COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER

2.19 The 2023-24 Programme for Government re-iterates the Scottish Government's commitment to reform and modernise compulsory purchase order (CPO) legislation starting with the appointment of an expert advisory group during this financial year. This Programme also notes that the Scottish Government will continue to consider the justification for, and practical operation of compulsory sales orders (CSOs).

PLACE PRINCIPLE

2.20 The Scottish Government and COSLA have agreed to adopt the Place Principle to help overcome organisational and sectoral boundaries, to encourage better collaboration and community involvement, and improve the impact of combined energy, resources and investment.

2.21 The principle was developed by partners in the public and private sectors, the third sector and communities, to help them develop a clear vision for place. It promotes a shared understanding of place, and the need to take a more collaborative approach to services and assets to achieve better outcomes for people and communities. The principle encourages and enables local flexibility to respond to issues and circumstances in different places.

2.22 Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose and is at the heart of addressing the needs, and realising the full potential, of communities. Places are shaped by the way resources, services and assets are directed and used by the people who live in and invest in them. A more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enables better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.

2.23 All those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create more successful places.

TOWN CENTRE FIRST PRINCIPLE

2.24 The Town Centre First principle was agreed between the Scottish Government and COSLA in 2014 marking a shift in public policy towards town centres. It asks that government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities put the health of town centres at the heart of decision making. It seeks to deliver the best local outcomes, align policies and target available resources to prioritise town centre sites, encouraging vibrancy, equality and diversity.

2.25 Taking local needs and circumstances into account, the Town Centre First Principle is about:

- Adopting an approach to decisions that considers the vibrancy of town centres as a starting point
- Ensuring that the health of town centres features in decision-making processes
- Open, measured and transparent decision making that takes account of medium to longer-term impacts on town centres
- Recognising that town centre locations are not always suitable and making sure that the reasons for locating elsewhere are transparent and backed by evidence

2.26 VDL can have a big impact on town centres. Quite apart from potential safety concerns around empty buildings or gap sites, neglected land and buildings can deter investment and are damaging to community pride and individual mental wellbeing. It is important that such sites are prioritised and brought back into productive reuse.

TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN REVIEW

2.27 The independent report ‘A New Future for Scotland’s Town Centres’ was delivered by the Town Centre Action Plan Review Group and published in February 2021. The Town Centre Action Plan Review is the joint response to this report from the Scottish Government and COSLA. It is a call to action and sets out some of the ways individuals can do their parts, locally and nationally, in rebuilding, re-energising and reimagining our towns to meet place and country ambitions. The response reaffirms the commitment to the Town Centre First Principle (above).

2.28 The review supports town centre living as a productive reuse for brownfield sites and the re-purposing of existing properties, locating homes closer to services and facilities and supporting 20-minute neighbourhoods. This includes establishing a new fund for local authorities to bring empty homes and potential empty homes back into residential use and to convert suitable empty properties in neighbourhoods and town centres. There is also continued support for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme to deliver affordable housing in town centres.

2.29 The delivery of new green infrastructure in town centres tackling persistent VDL sites is also noted with funding to be provided for pocket parks and green space in town centres. There is also support for the Place Based Investment Programme, including the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund which can act as a catalyst to leverage other funds to enable the acquisition of properties and land/assets.

2.30 The Action Plan seeks to maximise the opportunities for town and neighbourhood centres arising from a shift to home and near to home working as a result of the pandemic. This includes making use of existing vacant space and buildings on, or close to, town centres to create safe accessible local work space and increase diversity and footfall in towns.

2.31 The Action Plan also states that partners will seek to engage with the UK Government to review VAT treatment for refurbishment of existing buildings.

MORE HOMES AT THE HEART OF GREAT PLACES: TOWN CENTRE LIVING

2.32 This report, produced by Scottish Futures Trust in 2023, notes that despite policy support for town centre living, there are a wide range of issues and constraints that make projects difficult to deliver. This includes:

- The challenge of meeting rising building standards in existing properties makes it ever more difficult to deliver town centre living. The requirements for new homes to achieve digital, carbon, quality and other standards is a major barrier to the repurposing of vacant and under-used spaces for housing.

- A lack of data against which developers (public and private) can understand the type and extent of housing demand from occupiers

- The challenge of land reuse when investment decisions are based on financial return and a proposal to adopt a wellbeing approach

UPDATE TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN 2018-2032: SECURING A GREEN RECOVERY ON A PATH TO NET ZERO

2.33 This document updates the 2018 Climate Change Plan. Since that Plan, the Scottish Government has set new ambitious targets to end Scotland's contribution to climate change by 2045. It has committed to reduce emissions by 75% by 2030 (compared with 1990) and to reach net zero by 2045. This Plan sets out the Government's approach to delivering its climate change targets and focuses on the period up to 2032.

2.34 Reusing Scotland's legacy of VDL could make a huge contribution to the country's efforts to tackle climate change. Traditional arguments for urban densification and the role this could play in reducing transport emissions are convincing. But the benefits go far beyond this. Repurposing vacant spaces for community growing could help significantly reduce food miles, while simultaneously enhancing physical and mental wellbeing for local residents. There could also be the potential for VDL sites to generate renewable energy.

2.35 The £50 million Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme is a key part of the Climate Change Plan, recognising that sustained investment and effort is needed to unlock these sites for appropriate reuse and that these sites should be prioritised when seeking opportunities to develop the built environment and tackle climate change. As noted, this fund is currently suspended.

COMMUNITY-LED CLIMATE ACTION

2.36 The transition to net zero will impact on people and communities. Encouraging transformational change across communities and supporting them to be climate ready is vital for the just transition to net zero.

2.37 Community climate action hubs provide a strategic regional approach with 2 pathfinder hubs identified in 2020. The hubs network is being expanded across Scotland in 2023 to 2024, backed by £4.3 million from the Scottish Government. The hub network now consists of 13 hubs with a number of hubs in development.

2.38 A network of climate action towns is also being developed and aims to give a voice to communities in areas with little historical engagement on climate action as part of a fair and just transition to net zero. Communities and wider stakeholders work together to target local systemic barriers, deliver local plans, enable further collaborative working, and develop methodology for effective engagement and delivery of climate action. Improving neighbourhoods by bringing local vacant and derelict sites back into use can form part of a community climate adaptation route map. Architecture & Design Scotland, who are working with the climate action towns, have recently published a report and toolkit which is aimed at other towns and communities that would like to get involved in place-based climate action.

NATURESCOT: DELIVERING SCOTLAND'S AMBITION TO SECURE POSITIVE EFFECTS FOR BIODIVERSITY

2.39 National policies and strategies for nature are being recalibrated to respond to the twin and interlinked challenges of the climate emergency as well as a biodiversity crisis.

2.40 Scotland's planning system and development have an important contribution to make towards addressing the global biodiversity crisis and this is reflected in NPF4. This states that all development will contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, including where relevant restoring degraded habitats. Proposals for local development will include appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in accordance with national and local guidance.

2.41 For national and major developments, or those subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), proposals will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that it will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks, so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention. Only when actions result in biodiversity being left in a better state than before development are positive effects secured.

2.42 Vacant and derelict land can be of value for biodiversity, contain important landscape features or provide opportunities for informal recreation and play. Prior to reusing vacant and derelict land, consideration should be given to the nature that has colonised the sites, its landscape features which may be worth retaining and how people might have used these areas whilst they have lain undeveloped. For such sites, there are potential opportunities for long-term regeneration, to improve health and wellbeing, help us tackle climate change, create more resilient communities and enable more sustainable place making. Using nature-based solutions to rehabilitate these sites would also help to optimise the multiple benefits delivered.

PUBLIC HEALTH SCOTLAND STRATEGIC PLAN

2.43 Public Health Scotland's 3-year plan: 2022-2025 has a vision of a Scotland where everybody thrives. Specifically, it aims to improve life expectancy in Scotland and close the gap between life expectancy in the wealthiest and poorest areas. Poverty, poor-quality housing, low-paid work, unhealthy environments, access to services and unstable jobs all impact on people's physical and mental health.

2.44 Where people live shapes their health and this includes the buildings, streets, public spaces and natural spaces that make up the social environment of neighbourhoods. Addressing urban dereliction could play a major role in addressing health inequalities and improving wellbeing. Bringing these sites back into use could help provide new homes for people who need them, provide space for growing food or create new urban green spaces. Public Health Scotland will co-ordinate and manage a public health support hub tailored to community planning partners and local authorities with the aim of supporting their contribution to the national public health priorities and also to help tackle specific locally determined priorities.

BEST START, BRIGHT FUTURES: TACKLING CHILD POVERTY DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2026

2.45 Tackling child poverty is a national mission of the Scottish Government. In order to successfully tackle the issue there is a requirement for the transformation of our economy, further investment in key infrastructure such as childcare and transport, and provision of the right high-quality support at the right time in order to help families to move out of poverty. The Delivery Plan notes that no one action in isolation can make the change needed. It is the cumulative impact of action across sectors, by all partners, in all parts of Scotland, which will make the difference for children and families.

2.46 Key actions within the Delivery Plan sit under the following 3 headings which form part of Scotland's offer to families:

A. Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work

B. Maximise the support available to families to live dignified lives that meet their basic needs

C. Supporting the next generation to thrive

2.47 Under Part B, a transformational approach to people and place is proposed. As already noted, the places we live have a direct impact on our health and wellbeing, and on the environment. Place based regeneration therefore seeks to be both a policy of prevention and of transformation by addressing the key issues at a local level that contribute to poverty and inequality. Scottish Government investment in programmes such as the Place Based Investment Programme and Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme will enable the development of core community infrastructure. It is proposed that this will create new community assets, bring existing assets into community use and develop land for new use. These programmes directly create new jobs, provide spaces for community organisations to deliver activities their communities need.

FAIR WORK FIRST GUIDANCE

2.48 Fair Work First is the Scottish Government's flagship policy for driving high quality and fair work, and workforce diversity across the labour market in Scotland by applying fair work criteria to grants, other funding and public contracts being awarded by and across the public sector, where it is relevant to do so.

2.49 The default position is that all grant recipients awarded a public sector grant on or after 1 July 2023 will be required to pay at least the real Living Wage and provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice as a minimum standard. This includes all grants associated with Vacant and Derelict Land. The Fair Work First criteria seek to address particular challenges in Scotland's labour market, to make a real difference to people and their communities, business and other organisations and the economy.

POLICY APPROACH IN ENGLAND

DEFINITIONS

2.50 In England, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities collects land use statistics showing how different land uses are distributed across 28 categories and 13 groups split between developed and non-developed land uses. Vacant land is defined as land which was previously developed and could be redeveloped without further demolition or treatment. For example, cleared sites with no fixed structures or building foundations and including temporary uses such as car parking or playgrounds with no fixed structures.

2.51 Under this definition (which differs from the Scottish one) 0.2% of land in England is classified as vacant land. This equates to 26,092 hectares[1].

2.52 Although a 'derelict land' category previously existed, it was dropped as part of the methodology changes that took effect from 2013-14 for the land use change statistics.

BROWNFIELD LAND REGISTERS

2.53 In England, Brownfield Land Registers provide up-to-date and consistent information on sites that local authorities consider to be appropriate for residential development having regard to the criteria set out in regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017. Local planning authorities will be able to trigger a grant of permission in principle for residential development for sites in their registers where they follow the required procedures.

2.54 In order to be classified as brownfield land, the land should:

- Have an area of at least 0.25 hectares or be capable of supporting at least 5 dwellings
- Be suitable for residential development (allocated in a local plan, has planning permission or permission in principle for residential development or is in the opinion of the local authority appropriate for residential development)
- Be available for residential development (owner/developer has expressed an intention to develop the land or in the opinion of the local authority there are no issues which might prevent residential development taking place)
- Residential development of the land is achievable (within 15 years based on local planning authority opinion)

2.55 Sites which meet the above criteria are entered into Part 1 of a Brownfield Land Register. Part 2 of a Brownfield Land Register is a subset of Part 1. Part 2 will comprise only those sites in Part 1 that the local planning authority has decided that the land would be suitable for a grant of permission in principle for residential development.

2.56 The results of an analysis of 344 brownfield registers by CPRE, published in November 2022[2] shows that the amount of brownfield land in England has increased by 6% compared with 2021 figures. According to the report, available brownfield land covers 27,342 hectares, compared to 21,500 sites on 26,250 hectares in 2021. It states that this land has the capacity to provide land for 1.2 million homes. Planning permission has been given for 45% of the land, and 550,000 homes with planning permission are awaiting development.

2.57 The CPRE report points out that on the whole, the former industrial heartlands, which are most in need of levelling up, are least likely to have planning permission to redevelop brownfield land. CPRE also demonstrates large amounts of land that can be recycled within major cities, taking the pressure off greenbelt land.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.58 In England, the National Planning Policy Framework was revised in response to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill sets out the government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans can provide for sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner.

[1] England has a land area of just over 13,046,000 hectares (Land Use Statistics: England 2022)
[2] CPRE, State of Brownfield 2022, November 2022

2.59 At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Local Plans are required to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, which includes ensuring that land can come forward where it is needed.

2.60 The Framework states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.

2.61 As such, planning policies and decisions should:

- Recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production
- Give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;
- Promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively

2.62 Local planning authorities, and other plan-making bodies, should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, including suitable sites on brownfield registers using the full range of powers available to them. This should include identifying opportunities to facilitate land assembly, supported where necessary by compulsory purchase powers, where this can help to bring more land forward for meeting development needs and/or secure better development outcomes.

2.63 To support the reuse of brownfield land for housing, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount[3].

2.64 The Framework attaches great importance to Green Belts. Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This should include ensuring that as much use as possible has been made of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land.

BROWNFIELD LAND RELEASE FUND

2.65 At the Spending Review 2021, the UK Chancellor announced a £1.8 billion package of investment to regenerate communities and level-up the country, unlocking new homes on derelict and underused brownfield land.

2.66 As part of this, up to £180 million Brownfield Land Release Fund 2 (BLRF2) capital grant funding is available to all English councils to support the release of council-owned brownfield land for housing. The first two rounds of BLRF2 awarded almost £100m over 2022/23 and 2023/24 to release land for almost 8,600 homes by March 2027. The third and final round of BLRF2 is now open, offering up to £80 million for English councils.

2.67 Recent funding examples from Round 2 include:

[3] Equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of the existing buildings. This does not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned.

- Hull – £980,000 to release land at a former school site to deliver 99 new homes for affordable rent as part of the city's regeneration drive.
- Newcastle upon Tyne – £1.82 million to boost wider regeneration by releasing a complex site to deliver 146 new build-to-rent homes for communities in Benwell and Scotswood.
- Bognor Regis – £628,000 will unlock an £8 million scheme to rejuvenate a listed town centre building, delivering 35 new homes and improved retail space to support local regeneration.
- Sunderland – £1.81m to transform and remediate a former riverside industrial site to create a new urban quarter at Farringdon Row in Sunderland delivering 140 new high qualities low carbon, build-to-rent homes.
- Rochdale – £271,000 funding has unlocked delivery of 14 purpose-built homeless and supported accommodation units on a former car park and garage site.
- Somerset – £213,800 to demolish existing rundown garages and deliver 11 low-carbon one, two and three bedroom affordable homes subject to securing planning permission.

BROWNFIELD INFRASTRUCTURE AND LAND FUND

2.68 This fund is available to both the public and private sector to unlock strategic housing sites including housing-led, mixed use opportunities where brownfield, infrastructure or land projects face delivery and/or viability challenges. The Fund is operated by Homes England and up to £1 billion is available. Projects are assessed and prioritised based on the greatest potential for economic growth, value for money, potential for early delivery and scale. Other funds are available for house building however this particular fund targets brownfield land and targets the private sector as well as the public.

THE ENGLAND TREES ACTION PLAN 2021-2024

2.69 The UK Government has committed to increasing tree planting rates across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this Parliament. To achieve this, the UK Government intends to spend over £500 million of the £640 million Nature for Climate Fund on trees and woodlands in England between 2020 and 2025 to support this ambition. Specific actions are informed by the England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024.

2.70 In relation to VDL, the plan states that there is a need to revolutionise where to look for suitable land to become woodland to include vacant and derelict landscapes. Vacant and derelict sites such as landfills and former mines are often economically and environmentally degraded. In some locations, changing vacant and derelict landscapes to woodland habitats would provide cleaner air, deliver green jobs, and benefit communities and therefore the plan seeks to explore options for increasing tree establishment on this type of land in the future. The specific action is to research the potential to remediate and restore different types of vacant and derelict land to woodland, with a view to supporting such projects at scale in the future.

2.71 However, in 2023, it was noted that there was a policy decision that the vacant and derelict land project was not ready to move forward to delivery as more research, piloting and commercial development was found to be needed[4]. One of the difficulties experienced has been quantifying vacant and derelict land as local authorities define it differently. However, based on mapping work and engagement with landowners, it's believed there is a significant amount. Planting 5,000 hectares of woodland on vacant and derelict land should be achievable according to DEFRA. If evidence from the pilots of the vacant and derelict land scheme support it, a bid will be made in the next Spending Review for funding to deliver the new scheme.

[4] DEFRA, Departmental response to questions on (1) Supplementary Estimate 2022-23, (2) Post Implementation Reviews and (3) Defra Staff Resources (as requested in letter to Defra Secretary of State dated 26 April 2023)

SUMMARY

2.72 Prioritising the reuse of vacant and derelict was already a policy priority at the time of the Task Force and baseline analysis. The review above shows that is now more clearly embedded not only in economic strategy and planning policy through NPF4's national priorities and direction to LDPs to set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of VDL, but also cross-cutting for example through health, communities, town centres, place, poverty and fair work, and biodiversity.

2.73 Moreover, both planning and infrastructure are focused on slowing the creation of new vacant and derelict land by maintaining and reusing existing assets.

2.74 The regeneration strategy has not been updated but did set in train community empowerment and place planning which do positively affect VDL, with for example community wealth building action plans prepared to date all seeking the productive reuse of VDL.

2.75 The approach to VDL in England is not directly comparable due to different land use definitions around types and sizes of sites. There is a strong policy focus and weight on identifying brownfield sites for homes and other needs, to both reuse vacant land and take the pressure off greenbelt land. This policy focus is supported by brownfield land release funding across a variety of housing tenures and types. Interestingly, public sector funding for brownfield housing sites is also available for the private sector in England. There is not a comparable private sector offering in Scotland currently following the pause in funding for the Housing Infrastructure Fund. The current funding landscape is discussed further in the following section.

03

FUNDING LANDSCAPE

INTRODUCTION

3.1 According to the VDL Register 2022, where VDL was brought back into use 11% used public sector funding only, 50% used private sector funding only and 21% involved a mix of public and private funding[5].

3.2 The public sector funding landscape in Scotland has seen significant changes, particularly post-Brexit. This section will review the main national funding sources supporting the reuse of VDL, including the VDL Fund, VDL Investment Programme and the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund and the projects they have enabled. Other funding streams which also directly fund the reuse of sites are also covered. Unfortunately, at the present time due to Scottish Government budget constraints the VDL Investment Programme and the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund are currently suspended.

3.3 In 2019, Ryden produced a report for the Scottish Land Commission which fully reviewed funding options for VDL. This report was then updated in 2022[6]. This section does not fully repeat that work but focuses on the main funds which directly address the reuse of VDL sites.

OVERVIEW

3.4 In recent years, the wider funding landscape within Scotland has seen significant changes. Britain's exit from the European Union in January 2020 means it cannot participate in future rounds of European Union Structural Funds. These included the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund for which the Scottish Government was the managing authority. In its commitment to fully replacing European funding levels, the UK Government has introduced several new funding streams which are applicable to the whole of the UK and means they are now more actively involved in economic development in Scotland than was the case previously.

3.5 The Covid-19 pandemic also affected the funding landscape. A number of funders had to change their funding objectives to simply maintain business-as-usual and a number of one-off emergency funds were created by the Scottish Government. As intimated in the previous section, the policy landscape has also moved on. In Scotland, there is an increased focus on net zero and other agendas including community wealth building and natural capital which has resulted in a number of funders reviewing their objectives and re-casting grant programmes.

3.6 A positive introduction, based on the recommendations of the VDL Taskforce, has been the £50m VDL Investment Programme which was introduced by the Scottish Government in 2021. This new fund is available to all local authorities and now operates in addition to the c. £7.6m pa VDL Fund which targets the five local authorities most affected by VDL. The fund is currently suspended.

UK GOVERNMENT

LEVELLING UP FUND

3.7 In early 2022, the UK Government published its Levelling Up strategy. The strategy acknowledged inequalities between parts of the UK and established a set of missions to address these. The objective was to allow everyone the same opportunities in regard to health, education, work, and life chances no matter which part of the UK they live in. A common theme across several of these missions is the need to create more 'high quality' jobs outside London. To achieve this the strategy recognises a need to attract business investment to other parts of the UK.

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[5] Where the funding source was known

[6] Scottish Land Commission (2022) Review of the Funding Sources for the Re-use of VDL, 2022 Update, Ryden

3.8 As part of the levelling up agenda, the UK Government is investing £4.8 billion in infrastructure through the Levelling Up Fund over 5 years. The aims of this fund are to support the regeneration of town centres and high streets, upgrade local transport, and invest in cultural and heritage assets. £800m from the fund was ring-fenced for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Following 3 competitive bidding rounds, awards have been made in Scotland across 23 projects totalling almost £431 million. The details of the funding awards in Scotland are provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1: LEVELLING UP FUND AWARDS – SCOTLAND

	LOCAL AUTHORITY	PROJECT TITLE	AMOUNT AWARDED
ROUND 1	Aberdeen City	Aberdeen City Centre Master Plan	£20,000,000
	City of Edinburgh	Granton Gas Holder (Waterfront Cultural Regeneration)	£16,482,845
	Falkirk	Westfield Roundabout (Transport Infrastructure Improvement Project)	£20,000,000
	Glasgow City	Pollok Stables and Sawmill (Heritage and Community Centre Development)	£13,050,500
	Highland	Inverness Zero Carbon Cultural Regeneration	£19,856,253
	North Ayrshire	Infrastructure Improvements on B714 (Transport Infrastructure Improvement Project)	£23,693,443
	Renfrewshire	AMIDS South (Travel Links Improvement Project)	£38,725,218
ROUND 2	Aberdeenshire Council	Cultural Tides: North Sea Connections in Aberdeenshire	£20,000,000
	Dumfries and Galloway Council	Reactivating Galloway	£17,698,660
	Dundee City Council	Green Transport Hub & Spokes	£14,400,000
	East Ayrshire Council	Cultural Kilmarnock	£20,000,000
	East Lothian Council	Former Cockenzie Power Station Site Remediation and Preparation Works	£11,267,841
	Fife Council	River Leven Regeneration, Glenrothes and Central Fife	£19,410,000
	Inverclyde Council	Greenock Central	£19,390,000
	North Lanarkshire Council	Delivering on Cumbernauld's Town Vision	£9,225,000
	Shetland Islands Council*	Fair Isle Ferry Infrastructure Project	£26,762,313
	Stirling Council	Stirling Forthside Redevelopment	£19,052,300
ROUND 3	Dumfries and Galloway	Dumfries and Galloway Transport Bid	£13,752,000
	Dumfries and Galloway (with Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire)	Three Rivers Active Tourism Project	£22,809,416
	Glasgow City	Drumchapel Town Centre Regeneration	£14,979,646
	Moray	Elgin City Centre Masterplan: Levelling Up Moray	£18,291,000
	North Ayrshire* (with South Ayrshire)	Levelling Up For Ayrshire: Commercial and Low Carbon Infrastructure	£37,456,821
	South Lanarkshire	National Business District: Shawfield - Remediation and Development	£14,637,600

Source: UK Government/Ryden

3.9 A number of the projects awarded funding focus on large areas of VDL. This includes the Granton Gas Holder in Edinburgh, AMIDS South in Renfrewshire, Cockenzie in East Lothian, land around the River Leven in Fife, Stirling Forthside and Shawfield, South Lanarkshire. Whilst the Levelling Up Fund does not focus specifically on VDL, in delivering its regeneration priorities it will clearly have an impact and is a new entrant to the funding landscape in Scotland. Whilst funding has been provided for these sites, many are complex and although there are active proposals it will take time for them to fully come to fruition and be removed from the VDL Register.

3.10 For example, the Granton Gas Holder project will restore and open to the public, the B listed structure. The successful implementation of this project will unlock the wider regeneration of Granton Waterfront to deliver a new coastal town for Edinburgh and the region. Granton Waterfront is a post-industrial site which suffers from high levels of contamination, steep topography and made ground. Construction ground to a halt in 2008 due to the financial crisis and in 2018, the Council purchased the former gas works from National Grid to accelerate regeneration. A condition of this purchase was the restoration of this historic structure. Together with other landholdings in the area, the council now owns around 50 hectares of developable land. In 2020, a development framework was approved by the Council

Source: Scottish Construction Now

for the regeneration of the area. Delivery will be made up of four key phases, with the gas holder restoration, forming part of phase 1 which over the next few years will bring over 788 homes, 4,000 m2 of business and creative workspace, a new primary school and medical centre and a district heating energy network. Strong active travel connections are also part of the plans for the area. Granton is an extensive area of VDL which Levelling Up Fund monies will help to address.

3.11 In addition to the Levelling Up Fund awards noted above in September 2023, the UK Government announced that it would also be awarding funding to 55 towns across the UK. Each town will benefit from £20 million of investment over the next 10 years with the following 7 towns in Scotland awarded funding:

- Greenock
- Irvine
- Kilmarnock
- Coatbridge
- Clydebank
- Dumfries
- Elgin

3.12 This funding is to be used to *"regenerate high streets and tackle antisocial behaviour"*. A Towns Taskforce, sitting in the Department for Levelling Up, will help the towns to develop their plans and advise on how best to take advantage of government policies, unlock private and philanthropic investment and work with communities. This is also likely to have an impact on VDL in these towns. The funding awards in Greenock and Kilmarnock are in addition to the funding previously obtained and shown in Table 1.

SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

3.13 A further part of the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda is the £2.6 billion UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The Fund is non-competitive and allocations are provided straight to local places across Scotland, England, Wales and North Ireland to invest in 3 local priorities; communities and place, support for local businesses and people and skills. VDL is relevant under the communities and place priority. The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK.

3.14 Allocations are designed to ensure a real-terms match of EU structural funds based on a formula which considers population and need. The UKSPF is a 3-year initiative which ends in March 2025.

3.15 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities oversees the Fund at UK level and in Scotland local government is given responsibility for developing an investment plan for delivery of the Fund. Funding breakdowns for the Regional Economic Partnership areas are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: UKSPF ALLOCATIONS – SCOTLAND

REGIONAL ECOMOMIC PARTNERSHIPS	CORE UKSPF	MULTIPLY	TOTAL
Aberdeen City Region	£12,785,682	£2,668,856	£15,454,538
Ayrshire	£14,355,916	£2,996,623	£17,352,539
South of Scotland	£10,047,668	£2,097,329	£12,144,997
Edinburgh and South East Scotland	£33,211,244	£6,932,444	£40,143,688
Forth Valley	£10,429,076	£2,176,943	£12,606,019
Glasgow City Region	£61,116,874	£12,757,406	£73,874,280
Highlands and Islands	£19,967,429	£4,167,958	£24,135,387
Tay Cities Region	£13,446,294	£2,806,751	£16,253,045

Source: UK Government/Ryden

3.16 A review of local authority investment plans notes numerous proposals for investment in town centre assets and aesthetics including VDL and buildings however the detail on the specific assets is not provided at this stage.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

PLACE BASED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (PBIP)

3.17 Announced in February 2021, the PBIP is being used to link and align place-based funding initiatives within the Scottish Government. Its aim is to ensure that all place based investments are shaped by the needs and aspirations of local communities. It includes the continued delivery of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund as well as Place Based Investment Programme funding to local government, and the ongoing sponsorship of Clyde Gateway. The Programme is underpinned by the Place Principle. The main objectives are:

- Link and align place-based initiatives and establish a coherent local framework to implement the Place Principle
- Support place policy ambitions such as town centre revitalisation, community led regeneration, 20-minute neighbourhoods and Community Wealth Building
- Ensure that all place-based investments are shaped by the needs and aspirations of local communities
- Accelerate ambitions for net zero, wellbeing and inclusive economic development, tackling inequality and disadvantage, community involvement and ownership

3.18 The PBIP is supported by an initial £325 million capital over 5 years (commencing 2021/22) with funds being allocated to local authorities by the Scottish Government. Allocations are based on a weighted formula based on the number of towns and population in a local authority area and deprivation indices.

3.19 The PBIP aims to invest in centres or neighbourhoods connected with 2 categories of settlement:

- Rural settings with smaller populations, dependent on larger geographical areas for support, for example:
    - Small Towns with a limited range of non-specialised facilities
    - Villages with very limited, or non-existent, access to facilities
- Urban settings with sizeable populations, for example:
    - Regional Capitals with extensive provision supporting a wide geographical area
    - Larger Towns with a comprehensive range of dedicated services and facilities.
    - Individual Neighbourhoods with limited access to relevant local provision.

3.20 Local authorities can use this funding for existing projects along with emerging projects from its communities. Many local authorities have adopted a bidding process to enable this. Whilst the focus of the fund is on place based regeneration this can often impact VDL.

3.21 East Ayrshire Council has provided £120,000 from its PBIP allocation to the Corner, Darvel in the Irvine Valley. This project is being managed by the Darvel & Area Regeneration Team, a non-profit charity, which sought to repurpose a former derelict brownfield site on the main road to create a garden and covered market place for use by the community and local businesses. The development has replaced an old derelict building located in the centre of the village with a community-developed multi-purpose space for events, activities and gatherings.

VACANT AND DERELICT LAND FUND

3.22 The Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF) is one of two dedicated VDL funding mechanisms provided by the Scottish Government which aim to tackle long-term vacant and derelict land. Its objectives are to:

- Stimulate economic growth
- Create jobs
- Promote environmental justice and improved quality of life
- Support communities to flourish and tackle inequalities

3.23 It is an element of the local government budget settlement, as agreed with Scottish Government and has been in operation since 2005/6. It focuses on projects that promote innovation in both temporary and longer term greening techniques for vacant and derelict land sites.

3.24 Funding is limited to sites that have been vacant for at least 15 years and are between 0.1ha and 99ha in size, with a preference of Council ownership or a landowner agreement in place. It cannot be used on housing or infrastructure projects such as transport or flooding.

3.25 Five local authorities receive funding based on their extent of VDL sites and levels of deprivation:

- Glasgow City Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- Fife Council

3.26 For the last few years, these local authorities have shared a total funding pot of c. £7.6 million per annum however in 2024-25 this will drop to £5 million. Local Delivery Plans are required to be submitted to the Scottish Government to allow Ministerial approval of the expenditure of the funding.

3.27 According to the 2022 VDL Register, the VDLF made either a partial or full contribution to the removal of 14 hectares (7 sites). The figure for the previous year was 31 hectares (10 sites). Since its inception in 2005/6, the VDLF has contributed (either fully or partially) to the reuse of 458 hectares (in total) of previously derelict land across Dundee, Fife, Glasgow City, Highland, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire[7].

3.28 An example of a project funded by the VDLF is an active travel initiative in Ravenscraig. As part of North Lanarkshire Council's allocation under the 2021/22 VDLF, £500,000 was used to create a new north/south active travel route between Craigneuk and Ravenscraig Park/Sports Centre. This provides a direct, off-road route for cycling, walking and wheeling from the south of Ravenscraig to the facilities within it. Lighting, CCTV, seating and planting are also part of the route. This project was completed in 2022 and following further funding from the VDLF an east/west route has also now been opened between Craigneuk and New College Lanarkshire's Motherwell Campus as Ravenscraig. In addition to the VDLF monies, funding was also received from the

Source: North Lanarkshire Council

[7] The list of eligible local authorities has changed over the years since the VDLF's inception

Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme, Strathclyde Passenger Transport and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

VACANT AND DERELICT LAND INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

3.29 Launched in 2021, the low carbon VDLIP is a capital programme scheduled over 5 years to help with tackling persistent vacant and derelict land, supporting place based approaches to delivering regeneration and sustainable inclusive growth, as part of a 'just transition' to net-zero. The Fund is worth c£50m over its lifetime however at the present time the fund is suspended.

3.30 The VDLIP was set up following a series of recommendations from the VDL Taskforce and is based around four pillars of action:

- Sustained place-based approaches
- Urban green spaces
- Community-led regeneration
- Low carbon developments and renewables

3.31 The Fund is open to all of Scotland's local authorities and Clyde Gateway URC and follows a 2-stage process. At stage 1, projects should demonstrate that they meet the programme aims (above), can spend or commit funding by the specified date (depending on round), have involved the community in their design and will help to achieve net-zero targets.

3.32 Applicants can apply for 100% of costs however projects that demonstrate match funding are looked upon favourably by the judging investment panel. More than one application can be made however, as there are limited funds available it is requested that applicants are realistic and do not include projects still as feasibility stage. Multi-year project proposals (up to 2026) will be accepted.

3.33 All stage one applications are evaluated by an independent investment panel with expertise in place-based regeneration. If a stage 1 application is successful, applicants are invited to provide further details about their project at stage 2. If applicants have also applied for funding under the separate Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, they will not be invited to stage two of both funds. Applicants are encouraged to submit their project to one fund only. The projects awarded funding for 2024/25 will be announced in early 2024.

3.34 To date, VDLIP funding has been provided to 33 projects across Scotland totalling almost £26.6 million. More details relating to individual projects is provided in Table 3. It is noted that half of the awarded projects are in areas which already receive the VDLF.

TABLE 3: VDLIP AWARDS

ROUND	LEAD APPLICANT	PROJECT TITLE	TOTAL GRANT AWARD
2021/22	City of Edinburgh	Western Villages Granton	£619,661
	Clyde Gateway	Dalmarnock Riverside Park	£750,000
	East Dunbartonshire Council	Kirkintilloch Community Sport Complex	£836,000
	East Renfrewshire Council	Levern Water Revival	£1,084,661
	Falkirk Council	Lionthorn Bing Greenspace Project	£563,621
	Glasgow City Council	Belle Gro'@ The Meat Market	£450,474
	Glasgow City Council	Transforming Avenue End Road Greenspace	£417,812
	South Lanarkshire Council	Clyde Cycle Park	£296,000
	South Lanarkshire Council	ONECarluke Community Growing	£84,150
2022/23	City of Edinburgh Council	Greendykes North affordable housing	£623,713
	Clyde Gateway	D2 GRIDS	£664,000
	East Dunbartonshire Council	Twechar Canal Regeneration Project	£614,925
	Glasgow City Council	Hamiltonhill Green Infrastructure Project	£924,911
	Glasgow City Council	Ruchazie Greening and Growing project	£670,000
	Inverclyde	HSCP Community Learning	£990,000

	North Ayrshire Council	Annickbank Innovation Campus, Irvine Enterprise Area	£400,000
	North Lanarkshire Council	Glenmanor Greenspace	£230,911
	West Dunbartonshire Council	Community Food Growing – Former Bonhill PS	£100,000
2023/24	City of Edinburgh Council	Granton Gasholder	£1,224,410
	Clackmannanshire Council	Clacks Community – Growing a new Future	£500,000
	Clyde Gateway	Shawfield Phase 2 - Remediation	£200,000
	Fife Council	Ravenscraig Skills Hub	£491,582
	Glasgow City Council	Cadder Woods Community Greenspace	£772,700
	Glasgow City Council	Community Net Zero Hub	£182,276
	Glasgow City Council	Govan Graving Docks	£2,368,794
	Glasgow City Council	Greening Royston	£797,121
	Glasgow City Council	North Maryhill TRA Green Infrastructure	£1,450,000
	Highland Council	Cromlet Invergordon	£400,000
	Highland Council	Longman Park	£2,150,000
	Midlothian Council	All Through Community Learning Campus Shawfair	£3,667,000
	North Ayrshire Council	The King's Arms Irvine	£600,000
	Perth and Kinross Council	Millhaugh - Phase 1	£93,808
	West Dunbartonshire Council	Residential development at Pappert Bonhill	£1,250,000
TOTAL VDLIP GRANT AWARDS (TO DATE)			**£26,468,530**

Source: Scottish Government/Ryden

3.35 A number of the project awards are for environmental improvements to land including 'greening' and 'growing' projects. However, there are also instances of funding for construction projects including residential and commercial development.

3.36 A project example is East Dunbartonshire Council's Twechar Canal Regeneration Project which was awarded £614,925 from the VDLIP in 2022/23. The funding will aid the Council's regeneration of the derelict former industrial canal site in Twechar and can be used for land acquisition, soil remediation, utilities and access infrastructure, which will allow the site to be developed for social housing. These new homes will help the Council achieve the energy efficiency aims set out for the site as each home will be built to Passivhaus standards, reducing bills for tenants. The site is still on the VDL Register, BR1 Canal Side Street – Twechar.

3.37 The statistics collected as part of the VDL Register will be used in future years to monitor the impact of the VDLIP, similar to the VDLF. This will provide an understanding of where the fund has allowed for sites to be removed from the register for reuse. This data should start coming forward in the 2023 VDL Register due for publication later this year.

REGENERATION CAPITAL GRANT FUND

3.38 The Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) has been delivered in partnership between the Scottish Government and COSLA since 2014. The Fund supports locally developed, place-based regeneration projects that involve local communities, helping to tackle inequalities and deliver inclusive growth in deprived, disadvantaged and fragile remote communities across Scotland.

3.39 The RCGF is open to applications from local councils and Clyde Gateway and 10 rounds of funding have been provided to date.

3.40 The RCGF is primarily aimed at either providing new infrastructure or enhancing existing infrastructure that will improve the economic, social, and physical environment of communities. Projects are also required to detail how they will contribute towards the target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2045.

3.41 Projects should:

- Focus on areas that suffer from high levels of deprivation and disadvantage

- Demonstrate clear community involvement
- Deliver large scale transformational change with strong regeneration outcomes
- Encourage additional investment and address market failure in communities

3.42 Applications are not restricted in geography, size or type of project. The RCGF supports place-based approaches to delivering regeneration and inclusive growth and is aligned to the).

3.43 Similar to the VDLIP, application assessment follows a 2-stage process. At stage 1, projects should demonstrate that they meet the programme aims (above), can spend or commit funding by the specified date (depending on round), has involved the community in its design and will help achieve net-zero targets.

3.44 Applicants can apply for 100% of project costs but projects that demonstrate match funding are looked upon favourably by the judging investment panel. More than one application can be made however, as there are limited funds available it is requested that applicants are realistic and don't include projects still as feasibility stage. Multiyear project proposals will be accepted.

3.45 The RCGF is a capital expenditure fund. Future running costs are not eligible. The fund is not intended to be a primary source of funding for housing, transport infrastructure, retail or hotel developments or flood protection works.

3.45.1 All stage one applications are evaluated by an independent investment panel with expertise in place-based regeneration. If a stage 1 application is successful, applicants are invited to provide further details about their project at stage 2. If applicants have also applied for funding under the separate Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme, they will not be invited to stage two of both funds. Applicants are encouraged to submit their project to one fund only. Any projects awarded funding for 2024/25 will be announced in early 2024.

3.46 To date, RCGF funding has been provided to over 230 projects across Scotland totalling almost £240 million. An evaluation of the RCGF undertaken in 2019 estimated that at that time over 100 hectares of land had been brought back into temporary or permanent use as a result of the fund.

3.47 A project example is the Exchange Young People's Theatre in Renfrewshire. This project will deliver Scotland's first theatre designed for and with young people, by restoring, re-purposing and breathing new life into a vacant former nightclub in Paisley town centre. This community arts hub will provide much needed additional space for creative learning, a 300 seat main theatre, a flexible 100 seat studio theatre, a creative play space, workshop space, community hub and café. Led by Paisley's PACE Theatre Company, the hub will grow cultural provision and creative learning work with children and young people in Renfrewshire, with a particular focus on those deprived of cultural engagement or who are disadvantaged in other ways. The project will also contribute to the wider regeneration of Paisley. The project received £1.084 million from the RCGF as part of the 2022/23 funding round. Additional funding has also come from other charitable trusts and foundations as well as the Renfrewshire Council who submitted the bid on behalf of PACE.

REGIONAL PUBLIC SECTOR FUNDING

CITY REGION AND GROWTH DEALS

3.48 City Region and Regional Growth Deals are bespoke packages of funding and decision making powers are negotiated between the Scottish Government, the UK Government and local government designed to bring about long-term strategic approaches to improving regional economies. They are implemented by regional partners and overseen by the Scottish City Region and Growth Deal Delivery Board.

3.49 Each of the Deals agreed in Scotland is tailored to its region, reflecting its individual economic strengths and weaknesses, and comprises a programme of interventions to support positive, transformative change.

3.50 Whilst City Region and Regional Growth Deals do not specifically focus on VDL, a number are targeting particular regeneration or infrastructure plans which will in turn have an impact in this area. These impacts are likely to be of substantial scale given the ambitions of the Deals. There are 6 City Region and 6 Regional Growth Deals in Scotland which provide 100% coverage of Scotland.

3.51 The Glasgow City Region Deal was signed in 2014 and will invest £1.13 billion in the Region over its lifetime. In its most recent annual performance report it was reported that the City Deal had enabled 12 ha of VDL to be brought back into use/removed from the VDL Register up to the end of March 2023. It is estimated that the total project benefit by 2035 will be 210 ha. Work is underway to analyse VDL in the area – mapping where sites are located, identifying estimating land values, costs to bring it back into productive use and investigating possible funding streams. Work is also underway to better understand the condition of these sites, required access, decontamination and enabling works and development opportunities. For the first time, the Region will be able to demonstrate the economic value of investment in VDL, and as this work develops, it could have major implications for its investment strategy.

3.52 There are a wide range of other funding sources which target regeneration, community, environment, heritage etc. which can support the reuse of VDL depending on the nature of the site and the specific project. Like many of the funds noted in this section, these are typically competitive with many only offering part of matched funding. Further detail on this can be found in Ryden's full VDL funding options report[8].

SUMMARY

3.53 Analysis shows that around one-third of VDL sites reused in 2022 were funded solely or jointly by the public sector. Positively, funding sources to support the reuse of VDL site have increased since the baseline report and Task Force recommendations. The Scottish Government offers a suite of funds which specifically target reuse, either restricted to qualifying local authorities with pronounced VDL challenges, or open to all on a competitive basis. This type of funding has however reduced in 2024/25 in line with public sector funding cuts. Specifically, the VDL Investment Programme and the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund have been suspended. There is a lag effect in the reuse of sites and funding awards already made will continue to secure reuse of successful sites over the short to medium term.

3.54 More broadly, major initiatives such as Levelling-Up Funding, City and Growth Deals and the Place-Based Investment Programme support economic development and regeneration across the country. Through this activity they frequently lead to the reuse of VDL sites. These funds are allocated rather than competitive and, notably for this project, are multi-year sustained funding sources which offer the potential to carry individual sites through their phased of remediation, servicing and reuse, or to tackle a portfolio of sites in an area.

3.55 A further finding is that whilst funding is available to a wide range of applicant organisations it is apparent that there are funding gaps which omit private landowners of long-term derelict sites whether they be individual owners or private organisations. There are a number of options here including incentivising the reuse of sites by introducing additional reliefs on Non Domestic Rates and Council tax for new build properties on long standing vacant sites. This is discussed in greater detail in the Scottish Land Commission's report to the Scottish Government on Land Reform and Taxation[9].

[8] Scottish Land Commission (2022) Review of the Funding Sources for the Re-use of VDL, 2022 Update, Ryden
[9] Scottish Land Commission (2022) Land Reform and Taxation: Advice to Scottish Ministers, January 2022

04
SITES UPDATE

INTRODUCTION

4.1 This section of the report provides updated analysis Scotland's portfolio of VDL sites and assesses trends. The reporting dates are 2024 and 2019, based respectively upon the SVDLS for 2022 and 2017.

4.2 The SVDLS has been operating since 1988 (except during the pandemic in 2020). Data is collected from local planning authorities[10]. It monitors the extent and state of urban vacant and derelict land and its reuse which is becoming more important under the policy focus set out here in Section 2. Definitions in the SVDLS adopted by this report are:

- **Vacant land** is land unused for the purposes for which it is held and which is viewed as an appropriate site for development. This land must either have had prior development on it or preparatory work must have taken place in anticipation of future development.

- **Derelict land** (and buildings) is land which has been so damaged by development, that it is incapable of development for beneficial use without rehabilitation. In addition, the land must currently not be used for the purpose for which it is held or a use acceptable in the local plan. Land also qualifies as derelict if it has an un-remedied previous use which could limit future development. Dereliction is defined in three categories:

    - building remains; and/or
    - possible left over chemicals / substances; and/or
    - abandoned physical material (stone, deposits, rubble etc.)

- For both vacant and derelict land, site records must be at least 0.1 hectares in size to be included.

- SVDLS site updates record changes to individual sites, sites removed, sites reused and sites added.

Where there are methodological differences between this report and the SVDLS those are recorded here in footnotes.

2022 SVDLS

4.3 Figure 3 on the next page is taken from the 2022 SVDLS and shows a VDL area of 9,236 hectares comprising 3,186 sites. Eighty percent of the land area is derelict sites, which is skewed by ten sites larger than 100 hectares[11].

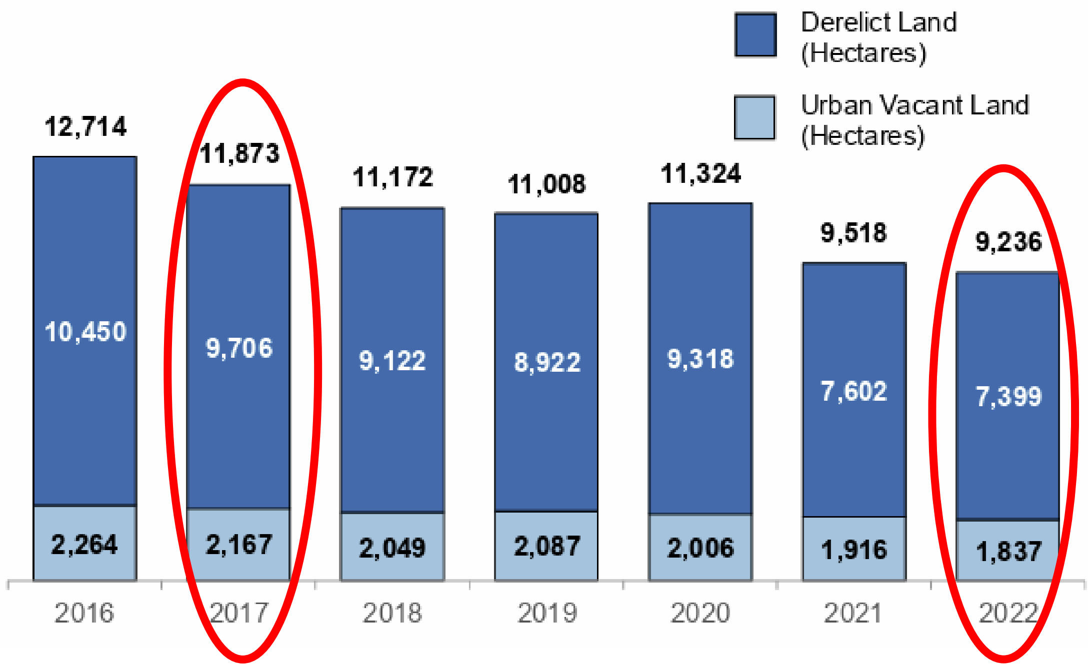
4.4 The downward trend in VDL since 2016 is clear. The fall of 27% in land area reflects both steady annual declines and a 16% fall in 2021 when 11 former coal mining sites were naturalised and 2 former airfields were reclaimed. Note in summary this reduced distortion of ex-urban major sites, but still many remaining. This graphic does not include VDL sites in settlements with less than 2,000 population; the remainder of this section adds those sites in smaller settlements back in.

4.5 The red circles on Figure 3 indicate the comparison dates for this progress report: 2017 and 2022. The progress report is therefore based upon a 5-year comparison, with a 2-year lag. This lag places emphasis upon the reviews, survey, consultations and site examples presented in the other sections of this report.

[10] Local authorities responding are broadly consistent year-to-year, but sometimes results may be rolled over to the next year rather than updated if an authority does not respond.
[11] For example Eastriggs (432ha), Ardeer (332ha) and Arderseir (302ha).

4.6 At a headline level, Scotland's stock of VDL has reduced by 545 sites (15%) and 2,744 hectares (23%) since 2017. The larger reduction in land area includes the coal and air fields as above. These are net reductions which include sites being added to the SVDLS as well as sites removed or reused.

FIGURE 3: DERELICT AND URBAN VACANT LAND 2016-22



Source: Scottish Government SVDLS 2022

4.7 The SVDLS provides informative tables and chart for example by location, former use, ownership and reuse types. The review below does not duplicate those analyses but summarises the trend and changes since 2017.

SVDLS 2022 v. 2017

4.8 In 2017 there were 3,731 VDL sites registered in Scotland. Derelict sites accounted for 52% of sites but 80% of land area due to being on average x4 of the size. Derelict sites accounted for 55 of the 56 largest VDL sites in 2017 due to the persistence of large former industrial, extractive and productive sites.

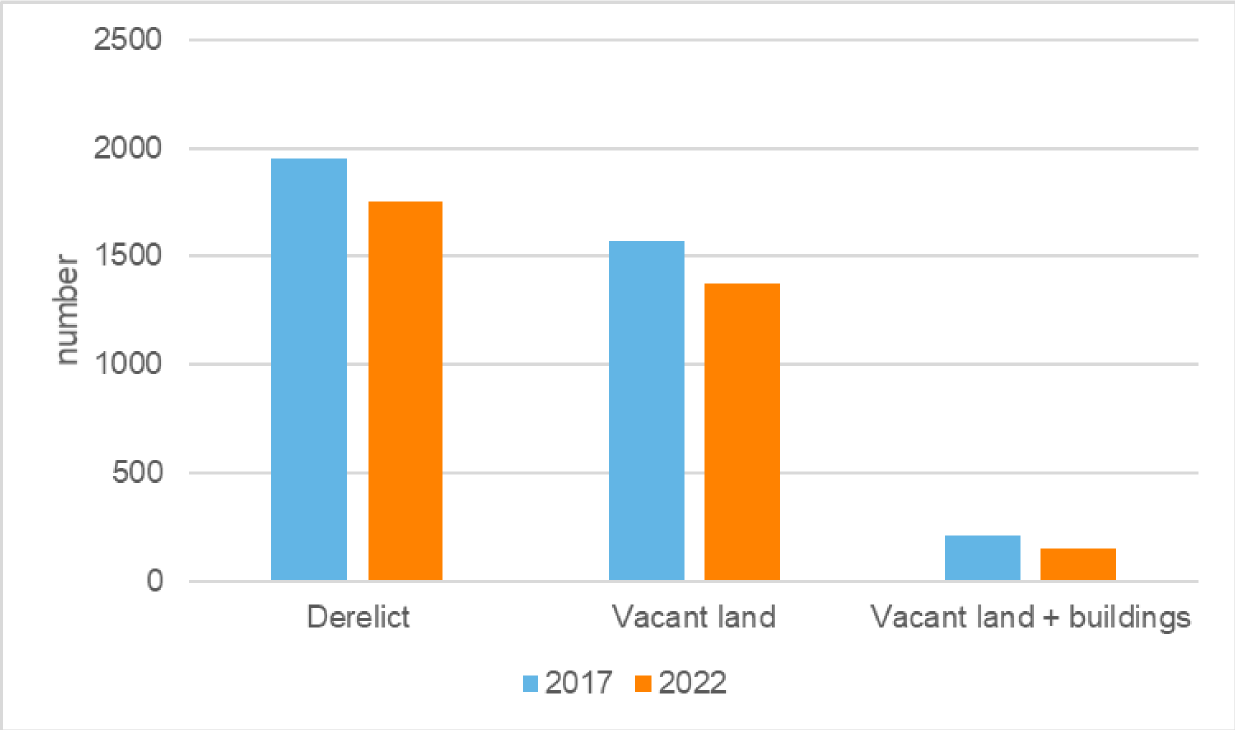
4.9 The 2022 register lists 3,277 VDL sites[12]. This is a net reduction (*after new additions, removed and naturalised sites*) of 454 sites, or approximately 90 sites (2.4% of the stock) on average each year. The decline is in fact faster, as The Highland Council did not respond to the survey in 2017 but added 138 sites in 2022; on a like-for-like basis therefore the decline in sites numbers 2017-22 is 592, or 118 (3.2%) on average each year.

4.10 Figure 4 compares site type by number showing 2017 against 2022. While there are clear falls in each category, the overall composition of the VDL portfolio has changed only marginally.

- Derelict land accounts for just over half of all sites in both years with 52% in 2017 and 54% in 2022; although as above major sites being naturalised has a much greater impact upon land area.
- Vacant land accounts for 42% in both 2017 and 2022
- Vacant land and buildings account for 6% in 2017 and 5% in 2022.

[12] All sites including those in settlements with a population of <2000

FIGURE 4: VACANT AND DERELICT LAND PORTFOLIO 2017 v 2022



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

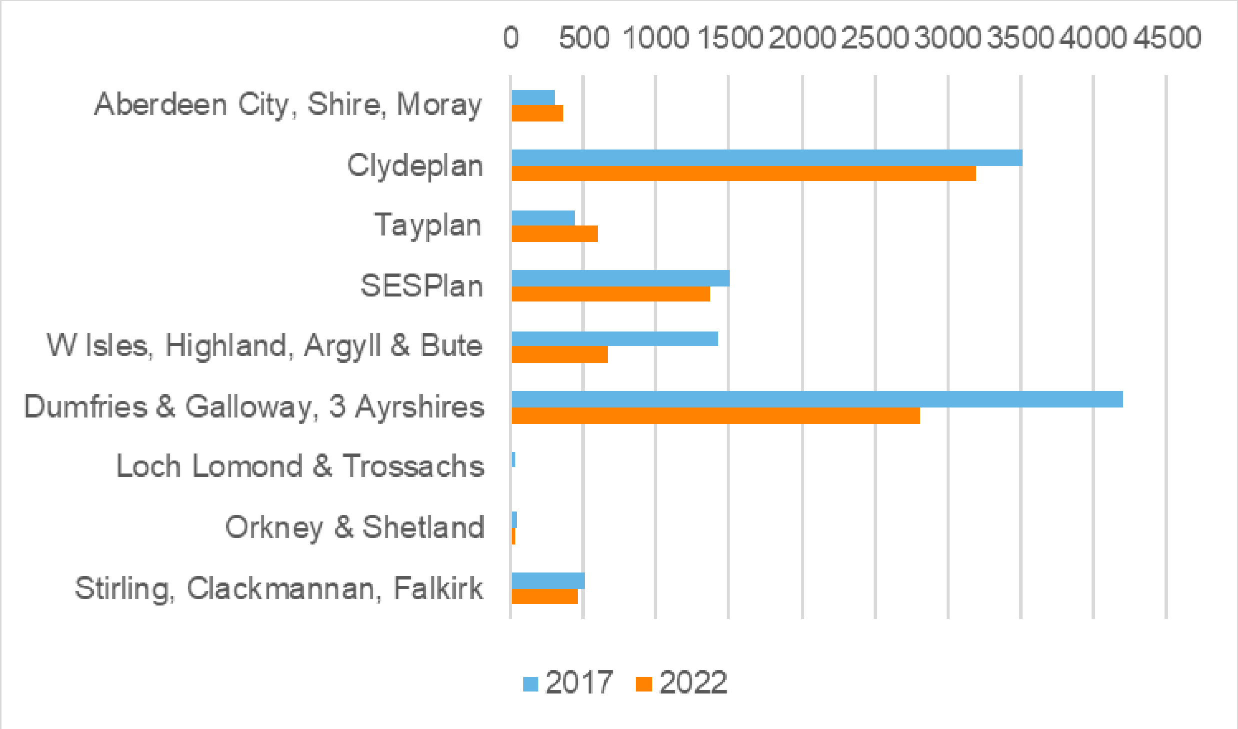
4.11 The regional[13] distribution of VDL by land area is shown on Figure 5 and the distribution by numbers of sites on Figure 6. Site numbers and total land areas have decreased in all regions apart from Aberdeen City and Shire and Moray, and in the Tayplan area. The most notable decreases in are the Clydeplan area, Dumfries & Galloway and the 3 Ayrshires (coal mines again), and in Western Isles, Highland (due in part to a major update) and Argyll & Bute area. The reduction in VDL sites seen at a national level is not uniform.

4.12 The locational classification of sites is the same in 2022 as in 2017:

- 8% are in settlements with less than 2000 population
- 80% are in settlements with 2000 or more population; and
- 12% are derelict sites in the countryside.

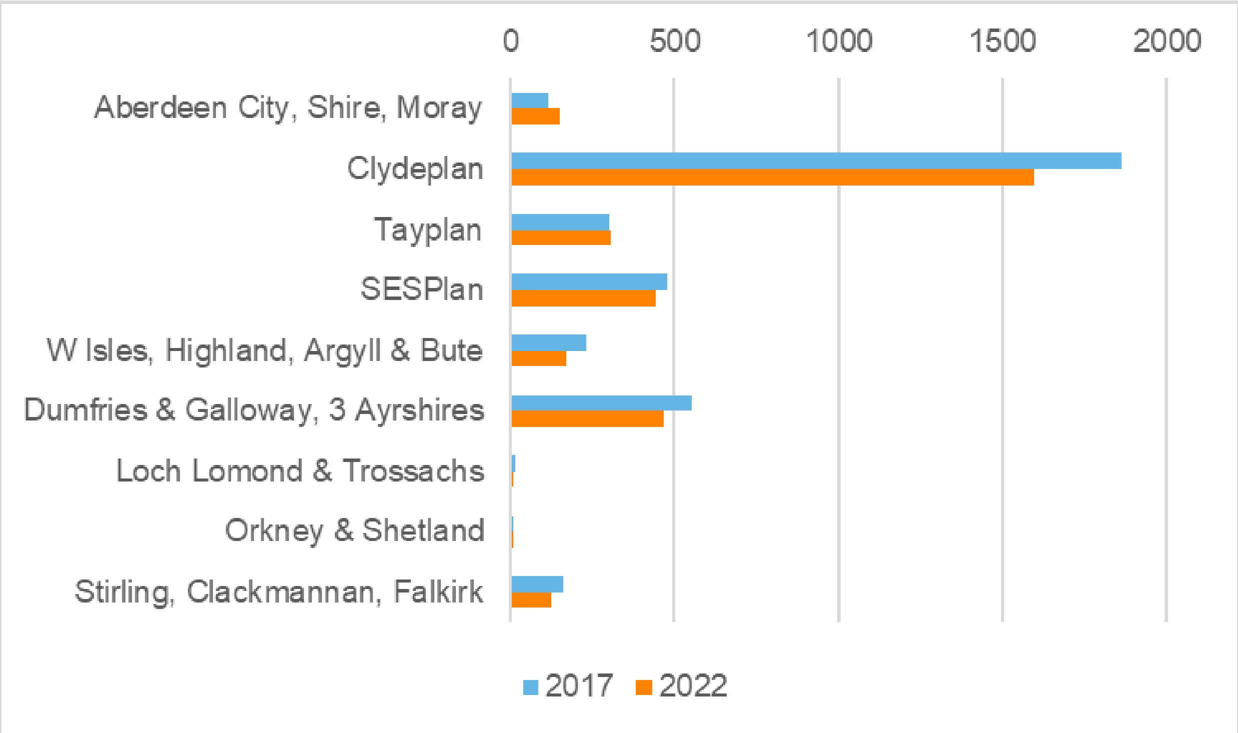
[13] The regional split continues that used in 2019 in order to allow comparisons, although since the introduction of NPF4 in 2023 and the removal of strategic plans, some of the areas no longer exist as some remain only as growth deal regions.

FIGURE 5: REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF VACANT AND DERELICT LAND 2017 v 2022 (ha.)



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

FIGURE 6: REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF VACANT AND DERELICT LAND 2017 v 2022 (numbers of sites)

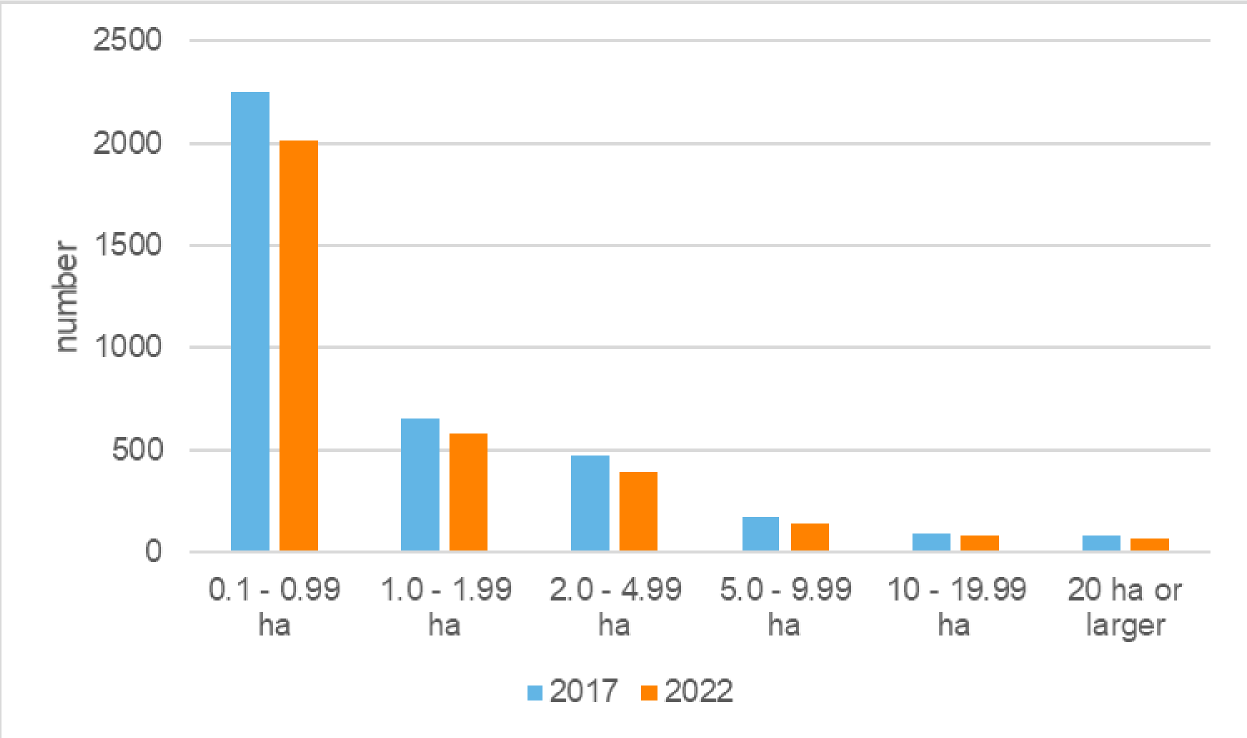


Source: SVDLS / Ryden

4.13 VDL is heavily skewed towards smaller sites in both 2017 and 2022 (Figure 7). The majority are smaller than 1 ha. (2.47 acres) with sharply declining numbers in larger size ranges. The mean size site has fallen from 3.2 ha. in 2017 to 2.9 ha. in 2022, due to the loss of the super-giant mines and airfields. The mean is however still distorted by 54 sites of former hospitals, power stations, industry, minerals and defence uses larger than 25 ha.; these account for 44% of Scotland's VDL land in only 1.6% of the sites.

4.14 While the survey does not record sites smaller than 0.1 ha. (which is around the size of a bowling green) those infill sites do exist and are important to communities where they are large enough for open space, soft or development uses.

FIGURE 7: VACANT AND DERELICT SITES BY SIZE RANGE LAND 2017 v 2022 (numbers of sites)



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

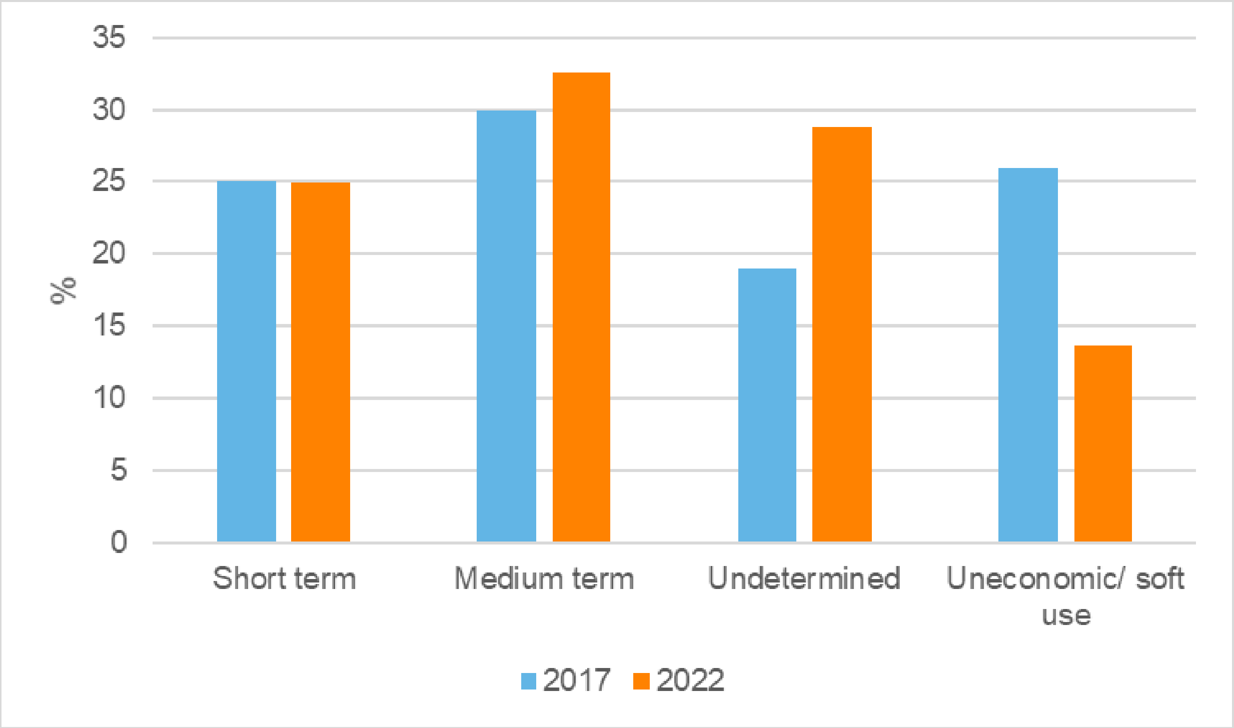
4.15 The development potential of sites in the SVDLS is an informed opinion made by the local planning authority, rather than a formal appraisal. Figure 8 overleaf indicates that the proportion of sites judged to have:

- Short term potential for reuse within 5 years remains at 25% in 2022 as compared with 2017.
- Medium term potential for reuse within 5-10 years rises from 30% to 33% of sites.

  Sites with short or medium term potential tend mainly to be urban vacant land rather than derelict or countryside sites.

- Most notably, the proportion of sites with undetermined potential has increased from 19% to 29%.
- Sites considered to be uneconomic to develop and suited to soft end uses have fallen from 26% to 14%.

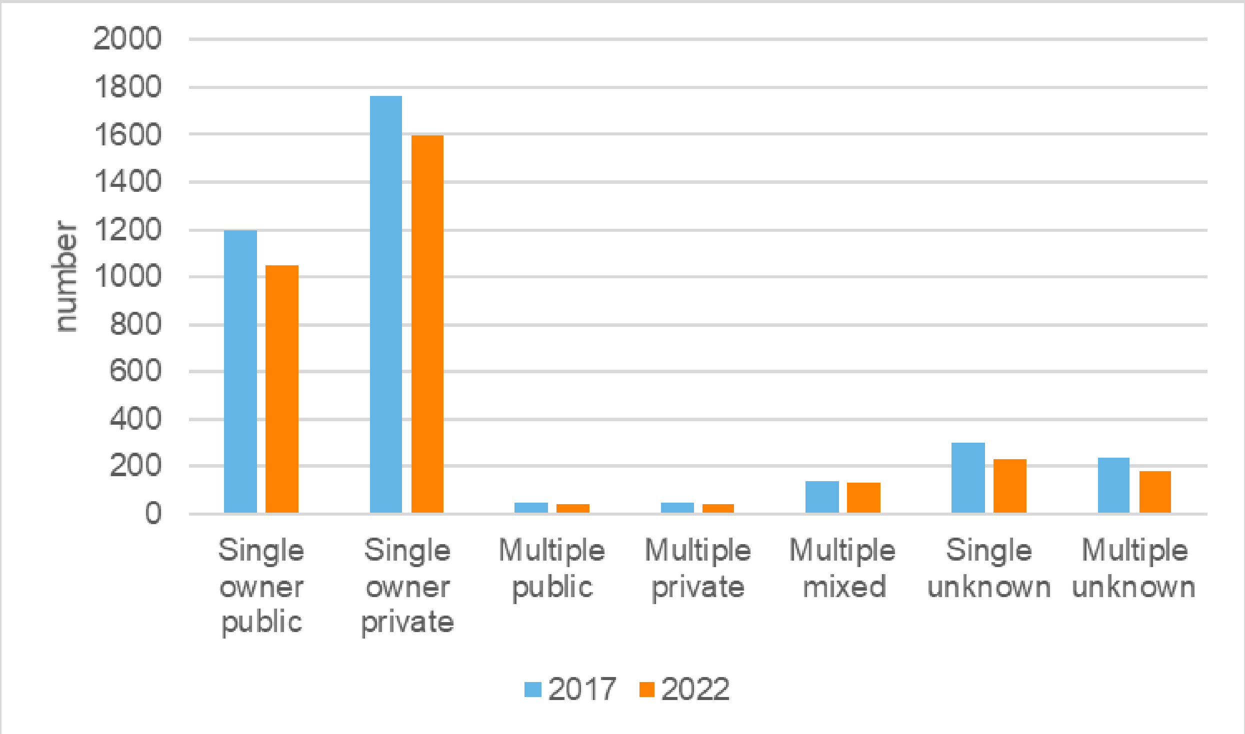
FIGURE 8: VACANT AND DERELICT SITES DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL 2017 v 2022 (ha.)



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

4.16 The 2017 data identified that 94% of sites were in single ownership. This was taken as a positive signal as it implied some control over reuse. In 2022 this figure was still positive but had fallen to 88% (Figure 9).

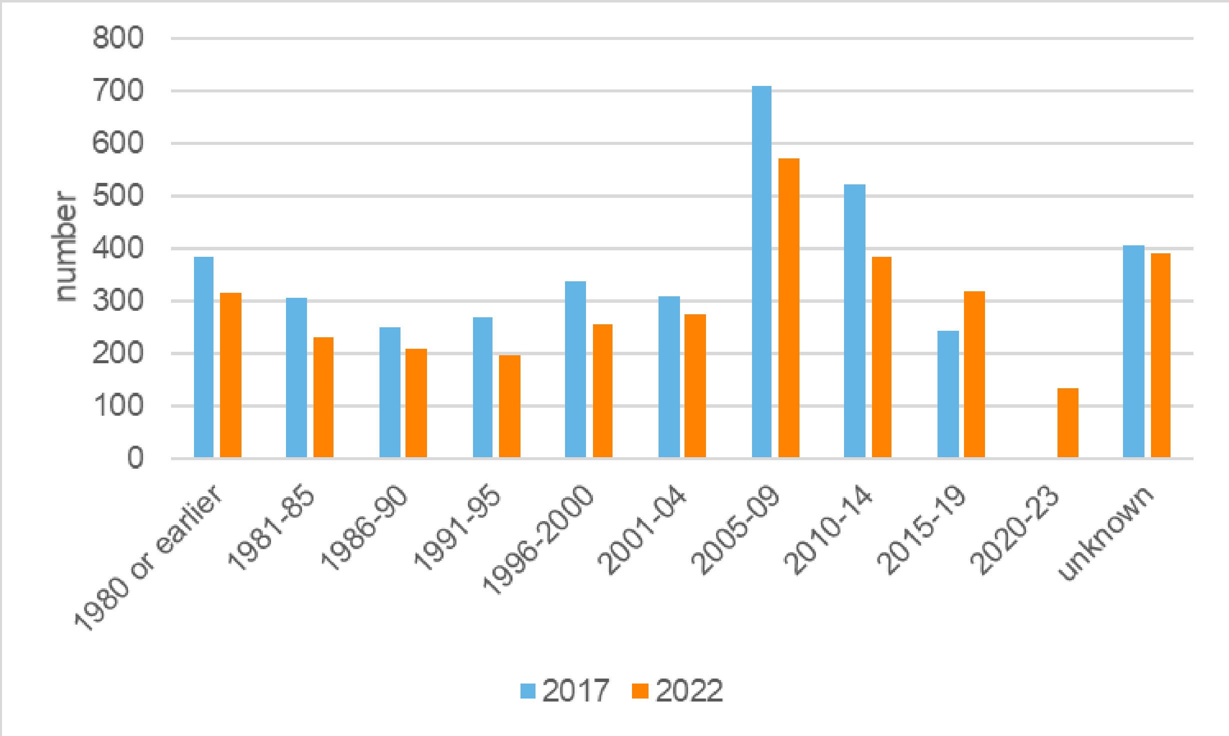
FIGURE 9: VACANT AND DERELICT SITE OWNERSHIP 2017 v 2022 (numbers of sites)



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

4.17 Figure 10 confirms when each site was vacated comparing 2017 and 2022 Registers. Notably, sites from all time periods have seen a significant reduction in numbers since 2017, although there remains a large cohort which fell vacant in 2000 or earlier and have therefore been unused for at least 23 years. Sites in the first two columns and part of the third column on Figure 10 have been unused since the SVDLS began in 1988. While the industrial recession of the 1980s no longer dominates Scotland's VDL, it still echoes through time.

FIGURE 10: VACANT AND DERELICT SITES BY TIME PERIOD VACATED 2017 v 2022 (numbers of sites)



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

SITES ADDED

4.18 The SVDLS reports new sites added to the register each year. The data has been examined and two changes made here:

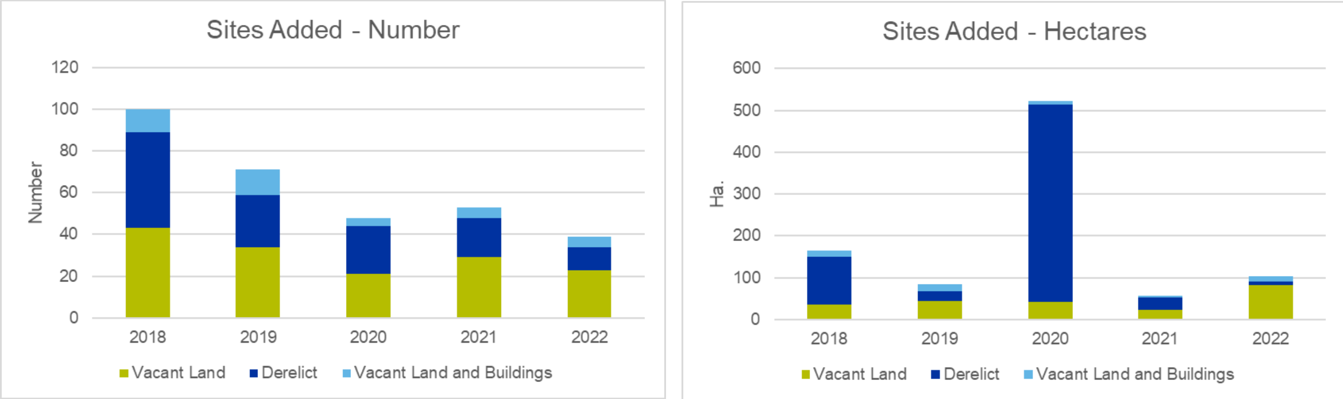
- Sites which were added but had actually fallen vacant at an earlier date and only recently been identified are not included. Only sites which became vacant or derelict between 2018 and 2022 are used here.
- As noted above, urban vacant sites in settlements with a population of less than 2000 are not included in some of the SVDLS reporting. Where these fell vacant 2018-22 they are identified and included here.

4.19 A total of 311 sites were added totalling 929.23 hectares. One particularly large derelict site (431.98 ha) Eastriggs MOD Site in Annan which became derelict in 2020 accounts for nearly half of the land area total.

4.20 The mean number of new sites being added since 2017 is 62 per annum. Compared with 83 for 2014 to 2017.

4.21 The year 2018 had the most sites added by number, at 100, this fell to 48 in 2020 but there may have been some under-reporting during the pandemic. With this caveat, Figure 11 shows the annual totals for sites and land area added – the MOD site in Annan is clearly evident in 2021 on the second chart.

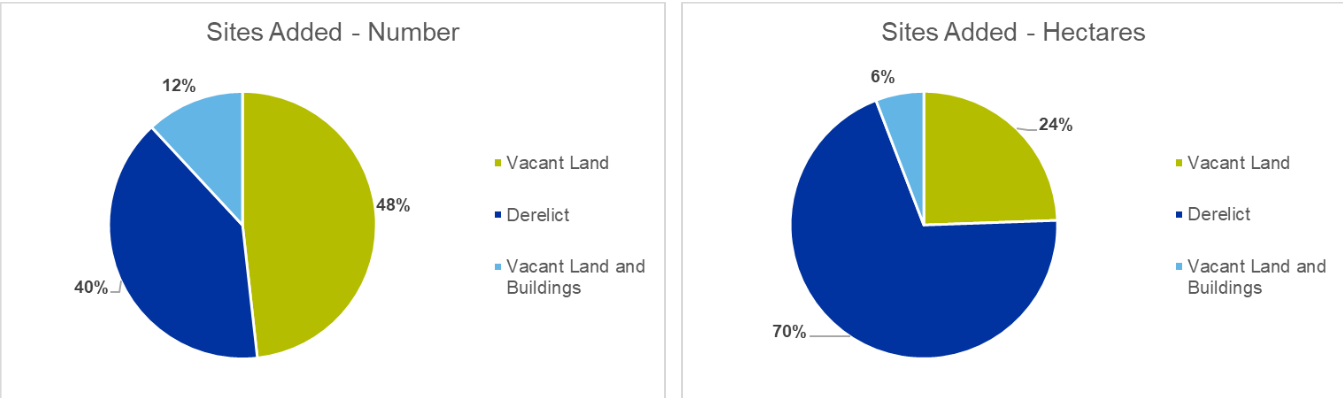
FIGURE 11: VACANT AND DERELICT SITES ADDED BY YEAR



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

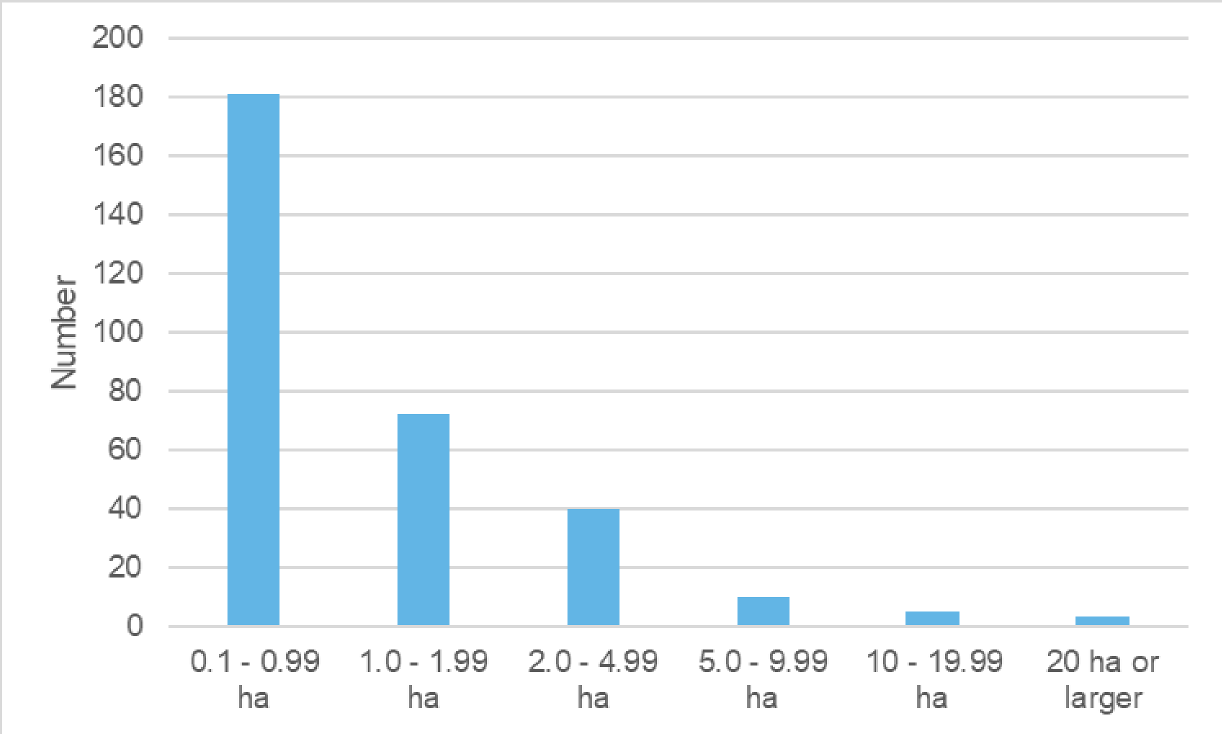
4.22 By number nearly half of the sites added 2018-22 were vacant land (48%), followed by derelict land with 40% (Figure 12). By land area, derelict land is majority (70%) but only if the MOD site in Annan is included; excluding that outlier, derelict land and vacant land account for 43% and 46% of new land added respectively. Vacant Land and Buildings had the least in by both number (12%) and hectares (6%).

FIGURE 12: VACANT AND DERELICT SITES BY YEAR ADDED TO THE REGISTER



4.23 The majority of sites added were between 0.1 and 0.99 hectares (58%), followed by 1.0 – 1.99 ha with 23%, 2.0 – 4.99 ha with 13%, 5.0 – 9.99 ha with 3%, 10 – 19.99 ha with 2%, and the final 1% for 20 ha or larger, as shown on Figure 13. The distribution of new VDL sites by size range is not dissimilar to the existing full portfolio of sites (as shown on Figure 7 above); in 2022 the full portfolio has a slightly higher 61% of sites in the 0.1 – 0.99 ha range, followed by 1.0 – 1.99 ha with slightly lower 18%, 2.0 – 4.99 ha with 12%, 5.0 – 9.99 ha with 4%, 10 – 19.99 and 20ha or larger with 2% each.

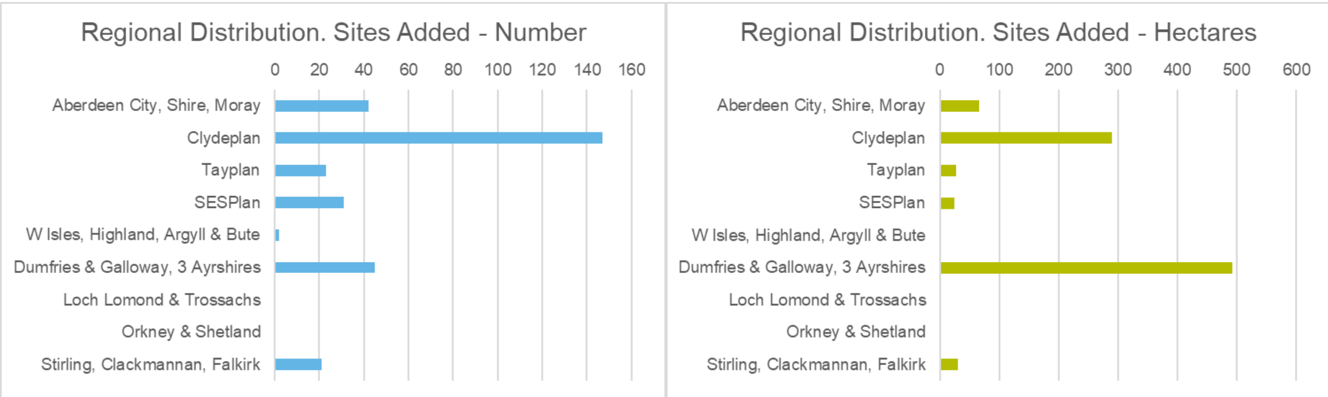
FIGURE 13: SITES ADDED BY SIZE RANGE



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

4.24 Looking at the regional distribution of sites added (Figure 14) the Clydeplan area had nearly half of all sites added by number with 47% or 147 sites. This is followed by Dumfries & Galloway and the 3 Ayrshires with 45 sites, and Aberdeen City, Shire and Moray with 42 sites. By hectares Dumfries & Galloway and the 3 Ayrshires had the most with 53%, or 492.59 hectares although as above the 431.98 ha site in Annan accounts for the majority of this. Clydeplan follows with 289.36 hectares[14].

FIGURE 14: SITES ADDED BY REGION



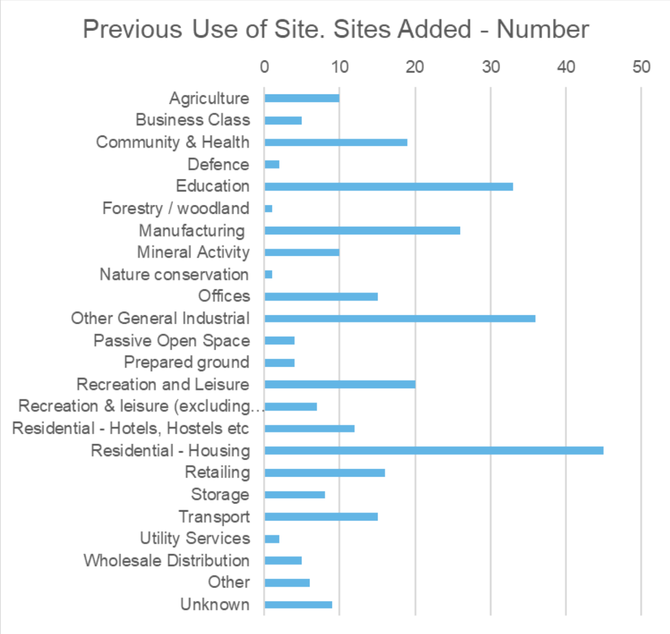
Source: SVDLS / Ryden

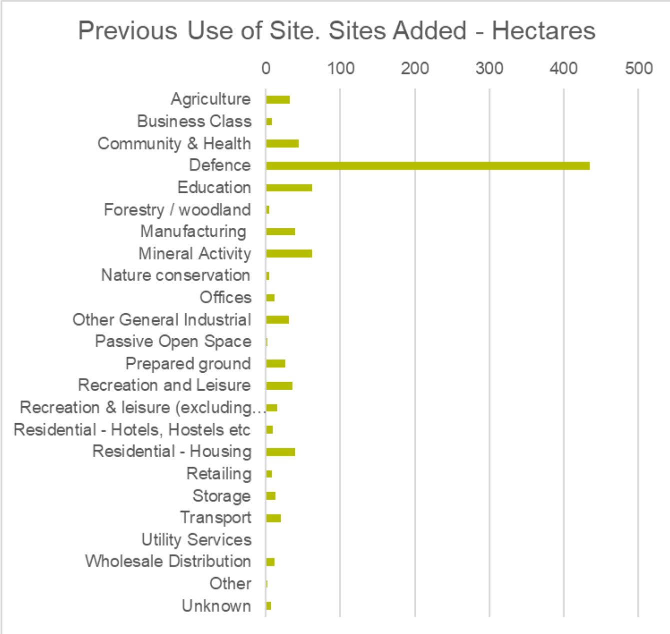
4.25 With regards to the previous use of site Residential housing had the most by number with 14% (45 sites), followed by Other general industry with 12% (36 sites), Education with 11% (33 sites), Manufacturing with 8% (26 sites), Recreation & leisure and Community uses with 6% each, Retailing, Offices and Transport had 5% each, and Residential hotel hostels etc. had 4%. All other previous uses had between <1% and 3% each (or 1 – 10 sites). By hectares, sites which had a previous Defence use had nearly half (47%) of the total, followed by Offices and Recreation & leisure with 7% each, Education with 5%, and Business Class,

[14] Some areas recorded no added sites (or rather sites which became Vacant or Derelict from 2018 to 2022)

Retailing, Storage and Residential housing with 4%. All other previous use types had between (1% and 3%) (Figure 15).

FIGURE 15: SITES ADDED BY PREVIOUS USE OF SITE





Source: SVDLS / Ryden

SITES REUSE

4.26 Reuse of VDL sites is reliant upon a range of end uses. This sub-section provides an overview of the main categories of development land reuse.

4.27 **Housing** is the most common re-use of VDL. Brownfield urban sites being demolished from a previous housing use (for example local authority housing stock clearance) or other land uses may appear on the register before they are redeveloped.

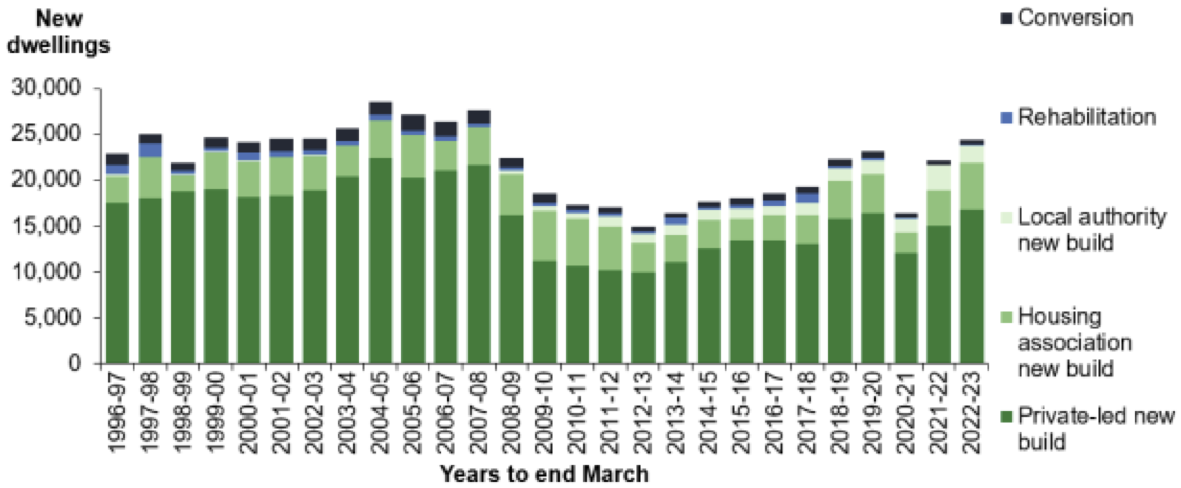
4.28 Scotland has a well-established demand and need to build large volumes of housing. Despite building around 20,000 new homes per annum, there is a regular shortfall. In 2022 Homes for Scotland indicated a cumulative shortfall of 100,000 homes across the country since the Global Financial Crisis in 2008. Vacant and derelict land is clearly a major contributor to this housing development programme, as an alternative to greenfield development.

4.29 Figure 16 shows housing completions in Scotland 1996 to (March) 2023. New-build housing in 2022-23 delivered 23,798 units, which is the highest output since 2007/08. The majority is by private house builders (16,840 units), followed by the social housing sector (6,958 units) comprising housing associations and then local authorities. The smallest share is conversion and rehabilitation (600 units), which will not re-use VDL but may prevent it from arising. Notably, affordable housing delivered its highest output since statistics began in 2000, at 10,462 units.

4.30 Given the strong relationship between housing development and reuse of VDL, the comparatively high housing output (aside from the pandemic shut-down in 2020-21) has had a positive impact on site reuse.

4.31 In 2023 the private house building market turned negative due to rising interest rates, rising costs of living and reduced mortgage availability. New housing starts fell by one-third 16,275, the lowest figure since 2014. While the market outlook is improving again in 2024 as interest rates stabilise and employment rates remain high, a reported cut to the Affordable Housing Supply Programme would imply that housing's reuse of VDL sites will have slowed for at least the short term.

FIGURE 16: TOTAL SUPPLY OF NEW HOUSING IN SCOTLAND



Source: Scottish Government

4.32 The **commercial and employment** property markets are adapting to both structural change and a slowdown in new development starts since late 2022.

4.33 The structural change is in retail and office markets, which now require less floorspace due to online shopping and hybrid working respectively. There is still strong market demand for prime locations such as top quality city centre office markets, city shopping pitches, retail warehousing and grocery shopping as well as some leisure and food & beverage offers, but market contraction is leading to surplus buildings around the country. Typically, these are not yet creating vacant or derelict land, and may indeed be reused or redeveloped before that happens, but the risk of long term vacancy and dereliction – potentially adding to the net flow of sites onto the register - has clearly increased.

4.34 The slowing of new development starts in the commercial and employment sectors reduce their potential to deliver re-use of sites. A combination of changing occupier markets and sharply rising costs and interest rates means that recent development completions are mainly of schemes that were started in the previous cycle. There are few new developments on site. The main focus of market activity is in refurbishing or converting existing buildings. The most active new-build development sector is purpose-built student housing in major university cities, along with small retail parks and some occupier-led new hotels particularly in Edinburgh. The industrial sector has a low vacancy rate due to strong demand and limited new development, which is expected to have an increased focus on refurbishing older buildings. Public sector investment in new facilities for example in healthcare and education is also reduced from previous cycles.

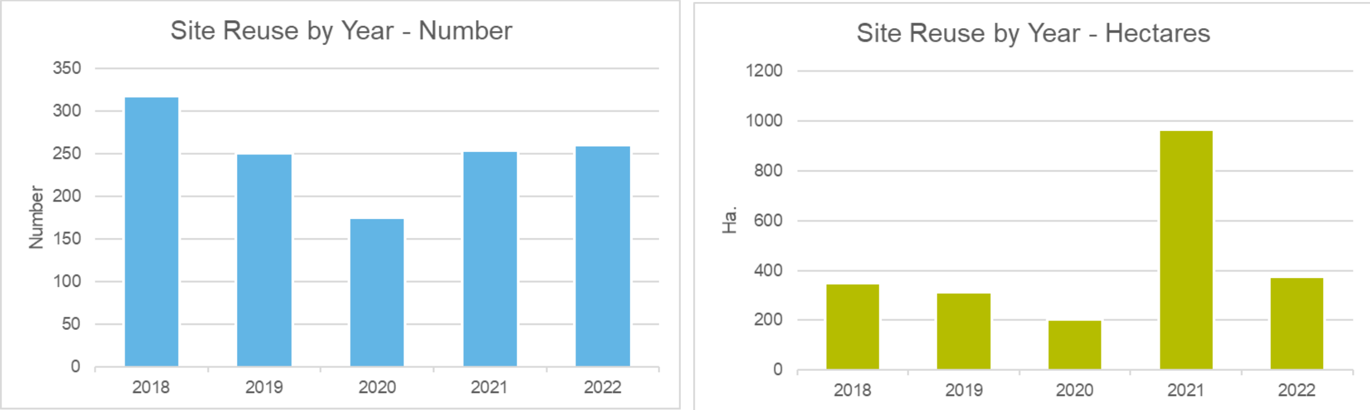
4.35 A total of 1,258 plots totalling 2,202.67 hectares of land was actively **reused**[15] **2018-22 inclusive**. This is equivalent to an annual average of 252 plots and 440.5 hectares. The term 'plots' is used here as some sites are only partly taken-up while the balance of the land remains on the SVDLS register. Removing duplicate sites which appear more than once indicates that 1,133 sites have benefited from reuse.

4.36 Reuse of sites by number and area are shown on Figure 17. Caution is required around these due to the impact of the pandemic on reporting and variations by local authority (most notably Highland).

4.37 Over the previous period 2013-17 a total of 1,472 sites and 2,233 ha. were reused, giving annual averages of 294 sites and 447 hectares. This is a higher annual average than that for the period 2018-22 inclusive (of 252 plots and 440.5 hectares).

[15] This analysis isolates those sites which have seen full or partial reuse from those which have been removed.

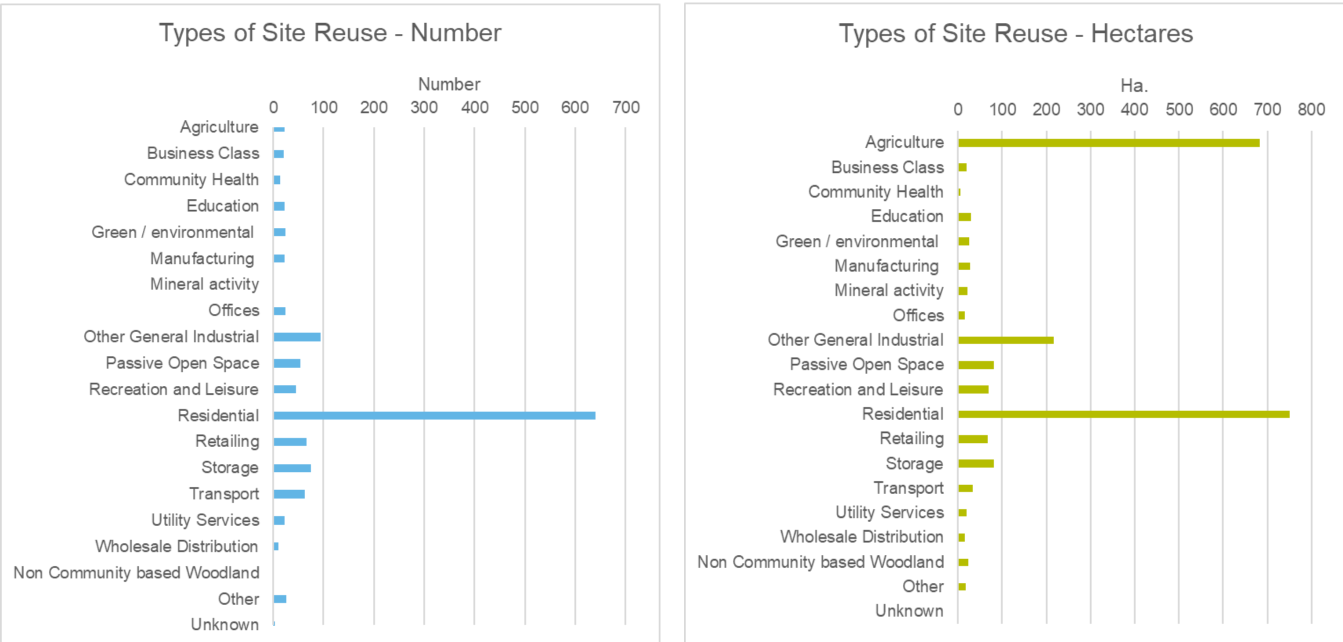
FIGURE 17: SITES REUSE BY YEAR 2018 - 2022



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

4.38 Residential use is by far the largest reuse category over the 5-year period, accounting for 751.6 hectares (34%) of take-up, in 640 sites (51%) (Figure 18). Agriculture is the next largest with 683.72 hectares (31%) in 22 sites, although this is inflated by the reallocation of two large airfield sites in Highland. Other general industry follows with 216.08 hectares (10%) in 94 sites.

FIGURE 18: SITES REUSE BY NEW USE 2018 – 2022



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

4.39 Looking more closely at residential as the leading development reuse of VDL sites:

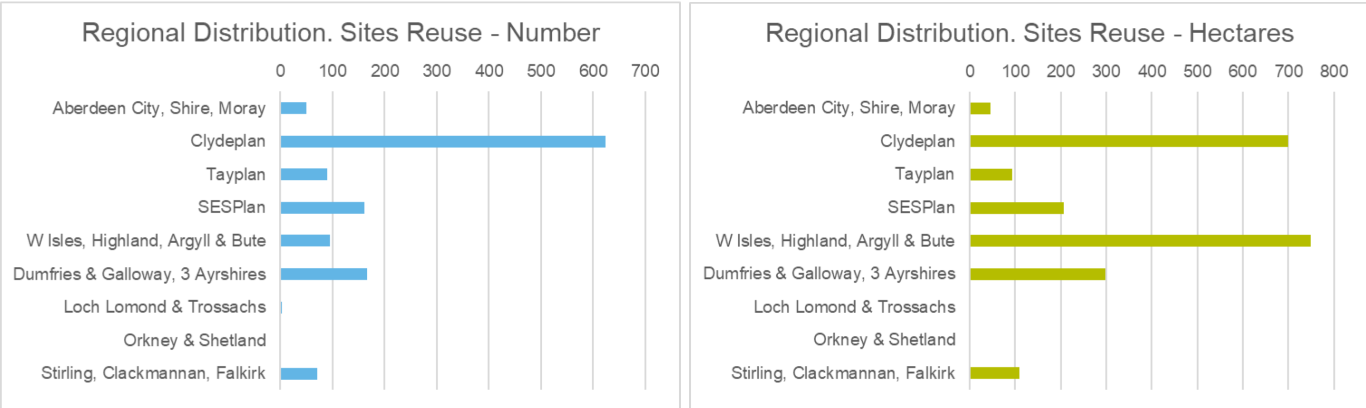
- 640 sites (51%) in 751.6 hectares (37%) were re-used for residential purposes 2018 - 2022.
- There is a very strong concentration of residential development in the Clydeplan area - 363 sites (57% of residential sites) over 443.75 hectares (59% of residential site area). Glasgow accounts for 20% (124 sites). Only North Lanarkshire with 116 sites re-used for residential development comes close to this.
- Other regions have modest residential re-use by comparison – for example SESPlan (82 sites); Dumfries & Galloway and the 3 Ayrshires (58); TayPlan (47) and Stirling / Clackmannan / Falkirk (37 sites).
- 7 residential sites received VDL funding: 4 in Dundee, 2 in Glasgow and 1 in South Lanarkshire.

- Over the 10 years, 2013-2022 inclusive, spanning the analyses in the baseline VDL report and this report, a total of 4,435.41 hectares in 2,730 sites has been reused for residential development.

4.40 Looking at the regional distribution of reused sites, Western Isles, Highland and Argyll & Bute had the largest amount by size with 749.52 hectares (or 34% of the total, partly due to airfields being reused for agriculture), in 95 sites (and also a catch up following a period of non-reporting from Highland Council) (Figure 19).

4.41 The Clydeplan area delivered 699.68 hectares (30%) of land take-up, but in terms of numbers was significantly ahead with almost half of all the sites reused (623 sites) across Scotland falling within that grouping of eight local authority areas. Dumfries & Galloway and the 3 Ayrshires followed with 298.17 hectares (14%) in 167 sites. The SESplan area had 205.8 hectares (9%) of land reused in 161 sites.

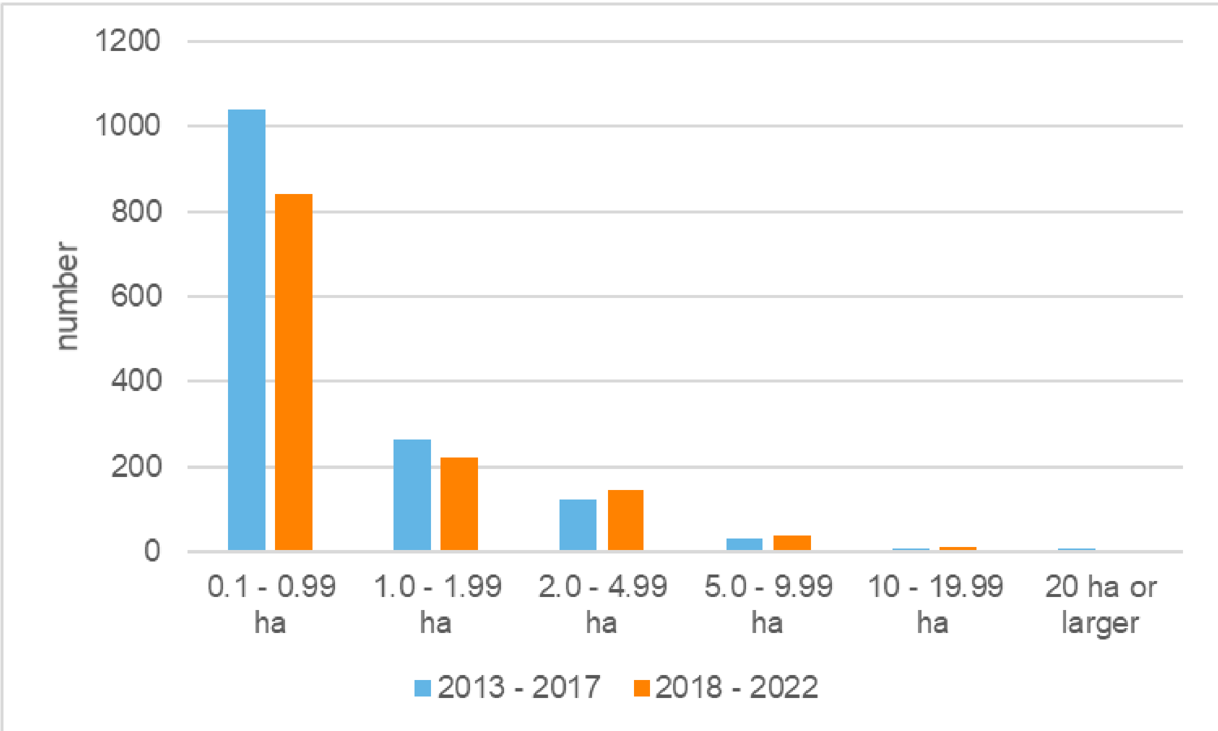
FIGURE 19: SITES REUSE BY REGION 2018 - 2022



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

4.42 Smaller sites were the most commonly reused. The smallest size range of less than 0.99 hectares accounted for 67% of all reuse. The next sizeband up, 1.0 – 1.99 ha had 17% and the 2.0 – 4.99 ha range had 11%. The spread of sites is a similar pattern to that during 2013 to 2017 (Figure 20), although that earlier period has 71% of sites reused in the smallest size range. The average size of a reused site from 2018 to 2022 is 1.75 ha, compared with a smaller 1.5 ha for 2013 to 2017.

FIGURE 20: SITES REUSE BY SIZE RANGE 2013 – 2017 AND 2018 – 2022 (number of sites)



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

4.43 Examples of smaller sites reused include:

– 0.02 ha sites at Muirhead Road/ Baillieston Road in Glasgow and Sunnyside Avenue/Pleasantside Avenue Woodhall, Port Glasgow both reused as Passive Open Space; a site on Raploch Road in Larkhall reused for Residential.

– 0.1 ha sites at North Street, Inverurie reused for Retailing; one on Muirieston Crescent in Edinburgh was reused for Residential; a reuse for Storage on George Buckman Drive in Dundee.

– 0.4 ha sites at Abbotsford Business Park in Falkirk reused for Business Class; at Winchester Avenue also in Falkirk for Other General Industrial; and for Offices on Monument Crescent in Prestwick.

4.44 By land area, large sites being reused skew the analysis. The 54 reused sites of 5 hectares or larger total 1,129.3 hectares, or 51% of the total 2,202.67 hectares. Two airfields in Highland, Fearn (345.21 ha) and Fendom in Tain (254.2 ha) delivered 27% of all reuse, for agriculture, and a site of 17.28 ha at Fearn has been reused for storage. At Kishorn Yard 62.54 ha has been reused for other general uses (the extension to the dry dock). Two yards at Hunterston (56.31 ha and 21.53 ha) have also been reused for other general industrial and are part of the port redevelopment / proposed XLCC subsea cable manufacturing facility. The former Royal Ordnance Factory at Bishopton continues to see reuse with 4 sites (over 5ha) totalling 43.9 hectares reused for residential and two smaller sites totalling 2.1 ha reused for education and retail. Ravenscraig is also a source of regular reuse, and has sites remaining on the Register.

4.45 Some sites are **removed** from the SVDLS, rather than reused. These total 289 sites no longer on the Register, in 1,995.5 hectares or 47% of hectares. Naturalised sites make up the majority with 61% by number (177 sites) and 93% by area (1862.78 hectares). Fifteen former opencast coal sites in East Ayrshire (of which nine are the largest sites in this category) have been removed, these total 1485.52 hectares – or 35% of the overall total of sites removed and reused from the Register, and 74% of just the removed sites. Other sites of note which have been naturalised include 24.4 ha on a site north of AMP in Irvine; the 23.76 ha former Kilgarth Tip in Coatbridge; and 20.63 ha aluminium works in Invergordon.

SUMMARY

4.46 There is a clear, year-on-year downward trend in Scotland's VDL sites numbers and land area. The 2022 stock of 3,277 sites represents a net reduction of 592 sites (15%) and a 23% fall in land area since 2017. The underlying pattern of VDL reduction is complex:

4.46.1 While the totals have fallen, the overall mix of vacant and derelict land is similar to that in 2017.

4.46.2 The reduction in VDL varies by geography. The most prominent decrease in site numbers is in the Clydeplan area (from the highest stock of sites). Other areas saw smaller falls or increases in VDL.

4.46.3 The stock of VDL vacated across all time periods is falling. Positively, this includes land which has been long term vacant since the 1980s or earlier.

4.46.4 There are fewer very large derelict sites - often outside of urban areas – than in the past. In particular, a number of former coal fields added to the register in 2013 have naturalised and were removed again in 2021. However, alongside the large number of potentially 'usable' sites there are still more than 50 major former healthcare, industrial, power, minerals and defence sites accounting for 44% of VDL by land area.

4.46.5 Assessments of short to medium site reuse potential are a little more favourable than in 2017, but there is also a substantial fall in sites (10% of all sites) suited to soft end uses such as greening, and a concomitant rise in sites with undetermined potential, indicating greater uncertainty overall.

4.46.6 While the large majority of VDL sites continue to be in single ownership, the number of more complex ownerships on the register has increased.

4.47 Detailed analysis of VDL sites **reused** since 2017 indicates that 1,258 plots were taken-up, in 1,133 sites (some sites had more than one plot taken-up over the 5-year period). The annual average is 252 plots in 227 sites. Smaller sites/plots below 1 hectare were most commonly reused, accounting for two-thirds of reuse. The land area reused was 2,202 hectares which equates to 440 hectares per annum. Residential use accounts for just over half (51%) of the VDL plots taken-up, while industry is next with 10%. Agriculture accounts for 31% of land taken-up, due to some large site sizes.

4.48 The Clydeplan area dominates in terms of the numbers of VDL sites reused, followed by Dumfries & Galloway and the Ayrshires then SESPlan, each of which records around one-quarter of the number of sites which Clydeplan has reused.

4.49 A total of 1,472 sites were reused (a further 98 were naturalised giving the previously recorded total of 1570), in a total of 2,233 hectares of VDL land in the period 2013-17 which is only marginally (1.4%) higher and is in fact very similar to 2018-22.

4.50 The predominance of residential use where VDL sites are developed (rather than greened) is now evident across the period 2013-22. Looking forwards, a depressed build rate, slow private market recovery and constrained public funding indicate uncertainty over whether this can be sustained (although it is also dependent upon the greenfield / brownfield residential balance, which is signalled to change by the planning system). Similarly, a more selective commercial development market and a greater focus on refurbishment of existing buildings may limit the potential for reuse of VDL, although building reuse may prevent some assets from reaching the register in the first place.

4.51 The flow of new sites onto the register averages 62 per annum. This is down by one-quarter on the previous period 2013-17 at 83 per annum. The size distribution of sites is similar to the full portfolio, but, bar one outlier in Annan, the incidence and impact of ultra-large derelict sites is reduced. The geographic distribution is very uneven, with some areas having no new VDL sites becoming vacant or derelict during 2018 – 2022, concentrations in other areas, and Clydeplan – which has the highest incidence and rate of reuse – also recording half of new sites.

05
SITES IN FOCUS

INTRODUCTION

5.1 A specific focus for the Scottish Land Commission is ***persistent, problematic sites with productive potential***. This led to two sub-sets of VDL sites being analysed by Ryden:

- A sample of 60 sites with a skew towards the 'four Ps' in terms of dereliction, longevity, location, size and ownership. This approach generated 42 derelict sites and 18 vacant sites (one of which was vacant with buildings). The filtering method is set out in the 2019 report Appendix 2.

- The 'DUSTEs'. These were derelict urban sites unused since 2000 or earlier, to reflect a concern that the regular reuse of sites may be mainly easier urban vacant sites, masking a more set of sites. The DUSTES report[16] was a separate exercise which identified 589 sites in the category.

Updates on these sites sub-sets are provided below. The extent to which these more challenging sites are being reused as much as the full sites universe is an important measure of progress with VDL.

- A new set of (5) case studies is included, to explore some of the types and principles/drivers of site reuse. This is complemented by a curated, thematic analysis of vacant and derelict land case studies undertaken by the Scottish Land Commission, Ryden and other consultants working on VDL.

SIXTY SITES

5.2 As noted above, the 60 sites selected in the 2019 report provided both a broad sample across the SVDLS register to help characterise and illustrate VDL, and a deliberate focus on more challenging sites. Some of the summary characteristics of the 60 sites portfolio were:

- 1.6% of 2018 SDVLS sites by number, 2.0% by area, concentration in West Central Scotland

- 37 sites had development plan status, 17 in area appropriate for development, 6 where development would be resisted

- The large majority of the 60 sites were not being marketed

- Very strong relationship between these sites and deprivation using SIMD

- Greatest potential for housing and green infrastructure (or both), then employment or commercial use

Red flag = large site of 10 hectares or above

Yellow flag = medium site of 2-10 hectares

Blue flag = small site of less than 2 hectares

[16] *Stuck Sites*: Understanding Scotland's Long Term Derelict Land, A report to the Scottish Land Commission (Ryden, 2020)

5.3 A progress check on each of the sites has been undertaken, comparing the original 60 sites against the 2022 Register and a revised look at marketing, development and planning.

5.4 Of the 60 sites, ten are no longer on the Register. Of these:

- Six have had residential development
- One is an entertainment/ sport venue
- One is now passive open space (*removed for definitional reasons rather than reused*)
- One has been Naturalised (*removed for definitional reasons rather than reused*)
- One is a car park

5.5 In addition, three sites remain on the register but have been identified as being developed or development is underway. Two of these for residential uses, while the third is a depot with site and currently in operation

5.6 A further seven sites have been taken-up in part, with part remaining on the Register. Three have residential development on part, two have an office, while two are used for storage.

5.7 In total 20 sites have already undergone, or are undergoing development, and have had a positive destination. Although two of these were removals from the Register rather than reuse.

5.8 A total of 40 sites remain on the Register as a whole, albeit some may have had some site size amendment, plus the seven noted above where some development has happened but remain on the Register in part. These total 47, but there is an overlap between those that have partial development with part remaining on the Register.

5.9 Of these 47 sites (or part sites) which remain on the Register, 25 have a positive <u>future</u> destination:

- There are 12 active planning applications
  - Of which nine are for residential developments
  - One is for recreational uses
  - One is for part of an aluminium recycling facility
  - One is for commercial and retail uses
- Two are part of parkland destinations *(Lochshore North, Glengarnock and Former Gartloch Distillery, Cryston)*
- Three are part of active masterplans *(NACCO, Irvine; Meat Market in Glasgow; and Former Oil Terminal Bishopbriggs)*
- One is part of the Forth Green Freeport *(Burntisland Harbour)*
- Seven are being actively being marketed

5.10 By location, half of the sites remaining on the Register (24 sites) are located in the West of Scotland.

5.11 Eight potential site archetypes sharing similar characteristics were noted among the 60 sites in the 2019 report. Table 4 indicates how many sites were in each archetype at that time and how many have been reused and or remain on the Register, including examples.

5.12 The 60 sites' update indicates that all types of former site use are making good progress, however former industrial and production sites are less likely to have been reused in the intervening 4 years than urban infill sites such as former housing and town centre gap sites.

TABLE 4: 60- SITE PROGRESS REPORT *Source: SVDLS / Ryden*

Archetype	No. of sites	No. of sites reused, partially reused or removed and examples	Remain on Register (as a whole or in part)
Peripheral Ex-Productive Sites	15	4 Site naturalised at Muirston, Meadowside, Beith. Storage on part of site at Inches Road, Ardrossan. Offices on part of sites in Prestwick and Kilbagie	14
(Inner) Urban Ex-Industry	11	1 Site 1, Cunninghame Road, Farme Cross, Rutherglen is now Top Golf leisure venue.	10
Former Community Uses and Public Infrastructure	11	3 Residential development on the Former St David's School Playing Field, Plains; and at Ground at former B.R. Monikie in Angus. Gasworks Site, Mansfield Road, Hawick is in active use as a depot with storage.	8 *(these sites have not been removed from the register yet)*
Housing Regeneration Sites	5	3 Residential development at Heatheryford Gardens, Plains; on part of Greendykes Road 2, Edinburgh; and on part of site NE of 117 Newarthill Road, Carfin, Motherwell.	4 *(and the latter two sites shown as reused remain on the Register in part)*
Town Centre Gap Sites	3	2 Residential development at the former fire station on Pearl Street in Callander Residential development on part of the site South of Glenpark Street in Wishaw.	2 *(and part of the Wishaw site remains on the Register).*
Leftover Land	4	2 The site at Babylon Road, Orbiston in Bellshill is now Passive open space. The site north of St James Road at Castle Street in Glasgow is now used as a car park.	2
Extra-Urban and Specialist Former Land Uses	4	1 The site at Glaitness Road, St Ola, Orkney was removed for definitional reasons	3
Committed or Reserved Sites	7	4 Part of the site at Burntisland has been developed for storage. Residential development on three sites : Etna Road, Falkirk; Former Urray House, Muir of Ord; and 195 Victoria Road/ Butterbiggins Road in Glasgow.	4

THE DUSTES

5.13 The Scottish Land Commission instructed Ryden to develop the 2019 baseline report to focus on 'stuck sites'. The report had found that reuse of VDL sites was skewed towards recently-vacated smaller sites, while older, larger and derelict sites were more likely to persist over time.

5.14 The subsequent analysis published in early 2020 using the 2018 SVDLS register found that 589 of 3,640 sites (16%) were derelict, in urban areas and unused since 2000 or earlier – the 'DUSTES'.

5.15 DUSTES were more prevalent in deprived areas, more likely to be in private or multiple ownership, and by definition had residual materials and/or structures requiring remediation, often in locations with the weakest markets and with lower value planning designations.

5.16 Clustering of DUSTES suggested a place-based approach. Glasgow had 9% of VDL sites in 2018, but 22% of the DUSTES. A further filter for pre-1990 site in deprived areas (SIMD deciles 1-4) found 34% of 225 sites in Glasgow, and 85% in only one-quarter of local authority areas.

5.17 A final filter using measures of harm – prominence, clustering, ownership and site condition - found 38 sites, 60% of which were in Glasgow. However, at this point the report noted that this was a data-based approach and that a finer-grained understanding of specific sites is required to determine the appropriate forms of intervention to secure their productive reuse.

5.18 This 2024 update steps back to the full portfolio of 589 DUSTES (totalling 1941.9ha). to identify reuse and persistence. Any DUSTE still on the register has been unused for 24 or more years; indeed those from the industrial recession of the 1980s may potentially have been unused for up to 40 years or more.

5.19 440 of the 589 individual DUSTE sites remain on the VDL Register (2022). A further 46 (261.7 ha) remain on but have had part of the site reused or removed. Therefore 486 DUSTE sites, or part sites, remain on the Register (totalling 1681.9 ha.).

5.20 Of the 149 DUSTE sites (171 plots) which have been reused or removed:

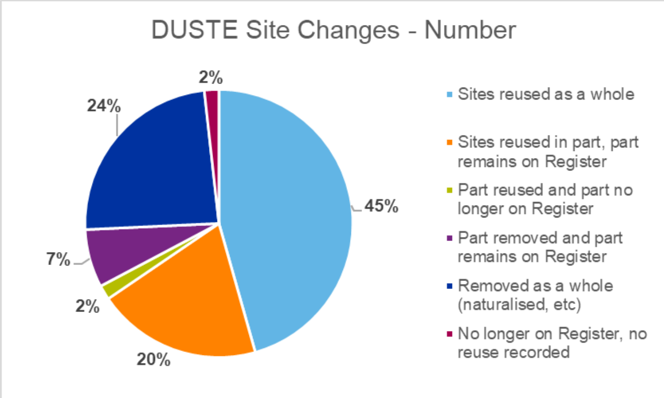
- 78 sites have been reused as a whole
- 34 have been reused in part with part remaining on the Register (as noted at 5.8 above)
- 3 have been reused in part, and the remaining part is no longer on the Register
- 41 sites have been removed as a whole (naturalised, for definitional reasons or remainder is <1ha)
- 12 have been removed in part with part remaining on the Register (as noted at 5.8 above)
- 3 are no longer on the Register and no reuse or removal is recorded

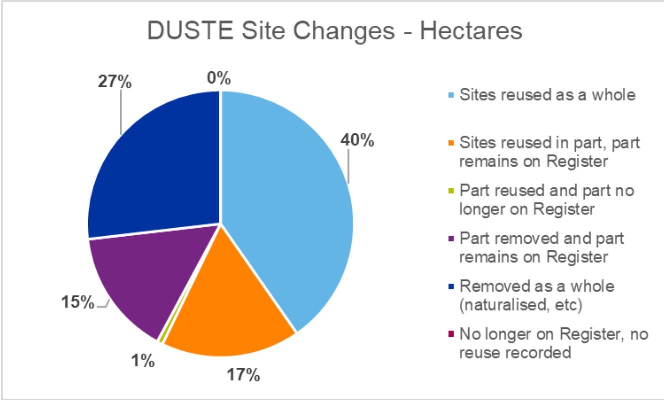
In summary, 78 DUSTE sites and 37 parts of sites (115 plots) have secured active reuse (139.1 hectares), while 56 sites or parts of sites have been removed (101.3 hectares).

5.21 It should also be noted that in some cases even though a site has had no reuse or removal the site size has been increased or decreased due to improved information.

5.22 Figure 21 summarises the mix of DUSTE plots reused or removed 2018-22.

FIGURE 21: DUSTE SITE CHANGES 2018-22

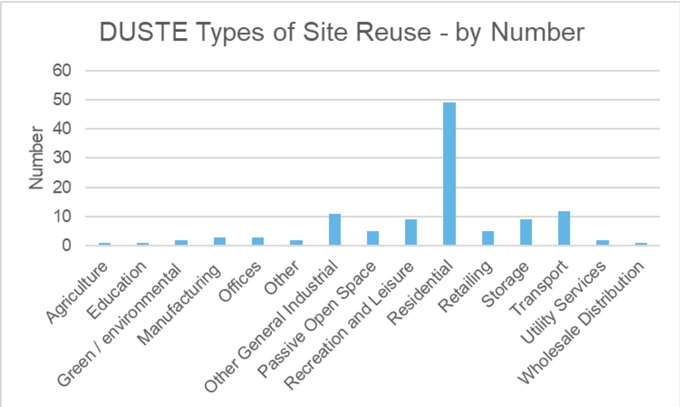


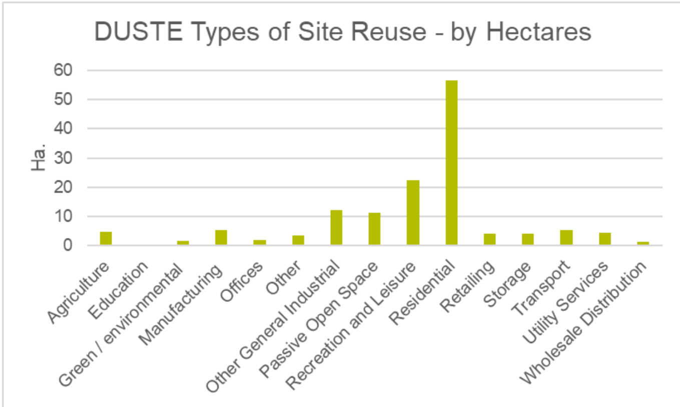


Source: SVDLS / Ryden

5.23 Residential development accounts for most of the reuse of DUSTEs with 49 plots (43%) totalling 56.45 ha (40%) (Figure 22).

FIGURE 22: DUSTES BY TYPES OF REUSE





Source: SVDLS / Ryden

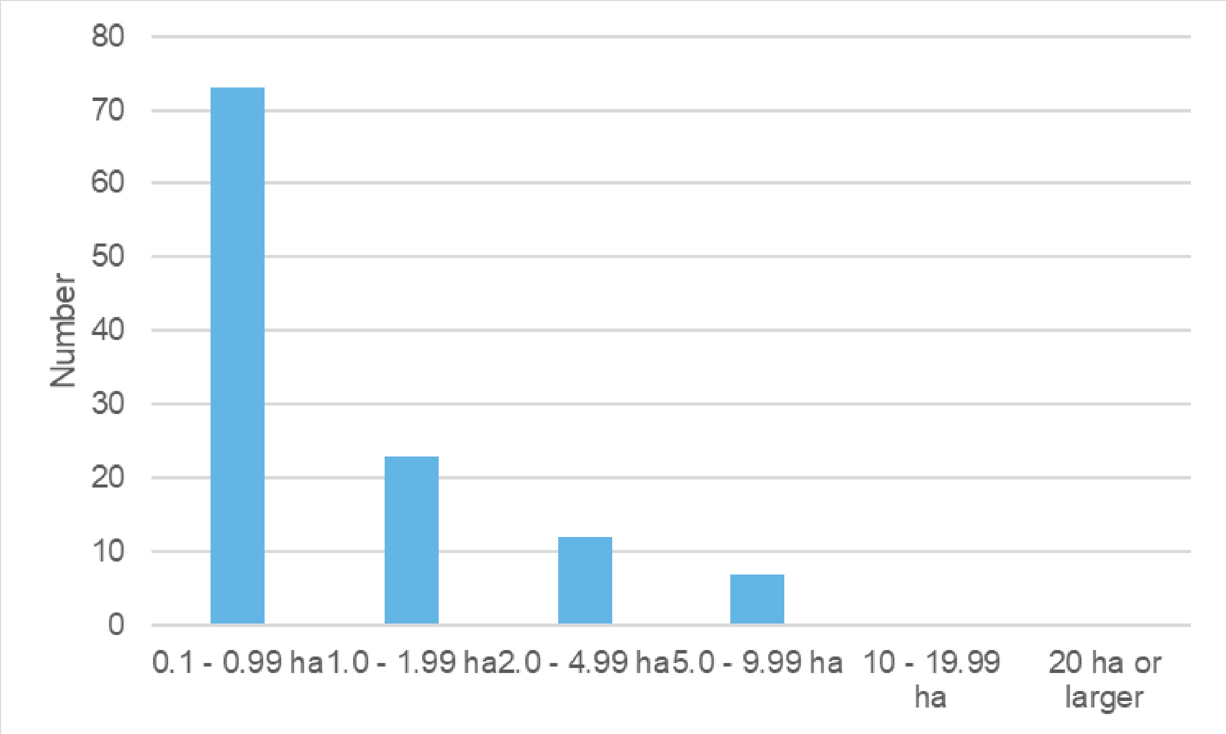
5.24 By numbers of sites, residential reuse of DUSTEs is followed by Transport with 12, General industrial with 11 and Recreation & Leisure with 9 plots. Residential is also the largest use by land area, although that make take time to deliver through development phasing.

5.25 In terms of the 53 DUSTEs plots being removed from the register, 36 have been naturalised (77.9 ha), 12 sites have been removed for definitional reasons (23.2 ha.) and 5 have been removed as the remaining site was less than 1ha. Of these 47 were whole DUSTE sites As above, 3 sites are no longer recorded on the register, but with no reuse or removal.

5.26 The reuse of DUSTEs is focused on smaller sites, which is no doubt related to the easier delivery of those or may indicate a phased approach as sites leave the Register in plots rather than all at once. The large majority of 73 (63%) of site plots reused were smaller than 1 hectare, while no site reused was larger than 10 hectares (Figure 23). As a broad illustration, a 1-hectare site fully developed (rather than greened or partly-greened) could accommodate around:

- 25 residential units in a typical estate housing layout (including landscaping, drainage, roads, parking)
- 100 flats in a 4-storey residential development
- 2,500 sq.m. / 27,000 sq.ft. of low density employment or commercial floorspace

FIGURE 23: DUSTES REUSED BY SIZEBAND (number) *Source: SVDLS / Ryden*



5.27 By region, Clydeplan delivered the most reuse of DUSTE plots with 62 of the 115 plots (Table 5 records changes to DUSTE land areas by region), in keeping with the concentration of VDL in that region and with it also having the highest concentration of reuse across all site types as was analysed in Section 4.

5.28 This is followed by Western Isles, Highland and Argyll & Bute with 20 sites removed (although as above Highland had a VDL data catch-up in 2021); and Dumfries & Galloway and the 3 Ayrshires with 18.

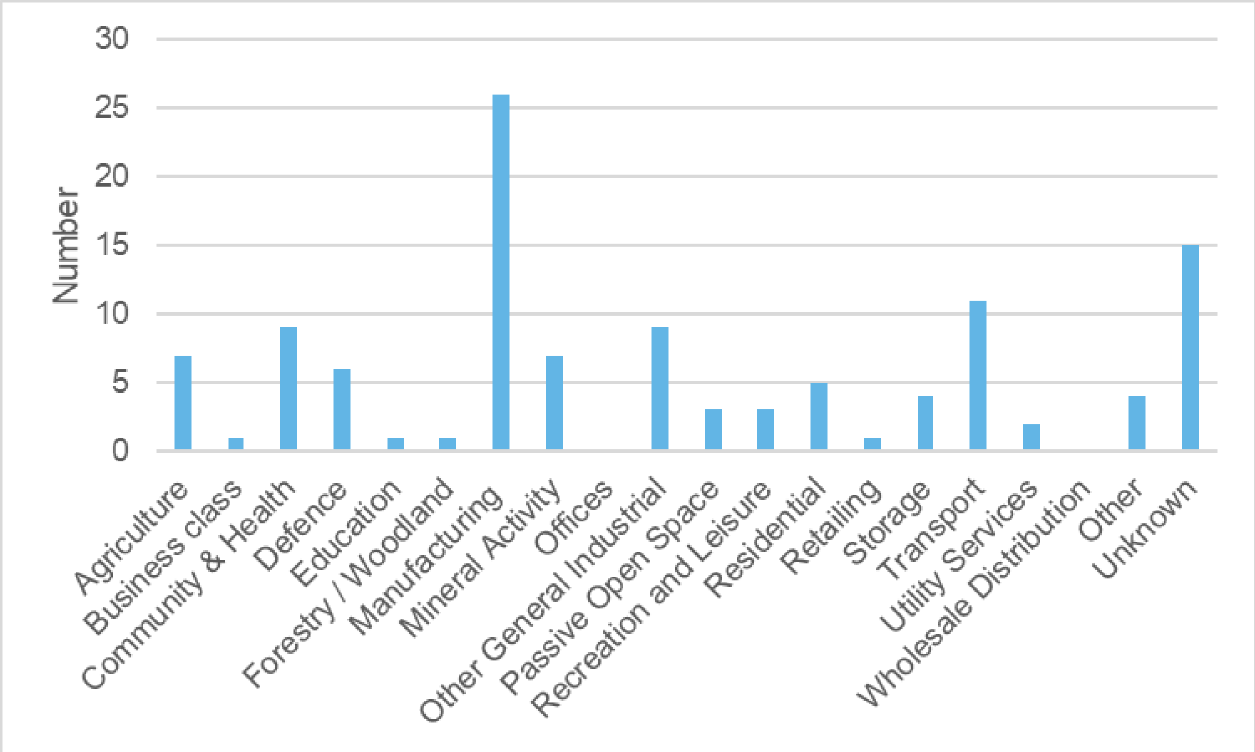
5.29 By DUSTE land area, again Clydeplan has the most reused with 81 hectares; followed by Dumfries & Galloway and the 3 Ayrshires with 21.7 hectares; Western Isles, Highland and Argyll & Bute with 17.5 hectares; and SESplan area with 12.8 hectares.

TABLE 5: DUSTES CHANGES BY REGION *Source: SVDLS / Ryden*

	NUMBER			HECTARES		
REGION	**REMAIN (whole + part)**	**REUSED (whole + part)**	**REMOVED (whole + part)**	**REMAIN (whole + part)**	**REUSED (whole + part)**	**REMOVED (whole + part)**
Aberdeen City, Shire, Moray	8	0	0	9.2	0.0	0.0
Clydeplan	297	62	14	1027.8	81.0	15.4
Tayplan	15	3	2	14.2	4.2	0.8
SESPlan	46	9	8	190.0	12.8	12.1
W Isles, Highland, Argyll & Bute	40	20	15	110.8	17.5	35.3
Dumfries & Galloway, 3 Ayrshires	66	18	13	305.3	21.7	36.7
Loch Lomond & Trossachs	1	0	1	0.8	0.0	0.1
Orkney & Shetland	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Stirling, Clackmannan, Falkirk	**13**	**3**	**3**	**23.8**	**1.9**	**1.0**
TOTALS	**486**	**115**	**56**	**1681.9**	**139.1**	**101.3**

5.30 The Types of Previous Use of Site for the DUSTEs are shown on Figure 24. Former manufacturing sites had the most reuse with 26 plots totalling 38.75 hectares. Transport followed with 11 plots (9.82 ha), then Community and Health also with 9 plots (24.98 ha) and Other General Industrial also with 9 plots (but a lower 3.36 ha). The Previous Uses of Mineral Activity and Defence although lower in numbers were higher in size at 7 plots totalling 15.98 ha, and 6 plots totalling 11.03 ha respectively.

FIGURE 24: DUSTES REUSE BY PREVIOUS USE OF SITE



Source: SVDLS / Ryden

5.31 Private-only funding supported the reuse of 49 DUSTES (43% of those reused). Public-only funding supported 20% while mixed funding (public + private) supported 6%. The funding source/s for 22% of reused DUSTEs is listed as unknown and 9% are recorded as having received no funding (perhaps linked to naturalisation rather than redevelopment). Eight of the sites received VDL funding (see Section 3).

5.32 Examples of productive reuse of DUSTEs include:

- **Cowglen Hospital** on Boydstone Road in Glasgow. A 14.25 hectare site which became derelict in 2001-04. The site was reused in two phases: 3.72 hectares in 2018; and 10.52 hectares in 2022. It is part of a larger housing development site of housing, known as The Boulevard

- South of 2020 **London Road, Glasgow**. A 4.8 hectare site which became derelict in 1981-85, with an unknown previous use. 1.45 hectares of this site was reused in 2018 for utility services with 3.35 hectares reused for Manufacturing in 2021. Part of Clyde Gateway East Business Park.

- Former **Garturk Brickworks**, Calder Avenue, Sikeside, Coatbridge. A 5.66 hectare former manufacturing site which became derelict in 1980 or earlier. The site was reused in three parts: 2.08 hectares in 2020: 1.71 hectares in 2021; and 1.87 hectares in 2022, for residential use by Persimmon Homes.

- **James Watt Dock, Greenock**. 1.23 ha former defence site which became derelict in 1980 or earlier. The whole site was reused in 2020 for residential, comprising 137 new-build one- and two-bedroomed flats for social rent by River Clyde Homes.

5.33 Some of examples of DUSTEs which have been removed from the Register rather than reused include:

- **Glenburn in Prestwick**, a 14.04 ha former manufacturing site which became derelict in 1981-85 and was recorded in 2021 as having been naturalised.
- **Panmurefield in Dundee**, a 0.8 ha site derelict since 1980 or earlier, naturalised since 2019.
- **Former Tank Farm, Dumbarton Road in Milton**, a 3.13 ha site derelict since 1986-90 then naturalised since 2019.
- **Cardowan Bing, Glasgow,** a 27.55 site derelict since 1991-95. In 2019, 9.33 hectares was removed for definitional reasons. 18.22 hectares remains on the Register.
- **Old Station Yard in Crianlarich,** a 0.9 hectare site which became derelict in 1986-90. The site was removed for definitional reasons in two parts: 0.76 hectares in 2018; and 0.14 hectares in 2020.

5.34 Finally, examples of DUSTEs still on the Register range from 78.51 hectares down to 0.1 hectares include:

- The large single employment site at i3, Riverside, Irvine totalling 78.51 ha
- Comrie Bing north of Blairhall in Fife totalling 60.96 ha
- Former Lanarkshire Steelworks, Craigneuk Street in Motherwell totalling 36.74 ha
- Site of Former Motor Transport Works, Beech Crescent on Newhouse Industrial Estate, Newhouse in North Lanarkshire totalling 2.47 ha
- Ex-Timber Basin, Earls Road in Grangemouth totalling 1.81 ha
- Site of former Waterloo Primary School, Overtown Road in Wishaw totalling 0.29 ha
- Former Village Hall, Kingseat Hospital. Kingseat in Aberdeenshire totalling 0.19 ha
- Site of former Burns building, Roxburgh Street in Galashiels totalling 0.12 ha

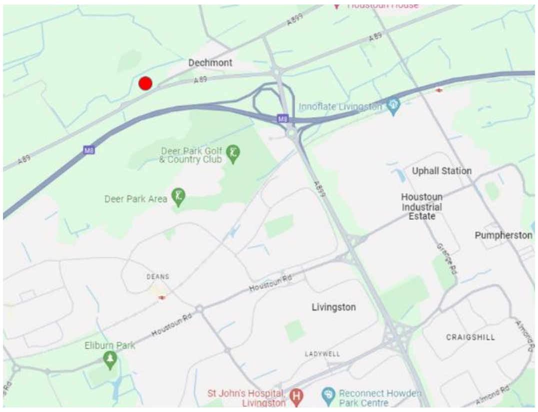
CASE STUDIES

5.35 A number of VDL case studies have been undertaken through the various studies commissioned on the topic by the Scottish Land Commission. New case studies are provided below as well as a check on progress in terms of the stalled project contained within Ryden's 2019 report (Killearn Hospital). A consolidated thematic analysis of all other case studies is also provided.

5.36 The new case studies are:

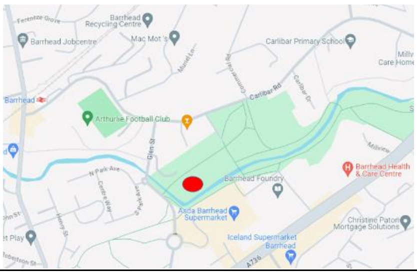
- Bangour Village Hospital, Dechmont, West Lothian
- Levern Water Restoration Project, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire
- Craigpark Quarry, Ratho, Edinburgh
- Greyfriars Biophilic Community Garden, High Street, Glasgow
- Queensway Industrial Estate, Glenrothes, Fife

BANGOUR VILLAGE HOSPITAL, DECHMONT, WEST LOTHIAN

Site History	 Bangour Village Hospital lies to the west of Dechmont and north of the A89 in West Lothian. It is a large site of nearly 90 hectares and includes15 listed buildings set within mature landscaping. The Hospital was built in the early 1900s as a psychiatric asylum based on a designed model village. Some 25 buildings were constructed within a rural landscaped setting providing patient accommodation, staff accommodation, and ancillary support services to enable the site to operate as a self-contained unit. After general medical services transferred to St John's Hospital in nearby Livingston, Bangour General Hospital closed in 1991 and this element of the site appeared on the VDL Register. The Village Hospital closed its last remaining ward in 2004 following which this element of the site appeared on the Register.
Site Conditions	Since the hospital closed, the site landscaping has not been continually maintained and much of the landscape and woodland has become overgrown. Similarly, a number of the listed buildings have deteriorated in condition and some of the unlisted structures have been demolished. In addition, the topography of much of the site is sloping requiring drainage and platforming works prior to development.
Planning History	The adopted West Lothian Local Plan identifies Bangour Village as a site for residential development, with a notional capacity of 550 units. Any development on the site also has a requirement for improved infrastructure and a school. The NHS submitted outline planning applications for residential development, primary school and community facilities but these applications were withdrawn in 1999 and 2010. NHS Lothian submitted a further application in 2015 which was recommended for approval but subject to the need for a Section 75 dealing with infrastructure (including school) and dealing with listed buildings. The application was appealed by the NHS and effectively a stalemate was reached. The site was then sold (now owned by Ambassador Bangour Ltd) and a new parameters based masterplan application for Planning Permission in Principle was submitted in 2019. This included provision of a new primary school (funded by the development), on site affordable housing provision and a comprehensive strategy for dealing with the listed buildings. The proposal was for up to 1,000 residential units consisting of new build and conversions within the existing listed buildings, a commercial hub, local retail centre and a range of infrastructure and enabling works. The application was subject to formal Environmental Impact Assessment which was approved by West Lothian Council in 2022. That included a Section 75 obligation in respect of delivering a new non-

	denominational primary school on site, 20% affordable housing and a comprehensive strategy for dealing with the retained listing buildings. The first detailed planning permission for 356 houses and 52 flats was approved in April 2023. Further applications for the remainder of the site (further residential phases and the commercial centre) are currently being considered.
Project Funding	The project has been entirely funded by the investor/developer with early detailed cash flow modelling discussed with the Council. This demonstrated significant early investment would be required to deliver basic site infrastructure and a physical framework to accommodate early phases of development both for new build and conversion of the listed buildings. This cash flow required significant commitment from the investor and therefore certainty in terms of the quantum of development and costs associated with the new primary school were critical to establish as early as possible. Without the significant early commitment based upon a known quantum of development, it would have been challenging to secure the early phases of the project.
Impacts	When complete, the development will provide: • Nearly 1,000 new residential units including a mix of family housing, affordable housing and conversions within listed buildings on site • A rehabilitated Category A Listed Church gifted to Historic Churches Trust • A new non-denominational primary school including part re-use of the Category A Listed Recreational Hall • Alteration, conversion and re-use of a series of other Category B and C Listed Buildings on site • A district-wide heating system • A new commercial and local retail centre • Management and improvement of the site wide landscape and woodland including re-planting trees • De-culverting and alterations to watercourse to improve water flows and quality • Maintaining public access and footpath links • Provision of affordable housing on site • Biodiversity mitigation and enhancement • Public Art features on site 

LEVERN WATER RESTORATION PROJECT, BARRHEAD, EAST RENFREWSHIRE

Site History	The Levern Water is a small river in East Renfrewshire and Glasgow which flows through the towns of Neilston and Barrhead for a total distance of 15km. Historically, the Levern Water facilitated the socioeconomic growth of parts of East Renfrewshire by providing water power for cotton mills as well as homes. The Levern Water runs through Barrhead town centre and historically the site was part of a council depot and most recently used as an amenity site. There are no buildings remaining on site and it has been derelict for a number of years. 
Site Conditions	Following the closure of the amenity site, the 4ha site (of which 1 ha was VDL) at Walton Street within Calibar Park had essentially become a derelict waste-ground. Part of the site was contaminated and despite its location next to a local play park it had become a known area of antisocial behaviour. The Levern Water itself had become degraded and because of flood risk issues it was not suitable for re-development (e.g. for housing). The VDL element of the site was added to the VDL Register between 1996-2000 and can be categorised as a DUSTE (Derelict Urban Site since 2000 or Earlier). 
The Project	The Levern Water Restoration Project is a partnership between East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) who sought to restore the river and create an attractive riverside 'blue-green' space for the community of Barrhead. Led by ERC, the project was funded through £1.6 million from the Scottish Government's Water Environment Fund, administered by SEPA and £1.1 million from the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme, with a further £0.1 million contribution from Sustrans. Recently completed, the project has restored 1.5km of the Levern Water and remediated 1 ha of derelict land. In terms of wider benefits it has also: • Removed 2 barriers to wild fish migration, allowing for biodiversity resilience. • Installed 380m of new public footpaths and planted up attractive riverside 'blue-green' space • Created more opportunity for active travel by linking the community to the amenities of Barrhead • Planted 600 native trees to create a mini climate forest • Sown 0.75 ha of wild meadow seed • Created wetland habitat • Improved the resilience of Levern Water to cope with heavy rainfall, preventing localised flooding  The local school, Carlibar Primary has been involved in monitoring the health and biodiversity of the Levern Water with support from the Clyde River Foundation. Pupils have been helping to rear thousands of trout in their classrooms to release into the river, the first batch were released on 27 February 2024. It is hoped that they will record the first salmon to return to the river in 170 years.

Photographs courtesy of SEPA

CRAIGPARK QUARRY, RATHO, EDINBURGH

Site History

Craigpark Quarry is located to the west of the small town of Ratho in rural West Edinburgh. The site was an active quarry producing hard rock until 1990, when all extraction ceased.

In 2006, planning permission was granted for the erection of 117 houses on part of the wider quarry site. These works also included some restoration of the remaining quarry site for public amenity purposes.

The remaining 23.4ha site is in close proximity to the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena as well as the Union Canal which is a Conservation Area.

Site Conditions

The quarry site is uncontaminated however because it is reclaimed land settlement can be an issue. This often requires civil construction solutions which can be a costly addition to a development project.

The VDL element of the site (18.5 ha) was added to the VDL Register between 1996-2000 and can be categorised as a DUSTE (Derelict Urban Site since 2000 or Earlier).

The Project

In 2016, Tartan Leisure Ltd partnered with Wavegarden, a Spanish wave technology provider with the sole purpose of bringing inland surfing to Scotland. A number of potential sites were considered and in 2017, Craigpark Quarry was acquired by Tartan Leisure Ltd with the ambition to create a landscape-led site with natural habitat biodiversity. The location next to the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena which attracts 280,000 visitors a year whilst being just 10 miles from Edinburgh city centre were key attractors for the site. It was also considered that the existing topography of the quarry creates a natural amphitheatre which not only provides character but also serves as protection from prevailing winds.

In 2019, planning permission was granted to redevelop the disused quarry site into a world-class surfing destination to include water sport and training facilities infrastructure, retail, food and drink and tourism accommodation facilities. This will all be set within a country park destination and aims to attract not just surfers but families and international visitors as well.

In 2020, a new planning application was approved which increased the floor area of the buildings to 6220 sqm and adjusted the configuration of some the buildings, i.e. an increase in the size of the proposed lodges adapting to market demand and a greater number of ancillary buildings.

In 2022, Wavegarden Scotland received £26 million from the Scottish National Investment Bank. Senior lender OakNorth Bank is supporting the construction of the facility with a £25.2m loan. Backing is also being provided by BAE Systems Pension Fund IM which will purchase the park through a sale and leaseback arrangement once construction is complete.

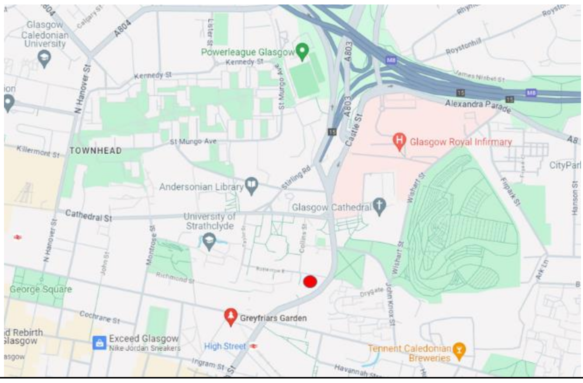
Construction commenced later in 2022 with earthworks completed in 2023. This included consolidation and landscaping of the quarry floor to provide a solid platform for the building phase to commence. The construction of the cove in underway which is the 160-metre surf lake powered by Wavegarden Cove technology. The cove will be capable of delivering up to 1,000 perfect waves per/hour. Other buildings on site are also taking shape.

Wavegarden Scotland has been renamed Lost Shore Surf Resort and the project hopes to deliver around 100 jobs and attract 180,000 visitors a year. The project is anticipated to open later in 2024.

GREYFRIARS BIOPHILIC COMMUNITY GARDEN, HIGH STREET, GLASGOW

Site History

The site at 321-325 High Street, Glasgow is positioned between the Victorian neo-gothic Barony Hall and the St Mungo mural in an area often considered the historic heart of Glasgow. The site itself is understood to be a former hydraulic pumping station for Glasgow which was built in 1895. Its job was to supply water at high pressure to premises in the city centre to operate lifts, presses and other devices. It continued until 1964. Laterally the site had been under utilised public space.



The Project

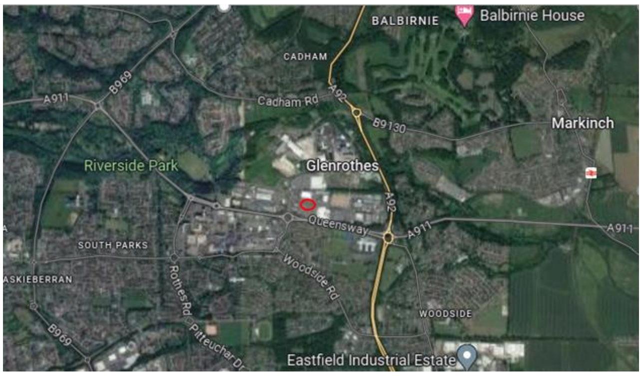
Glasgow City Council has worked with community groups in the Merchant City, High Street, Drygate and Trongate for a number of years providing growing space in the city centre. Garden space was originally provided on the nearby Shuttle Street in 2012 as part of the Council's Stalled Spaces however this was always intended to be temporary with the site earmarked for re-development.

The Council identified the replacement site at 321-325 High Street and funding was obtained from the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Fund as well as the Council's Food Growing Strategy and the City Centre Strategy. There was also in-kind support from the Council's Neighbourhood Regeneration Sustainability teams including Parks Development, the Landscape Design Team and the Community Payback Team.

The Garden, which features a collection of flowers, herbs, fruits and vegetables in 57 raised beds (3 of which are accessible, where a chair or wheelchair can fit beneath) and surrounding areas was created through a partnership between the Council and the community groups. The new growing space has transformed the under utilised space into a community asset – managed by a committee of local people – offering food growing opportunities to local residents.

The Council has leased the new site to Greyfriars Biophilic Garden (a Registered Charity) and it will be managed by the committee. This step allows the group to determine their rental charges for their plotholders with income generated being ploughed back into the site. It also supports the groups desire to develop their own fundraising strategy and take responsibility for the site in the longer term, empowering the community to have a positive impact on their community beyond the perimeters of the garden. The Garden opened in August 2023.

QUEENSWAY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, GLENROTHES, FIFE

Site History	Queensway Industrial Estate is one of Glenrothes' highest profile and most popular industrial estates which has over many years been home to a wide range of businesses. The estate has proximity to the town centre however, it was recognised over 10 years ago that the age and condition of some existing buildings, derelict land and property and retail encroachment had resulted in the estate being unable to realise its full economic potential. In order to secure its future success, Fife Council prepared a Regeneration Action Plan for the wider estate. 
Site Conditions	As part of the Regeneration Action Plan, the Council identified a specific site within the industrial estate which previously hosted a manufacturing facility which since its closure had become vacant and derelict. The site also had issues of ground contamination and stability.
The Project	The Council sought to construct new-build, fit-for-purpose business units in order to encourage more businesses to locate and grow in the area. Fife Council secured funding of c. £337,000 from the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund which secured the demolition of existing buildings along with site investigations, site decontamination together with other essential site infrastructure works. The Council was able to acquire the site and construct 9 new business units ranging in size from 1,044 – 2,131 sqft. The units were completed in 2021 at a cost of £3.38 million (including fees). All business units are now fully let by a range of local businesses including those operating in construction, manufacturing and food and drink. The early investment from the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund helped to unlock monies from the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal's 'Fife Industrial, Innovation, Investment (i3) Programme' to complete the redevelopment of the site. Approval for use of further Vacant and Derelict Land Fund is now in place to support ground remediation and preparation in advance of commercial redevelopment activity across the balance of the derelict land at Flemington Road within the Queensway Industrial Estate. 

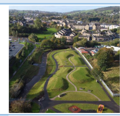
KILLEARN HOSPITAL, STIRLING - UPDATE

Update	In Ryden's 2019 report, 5 case studies were undertaken in order to illustrate in more detail the re-use of vacant and derelict sites for a range of productive purposes. One of the sites reviewed was the 'stalled site' of Killearn Hospital, which closed in 1972. The 22-hectare site is rural in nature and contained a number of derelict buildings, many with issues of asbestos. Several schemes had been proposed for the site but had struggled to come to fruition.  By means of update, in 2020 developer CALA Homes was given planning permission to build 89 new houses with an area earmarked as commercial space. Planning conditions require remediation work to be carried out to the entire site before the start of construction. Following an application by CALA to vary the conditions attached to the original planning consent it was agreed by Stirling Council that the remediation works can be undertaken in 2 phases. Phase 1 will see the remediation works being undertaken on the residential site, while phase two remediation works on the non-residential site will be undertaken at a later date. CALA purchased the site at the end of 2022. Remedial works on the residential site commenced towards the end of 2023 and are expected to take 9 months before housing construction will commence. Sales launch is expected to be in Spring 2024. The development will provide much-needed housing options for the area.

5.37 The majority of the above case studies are for particularly large, complex sites which have been on the SVDLS register for a number of years. Bringing these into reuse is a lengthy process which requires various stages of project feasibility work before any development can commence. This can be a costly upfront expense which often relies on external funding which as noted in Section 3 can be very competitive. Bringing these sites to fruition often requires a collaborative approach between the public sector, the private sector and/or the community.

5.38 Table 6 overleaf provides a thematic summary of all VDL case studies on the Scottish Land Commission's website as well as in its various consultant reports.

TABLE 6: THEMATIC SUMMARY OF CASE STUDIES

SITE	SIZE*	LOCATION	SITE ISSUES	REUSE	FUNDING	PROJECT LEAD	IMAGE
Bangour Village Hospital	c.90ha	West Lothian	• Listed buildings • Topography • Dense woodland/vegetation • Infrastructure requirements	Residential led masterplan	Privately funded by developer	Private sector	
Levern Water	4ha	East Renfrewshire	• Contamination • Flood Risk • Antisocial behaviour	Improved riverside blue-green space	• Water Environment Fund (SEPA) • Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme • Sustrans	Public sector	
Craig Park Quarry	23ha	City of Edinburgh	• Reclaimed land	Leisure	• Scottish National Investment Bank • Other private funders	Private sector	
321-325 High Street	0.37ha	Glasgow	• Under-utilised land but no known site issues	Community garden	• Vacant and Derelict Land Fund • Glasgow City Council	Community and public sector	
Killearn Hospital	21ha	Stirling	• Derelict buildings • Asbestos • Dense woodland/vegetation	Residential and Commercial	• Privately funded by developer	Private sector	
Cuningar Loop	30ha	South Lanarkshire	• Considerable contamination	Leisure	• Scottish Government • South Lanarkshire Council • Vacant and Derelict Land Fund • Clyde Gateway	Public sector	
Opera House, John Finnie St	Not stated	East Ayrshire	• Listed building • Derelict site with only weathered façade remaining • Economic climate (2009/10)	Council office	• Heritage Lottery Fund • Historic Environment Scotland • East Ayrshire Council • Development Partner	Public sector	
Old Abertay Steelworks	1 ha	Fife	• Contamination • Dense woodland/vegetation • Buildings requiring demolition	Community building	• Big Lottery • Regeneration Capital Grant Fund • EU LEADER funding • Various charitable trusts	Community and public sector	
Shawfield	11 ha	Glasgow	• Considerable contamination	Offices	• Clyde Gateway	Public sector	
Athlete's Village	39ha	Glasgow	• Contamination • Infrastructure requirements • Depressed housing market (2014)	Residential	• Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council funding associated with Commonwealth Games	Public sector	

Former Dumbarton Academy	Not stated	West Dunbartonshire	• Listed building • Disrepair	Council office	• West Dunbartonshire Council	Public sector	
Wishawhill Wood Pump Track	Not stated	North Lanarkshire	• Derelict site • Antisocial behavior	Leisure	• Vacant and Derelict Land Fund	Public sector	
Shettleston Growing Project	Not stated	Glasgow	• Contamination	Community allotment/garden	• Climate Challenge Fund • Shettleston Housing Association	Community and public sector	
South Central Kilmarnock	44ha	East Ayrshire	• Vacant units • Significant flood risk	Residential and commercial proposed	• TBC – at masterplan stage	Public sector	
Raining's Stairs (Castle Street)	Not stated	Highland	• Derelict site • Topography	Residential (affordable housing)	• City Region Deal	Public sector	
Baltic Street	Not stated	Glasgow	• Derelict land	Leisure	• Glasgow City Council • Clyde Gateway • Creative Scotland	Community	
Canal and North Gateway, Hamiltonhill	Not stated	Glasgow	• Derelict land	Greening/leisure	• NatureScot	Public sector	
Social Bite Village	Not stated	Edinburgh	• Vacant grass lot	Residential (homelessness accommodation)	• City of Edinburgh Council • Others not stated	Community/Social Enterprise	
Saughton Park	48ha	Edinburgh	• No site issues, well managed open space and not VDL • Exemplar for sites returned to amenity use/naturalised	Green energy for the facilities on site	• Heritage Lottery Fund Parks for People • Sustrans • Scottish Energy Efficiency Programme • Salix Finance Scottish Power's Green Economy Fund	Public sector	
Urban Market Garden, Locavore	Not stated	Glasgow	• Overgrown, derelict land	Community garden	Not stated	Public sector	

Old Changing Rooms, Queens Park Recreation Ground	Not stated	Glasgow	• Building in poor condition/fire damage • Antisocial behaviour	Community building	• Community Ownership Fund • Glasgow City Council	Community/Public sector	
Former Police Box, Alexandria	Not stated	West Dunbartonshire	• Dilapidated • Complex, small piece of land	Leisure/Active Travel	West Dunbartonshire Council National Lottery	Community/Public sector	
Carluke High Mill	Not stated	South Lanarkshire	• Listed building • Derelict site	Community building and garden/heritage tourism	• Architectural Heritage Fund • Scottish Land Fund • Community Climate Asset Fund • Vacant & Derelict Land Investment Programme • Historic Environment Scotland • National Lottery Heritage Fund	Community	
Concrete Garden, Possilpark	Not stated	Glasgow	• Small derelict site	Community garden/leisure	• Scottish Land Fund • Community Enterprise	Community	
Trotters Building, New Cumnock	Not stated	East Ayrshire	• Dilapidated building • Flood risk	Community building	• UK Government Community Renewal Fund • Scottish Land Fund	Community	

Note: * For size, the whole site may not be included on the SVDLR

5.39 In analysing the 25 case studies in Table 6 it is apparent that site conditions often go much further than just being VDL. These sites can often contain further complexities such as listed buildings, flood risk, complex topography and contamination. Issues such as these can dramatically affect the feasibility of development projects as they require upfront investment in order to make the site safe and amenable for development. This can perhaps, partly explain why the majority of the projects have been driven by the public sector rather than the private. Where the private sector has been able to take forward a site this is generally with a residential consent which can help with overall project feasibility whilst also providing much needed land remediation and delivery of new housing. It is positive to see a lot of community involvement with local sites and the creation of many new community buildings and/or gardens. Development will not be appropriate for every site and the case studies above also show examples of enhanced greening as well as the provision of new active travel links. It is also interesting to note that several local authorities have used VDL sites for new Council offices, choosing brownfield land and buildings over new build and thus aligning their corporate actions with their own policy drivers.

SUMMARY

5.40 To explore and explain the SVDLS and in particular the persistence of more problematic sites, a suite of sub-categories of sites was re-examined:

Sixty sites with a skew towards the 'four Ps' in terms of dereliction, longevity, location, size and ownership:

- 18 (30%) reused or part reused, of which 11 residential and other employment, sports, parking.
- A further 18 (30%) have planning activity and/or designations and/or are being marketed.
- All types of site are progressing, though urban infill more readily than industrial / production sites.

The 'DUSTEs' were 589 derelict urban sites – 16% of the sites on the register - unused since 2000 or earlier. As well having remediation requirements they are more prevalent in deprived areas with weaker development options:

- 78 DUSTEs plots have been fully reused and 37 partly reused = 115 plots (19.5% of all DUSTEs benefiting from reuse).
- Encouragingly, DUSTEs are also most likely to have been reused for residential development then other uses (rather than defaulting to softer end uses).
- In addition 53 have been removed in whole (47) or in part (6) and 3 sites have simply come off the register.

The case studies reported in this section show:

- The five new case studies show major, private sector-led housing regenerations alongside a public sector-led environmental projects, a unique private sector leisure project funded by patient capital, community-led urban growing project. An update on a derelict hospital site from 2019 finds that it too has attracting private sector residential-led regeneration.
- The thematic review of all Scottish Land Commission VDL case studies highlights the complexities often involved in bringing these sites to fruition which can often be reliant of external funding. The majority of sites appear to be public sector-led however the community also is particularly active with the private sector less prominent. For some VDL sites development will not be appropriate and it is positive to see that enhanced greening can be used to improve the local blight some sites can present.

5.41 The sites-in-focus present a very positive direction for some of the more stubborn VDL sites. They are an important measure of progress in addressing VDL – that not only the full register sites, but also the 60 sites and particularly the most problematic sites, the DUSTEs, are finding positive destinations in reuse, part reuse and greening.

06

SURVEY AND CONSULTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

6.1 The experience of those dealing with vacant and derelict land is a critical element of this research project. There is an inevitable lag from policy to land reuse, as well as a lag in collation of VDL statistics. Qualitative research is therefore required to fully explore current and emerging VDL trends and support the analysis.

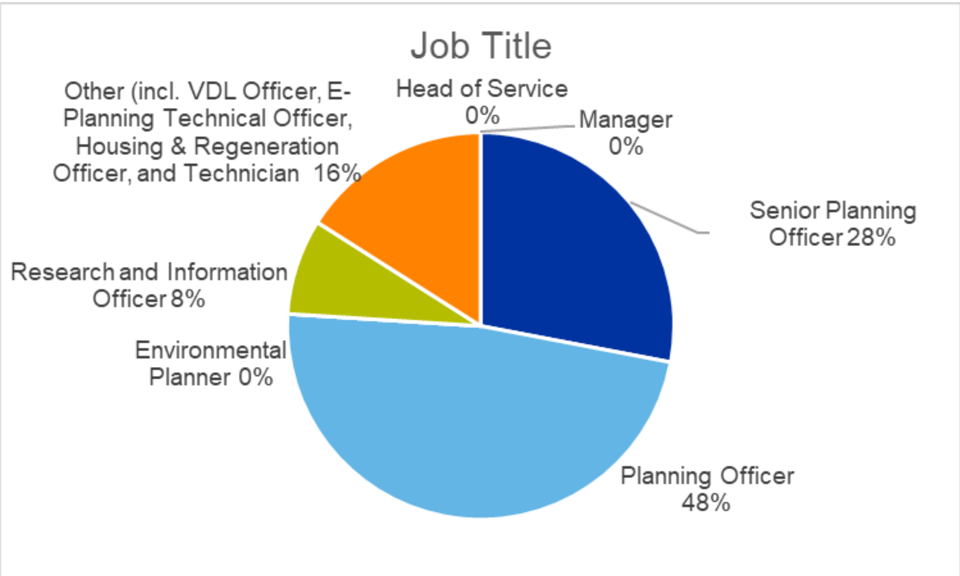
6.2 An online survey was issued to 33 Scottish local planning authorities. The officer responsible for compiling the annual SVDLS return for each authority was contacted. The survey did not seek to replicate the statistical detail of the SVDLS, but rather to harvest local authorities' understanding of the nature, potential of, and barriers to the re-use of local VDL sites. The survey achieved a high response rate of 76% (25 responses), including from those authorities with notably large vacant & derelict land portfolios. The survey follows a similar exercise in 2019 which also secured a high response rate and is compared with the new survey results at the end of this section.

6.3 In addition, one-to-one consultations were undertaken with national organisations which have an interest in the increased reuse of Scotland's vacant and derelict land, including policy makers, planners, community regeneration, private house building, public house building, commercial development and greening, along with elected local planning authorities to supplement their survey responses. A list of consultees and the topic guide used for consultations are included at Appendix C.

SURVEY RESULTS

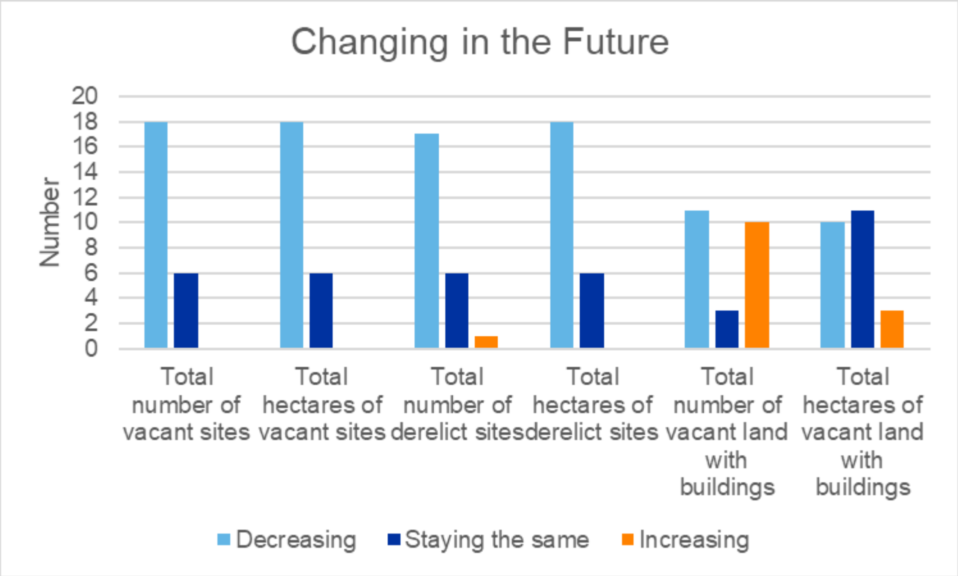
6.4 The analysis below provides the combined responses to each survey question. Where supplementary comments were made these are also summarised.

6.5 **Question 1**. Please select your job title. A significant majority (76%) of respondents are senior planning officers or planning officers (including Planning Information Officer and Supervisory Planner). The balance of 24% are VDL officers or work in related fields such as information or housing.

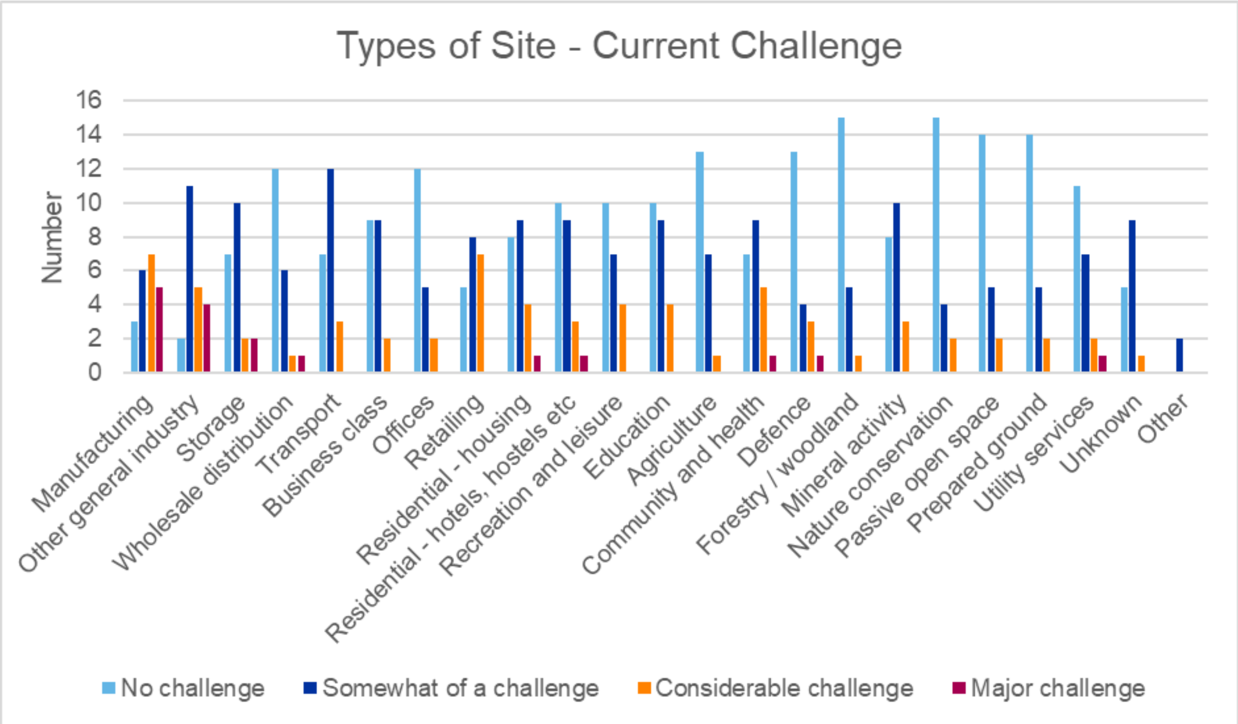


6.6 **Question 2** asked the respondents to summarise the number and hectares of vacant and derelict sites on their current Vacant and Derelict Land Survey return. This data was already available and simply provided a baseline within the survey.

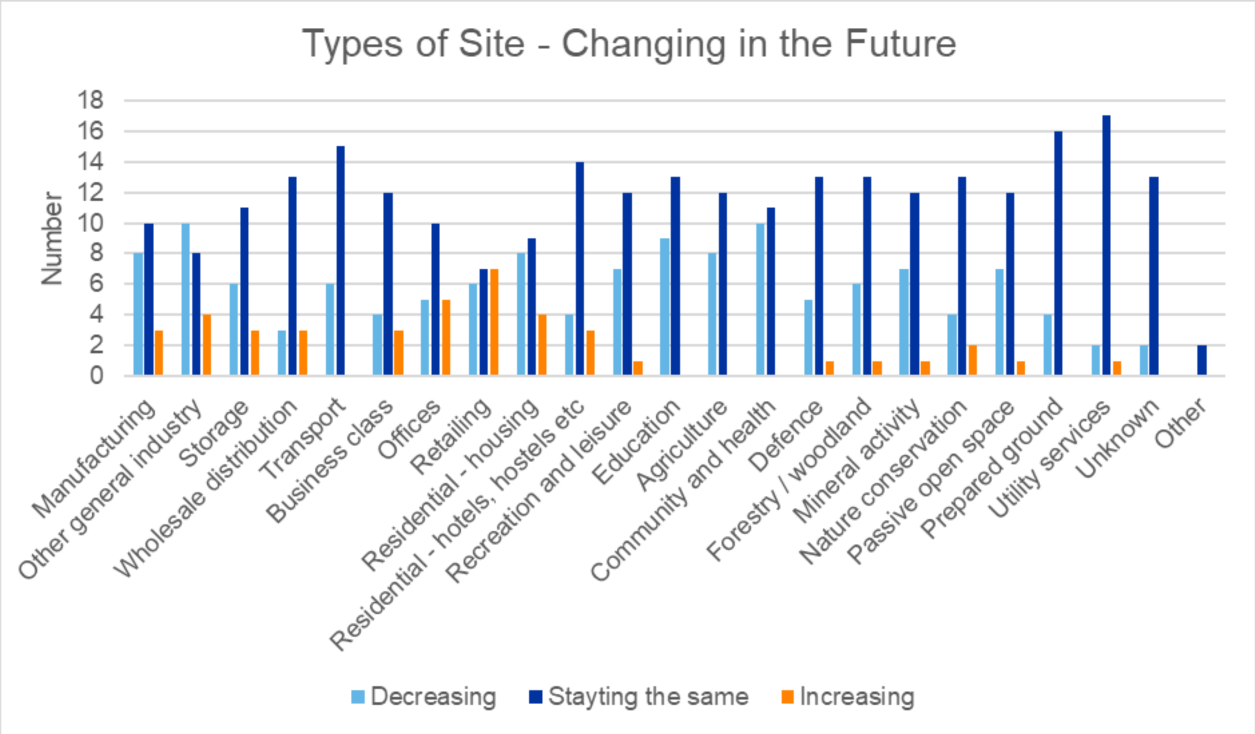
6.7 **Question 3** asked to what extent the number and hectares of types of sites are expected to change in the future. The majority felt that these would either decrease or stay the same (see chart below), although one respondent felt the number of derelict sites would increase. This implies that the peak of creating new vacant & derelict sites may be passing. Notably though, the vacant land with buildings is split between decreasing and either staying the same (land area) or increasing (numbers of sites).



6.8 **Question 4** asked to what extent types of sites are CURRENTLY a challenge. The site types used in the VDL returns were provided with the option to rate these from 'No challenge' to 'Major challenge'. The results are mixed, indicating the different VDL situations across the country. Former 'industrial' sites – Manufacturing and Other general industry – present the greatest challenge. Other former employment sites are a challenge for some authorities. Former Retailing sites are also a challenge for some. Other former uses which are challenge in a minority of locations include Residential types, Education, Community and health, Defence, Utility services and Mineral activities. Other challenges mentioned in responses were docks and former petrochemical sites. Soft uses such as forestry, nature and open space are less of a challenge as might be expected, but are each mentioned by a few local authorities as challenging.

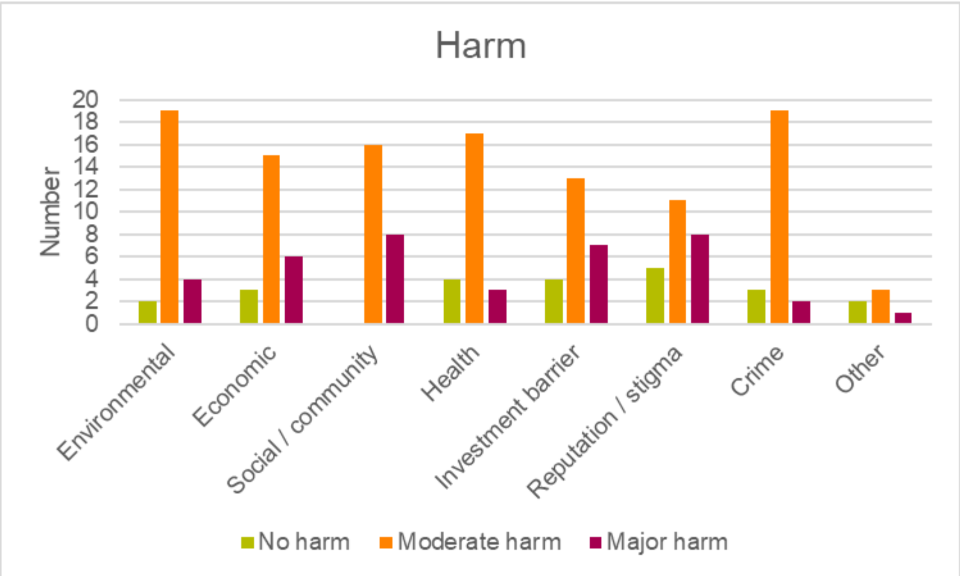


6.9 **Question 5** asked to what extent the number of sites in each former land use category is expected to change in the future. The options provide were decreasing, stay the same and increasing. The most common response was that levels of VDL are expected to stay the same, closely followed by a decrease. A minority expect increasing levels of VDL for specific former land uses, most notably in Retailing followed by employment uses and a few reporting an expected rise in VDL former residential sites. Other increases by former site use were reported by one or two respondents only, potentially reflecting their local sites.

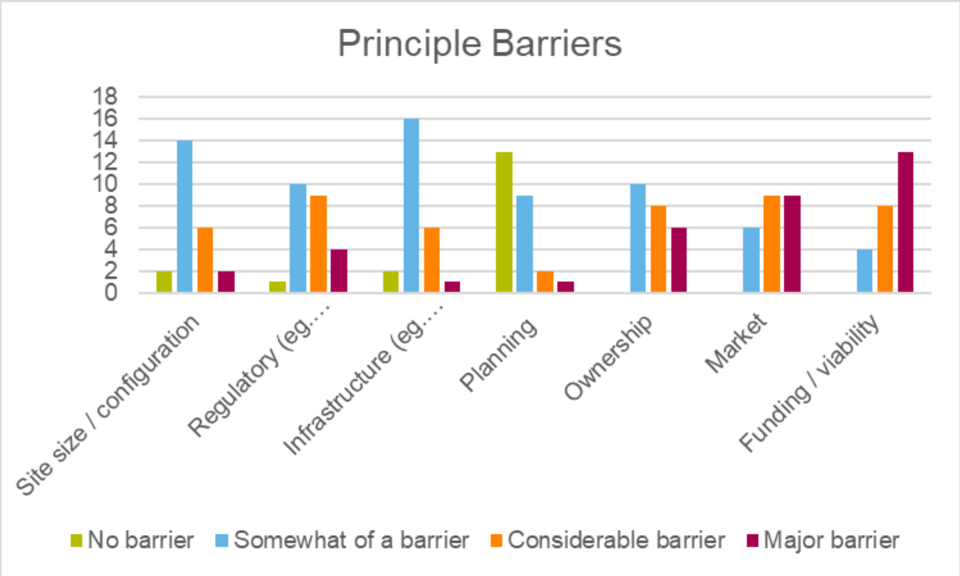


6.10 Additional comments for Question 5 included possible increase in offices and business sites due to the change in working patterns which may lead to more vacancies; changes to the High street and retailing patterns may increase retail sites; dated offices and industrial units may increase site vacancy; out-of-town sites are harder to find a new purpose for; prepared ground vacant but ready for development will decrease; and rural areas have different land use issues such as contaminated former mill land, agriculture and forestry with potential redevelopment constraints due to low labour skill and availability.

6.11 In **Question 6** respondents were asked to rate the harm caused by VDL in their area. The levels of harm are notable, signalling moderate to major harm across economic, social /community, investment and reputation / stigma, environmental, health and crime. Only small minorities reported no harm under each category, expect for social/ community where all respondents reported harm from VDL. Under ‘other’ some identified particular sites in their area which are a blight or attract anti-social behaviour.



6.12 **Question 7** asked respondents to identify the principal barriers to re-use of VDL sites, choosing from no barrier through somewhat then considerable to major barriers. The most prominent are market and financial which are weighted towards considerable and major barriers. Ownership and regulatory barriers are also considerable. Infrastructure and site size/configuration were reported as significant barriers by some respondents. Planning was rated as the lowest barrier to reuse, although this may in part reflect planning officers' familiarity with their planning system and local sites.



6.13 Respondents' supplementary comments on barriers to site reuse also centred on market demand, cost/viability, ownership and current economic conditions. Other challenges such as site constraints and remediation are seen as compounding those. Funding is seen to be supporting problematic sites however only in certain locations. Comments on these and other barriers include:

- *"The majority of sites have some constraints that make them more expensive to develop than a greenfield site would be. The economic conditions and low population in this area present a challenge to developers getting return on investment in most categories of use and are likely to require additional funding to make them viable".*

- *"Planning now encourages reuse of these sites. The main barrier for developers would likely be remediation and viability".*

- "*Ownership and funding/viability of projects on VDL remain two of the most significant challenges to re-use".*

- *"Although all interrelated, market and viability seem to be the biggest challenges because even sites which have all of the other issues resolved cannot be brought forward".*

- *"A high number (have) existing buildings and/or contamination. Therefore, there are considerable works required, and upfront costs before any development can take place. As interest rates are rising, and the cost of borrowing money becomes more expensive, developers will look to sites which they can start development and in turn produce income more quickly".*

- *"(The) approach to funding (VDLF) is traditionally top-down focused through a nationwide perspective, in which a very slim pool of recipient authorities recur. Authorities who will never qualify do not have sufficient alternative means or mechanisms to decisively intervene in private VDL stock - and this permanently entrenches the market impediment".*

- *"Larger sites to which development has been directed predominantly fall within masterplan areas for* *which the market, funding, viability, and infrastructure present considerable barriers but which the frameworks seek to rectify".*

- *"Much of the legacy of the longest-term derelict land is of industrial or related nature. These sites are of typically private ownership. Ultimately, owner interest must be compelled and/or incentivised to act. The policy framework is already one of the most obvious consistent enablers but it alone does not instigate or catalyse private sector action".*

- *"Another barrier is proximity and lack of cohesion between uses e.g. student accommodation 50 metres from a factory may be seen to be in conflict/cause environmental health issues".*

- *"The compatibility of redeveloping vacant land can cause issues with existing surrounding uses and to redevelop as a whole would probably need public sector intervention to bring large areas of land in mixed ownership into more productive use".*

Some positivity was also noted:

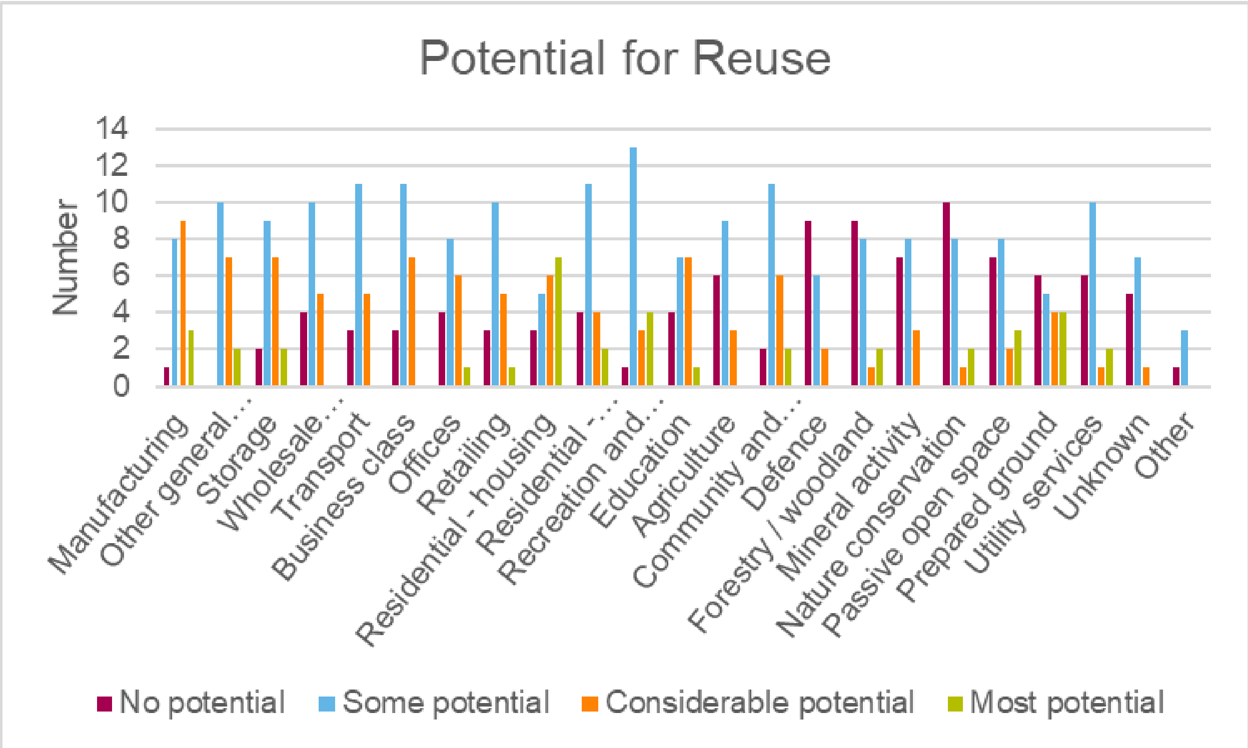
- *"Smaller vacant sites within established business/industrial areas are less of a challenge and it is anticipated based on market interest that these will be developed in the short to medium term".*

- *"The small number of VADL sites in affluent suburbs have steadily reduced through profitable housing developments"*

6.14 **Question 8** asked about problem sites and potential solutions, which included compulsory sales orders (or similar land forfeiture), external funding, public money to clean up contamination remediate sites, community-led projects, marketability of sites, business cases to develop ideas for reuse, affordable housing, removal of barriers to the conversion of existing buildings, and masterplans. See Appendix B for suggested sites.

6.15 In **Question 9** respondents were asked to rate to what extent re-using VDL is a priority for their organisation. All but one respondents rated it as a medium to high priority.

6.16 **Question 10** asked respondents which land uses offer the most potential for site re-use. The greatest potential was noted for residential. Other land uses believed to have good potential are Manufacturing, Other general industry, Storage, Prepared ground, Community and health, Education, Recreation and leisure, Offices and Business class. Notably though, softer end uses are thought less likely to have potential.



6.17 In **Question 11** respondents were asked to describe an example of a successful productive re-use of vacant and derelict land in their area. The responses were varied and positive and are presented in Appendix B. While residential re-use of sites and buildings is noted as the most common solution, the 36 examples provide a very wide range of other uses including recreation and leisure, industrial, retail, greenspace/ allotments, public realm, community events space, storage and recycling.

6.18 **Question 12** asked respondents to describe a local example of a long term stalled site. Responses include several former industrial sites, defence locations and former hospitals. Issues hampering their reuse include contamination, funding, ownership, limited redevelopment options, heritage constraints and size. The 30 sites and respondents' comments on why they are stalled are presented in Appendix B.

6.19 **Question 13** asked whether any particular sites or types of sites could be readily reused within the next 3 years. Particularly noted were sites in areas of population for housing including social housing and other cleared sites for residential development; sites/ prepared ground for industrial or business development on estates; sites in the ownership of a party securing planning permission; and heritage restoration including former hospitals. Sites with no contamination, no ownership barriers, access to funding and viable proposals for their reuse are most likely to be brought forward; as well as sites in public ownership. Many of these are already moving through the planning system. The comments on the suggest sites or types of sites offered by local authorities are presented in Appendix B.

6.20 At **Question 14** respondents highlighted any policies, strategies, programmes or projects in their area designed to encourage the re-use of VDL. Responses included NPF4, LDP policies, Strategic Development Frameworks, Growth Deals, Vacant and Derelict Land Strategies, Town Centre Living Fund, Town Centre Frameworks, Area visions, Regeneration Development Plans, Strategic Investment Plans, Place Programmes and Masterplans. These are named in Appendix B.

CONSULTATIONS

VDL TASK FORCE

6.21 Consultees consider that the Vacant and Derelict Land Task Force provided a "rallying point" around Scotland's VDL. It helped to embed the principle that indefinite dereliction of land is damaging and wasteful. While VDL was already a priority for some, the Task Force raised the profile and led to the introduction of the Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Fund which is benefiting many sites, and informed other initiatives and the planning system. There is a sense among some consultees though that although good things are happening around the country, the overall initiative has lost momentum, is not as visible as it was and lacks the focal point that it had at the time of the Task Force and SLC's coordination. One consultee mentioned that other parts of the UK had picked up on some of the Task Force's recommendations, citing Liverpool City Region as well as the Southwark Land Commission as examples.

SVDLS

6.22 The SVDLS and register continue to be a well-recognised and useful resource, enabling work for example within specific geographic areas. The limitations highlighted by the baseline work in 2019 and by the Task Force were echoed in comments that the register is the first port of call for statistics and trends and is produced on a reliable and standardised basis, but does not "explore the art of the possible" for VDL sites. Local knowledge of VDL is good and lack of awareness of VDL sites at a local level is not a major issue.

6.23 The DUSTES initiative around stuck sites (see Section 6) was useful but these sites are an ongoing challenge and the related analysis and mapping had not been updated.

6.24 Most consultees outside of government were not aware that the register is currently being digitised and enhanced to link it to planning policy, funding, case studies, mapping and additional data layers, enhancing its role in place development. Some were aware of the more detailed mapping undertaken for selected areas by a few local authorities and the Green Action Trust. The messaging from the SVDLS is important as it was recognised by consultees that the overall amount of land and sites on the register is declining.

TRENDS IN VDL SITES

6.25 There was a broad sense that VDL is being reused. Consultees familiar with the register assessed that sites are coming off at a faster rate, although some of that has been reclassification, for example of former coalfields. Some thought that the flow of new sites onto the register is probably around the same and is not being stemmed, while others pointed to a clearly reducing flow of new sites in their area of interest. Some pointing to high profile city regeneration projects wondered whether local communities are seeing the same progress in reusing VDL which directly affects them.

6.26 History and geography were the drivers of rising VDL and longer term unused sites – such as manufacturing industry and minerals extraction – and those land uses are not being repeated. However, current structural change for example in retailing, the public sector estate including schools (particularly in parts of the West of Scotland), churches, offices, leisure and recreation, and disused listed buildings generally were suggested as being at risk of creating future VDL. Town and city centre action plans were noted as important in helping stem the flow of new sites. Views were nuanced around whether larger towns and some cities are faring worse in terms of this new vacancy and dereliction risk, or whether even a small number of discussed key buildings in a local area or smaller town can have a disproportionate effect.

6.27 The Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan hierarchy should also help reduce the flow of new VDL sites, but only if 'cash-strapped' public sector organisations follow suit. In that regard the high proportion of VDL owned by the public sector and limited public sector resources (including sufficiently detailed information on sites barriers and potential) were mentioned as challenges to reducing VDL.

6.28 It was noted that affordable housing and commercial / employment development tend to be on VDL sites anyway, rather than greenfield – for example new housing association developments on former high rise sites. A combination of housing needs and demand pressures allied to a focus on brownfield development and town centre living is thought favourable to continuing reuse and a decline in the total stock of VDL sites. Some of the town centre sites which will be reused are less than 0.1 hectares in size and never appear on the SVDLS register. Reuse of surplus town centre stock may be for open space in support of increased residential populations, rather than for new development.

6.29 More negatively, consultees observe that housing development is fragile and that the new-build rate has fallen again, reducing the overall demand for land including VDL, while brownfield sites can be more complex to develop than greenfield, and the development industry has lost some capacity recently. A specific comment noted that housing associations, which are major reusers of VDL, may need to bend funding towards decarbonisation of existing stock with negative impacts upon their funding for new-build.

6.30 Blue and green infrastructure offer reuse opportunities. Further recreational uses can be considered on a site-specific basis. Community activities and interests are focused on brownfield land and the recreation of green spaces and softer use such as community gardens and meantime uses. Active local authorities are assessing sites for climate-related uses such naturalisation, tree-planting and solar PV panels.

6.31 In terms of sites presenting ongoing difficulties, some mineral extraction sites such as quarries, privately-owned urban fringe sites and persistent DUSTEs were noted, with consultees suggesting that making these safe and allowing them to naturalise may be the solution where they are not marketable.

BARRIERS TO RE-USE OF VDL

6.32 The main barrier to re-use is cost, and the current market and limited public money do not help. Reduced resources in local planning authorities and for partnership working can also be a drag on re-using sites.

6.33 Greater regional planning was suggested to help allocate and spread scarce resources rather than all 'chasing the same funding'. The Glasgow City Region VDL regional approach to prioritise sites for support was cited as a positive example. Other respondents prioritise sites which have greater certainty of being delivered through public sector control and/or an active private sector partner. Complementary resources such as the Green Action Trust were seen as increasingly important to sit alongside and support local authorities in dealing with VDL.

6.34 Physical constraints to reuse are a major barrier, particularly for medium to larger sites and where the constraints are complex and multiple, and particularly if they are longstanding problem sites. Respondents noted that these constraints are site-specific and required collaborative problem-solving. In many situations though, if a site is remediated (contamination or the perception of contamination is a major barrier), assembled if required and has services (water and power are consistent challenges) then the 'market will step in'. Decontamination can benefit not only the subject site but also the wider local environment. For smaller VDL sites with physical constraints, direct engagement to support local SME developers is seen as a route forward. One consultee suggested a preferential approach for DUSTEs, as Scotland's 'most stuck sites'.

POLICY

6.35 The policy focus on VDL is increasing. Consultees note the strong emphasis on VDL at national level in NPF4 and Housing 2040, the infrastructure investment hierarchy, the draft Biodiversity Strategy and the expectation that VDL will feature in emerging LDPs and in the forthcoming Community Wealth Building Bill. The Regeneration Strategy is now comparatively dated but there are ambitions to refresh that too. The Place Principle is becoming embedded in the workings of public sector departments (such as Health nationally and also at the community level) and agencies, but delivery of its aims requires more work and demonstration. Ongoing Compulsory Purchase Order reform was felt to offer the potential to support increased reuse of VDL, but should always be selective as it involves compulsory acquisition of private assets.

6.36 At the local level, addressing VDL now 'pops up' as a cross-cutting priority in LDPs, SHIPs, Growth Deals, economic strategies, regeneration strategies and climate strategies. The next iteration of LDPs is being produced under NPF4 and will consider VDL in land allocations, potentially creating more of a marketing platform for these sites than in the past.

6.37 Consultees noted that the policy framework is now in place its impacts on VDL should emerge over the next few years. There is work to be done to join this up (particularly at the local planning level) and implement it, with public funding for example for affordable housing provision moving in the wrong direction due to budget constraints. Echoing the comments above about the Task Force, public leadership is seen an important component for VDL, particularly for dealing with the challenge of long term derelict sites. Practical suggestions to help accelerate re-use were to prioritise planning applications on VDL and to support SME developers with local planning applications on complex VDL sites (while recognising that local authority planning teams are already constrained), and to consider prioritising sites in planning by duration vacant (for example selecting DUSTEs as a planning priority); forthcoming masterplan consent areas were also noted as having potential to support re-use of VDL through upfront consenting.

6.38 The strength of the emerging policy focus on VDL attracted comments. It was suggested that having VDL as a priority should not be a 'tick box' which excludes other forms of development. Indeed, eradication of VDL not possible or desirable as a regular supply and continuing, long term release of brownfield sites is required build on (for example Edinburgh's emerging planning policy focus is on both vacant and future brownfield sites for housing-led development). Developers may be beginning to respond to the increased policy focus on brownfield land (and indeed most non-domestic development and affordable housing is already on previously developed sites), but if planning constrains land development markets too tightly (onto VDL) then land and property supply will be stifled and prices will rise.

FUNDING SUPPORT

6.39 Consultees with development experience noted that some VDL sites can cost more to develop than the resulting value, meaning that they are not commercially viable and won't be taken on by private developers. The policy imperative described above requires that to be deliverable, and supported by funding.

6.40 The VDLIF received mostly feedback, doing "exactly what it was wanted to do", and encouraging local authorities to look widely at the sites in their areas. The fund is however always over-subscribed and is affected by changes to the Regeneration budget (including RCGF, PBIP and Clyde Gateway which also benefit VDL, and the Housing Infrastructure Fund which is temporarily closed). Funding is however largely directed at public sector sites, when many stuck sites are in private ownership. Re-use of sites takes time so there is lag from funding awards to sites being removed from the register. Some respondents said that they have yet to notice these increased funding awards being spend on sites. The VDLIP and the RCGF are currently suspended.

6.41 The major intervention model at Clyde Gateway URC is shown to have worked, by forming a dedicated agency with funding and land which have transformed huge areas of VDL in the east of the Glasgow urban area. Other large scale interventions mentioned were Tax Incremental Financing and Growth Accelerators (*both are forms of tax hypothecation to bring forward development land used selectively but at scale in Scotland to date, for example addressing VDL at Dundee Waterfront*).

6.42 It was noted though that many VDL sites are small infill opportunities so major infrastructure solutions are less applicable than the competitive funding pots noted above, alongside any potential general tax reliefs that could be considered in future such as VAT (a UK tax) and non-domestic rates (Scotland-wide with some local leeway on reliefs), or at a site-specific level the amount of planning contributions levied. In the round it was considered that tax incentives could be better used to support regeneration using both “carrots and sticks” and recognising that development activity on VDL sites should lead to long term tax revenue.

6.43 Some caution was advised around competitive funding pots, as the process of securing consents, assembling a project and delivering reuse for more challenging sites takes time and requires a patient capital solution rather than short term conditional funding. The VDLF was mentioned positively in this regard, with the suggestion that it could be enhanced (potentially by taking over the competitive funding pots) and access to its annual funding widened to more local authorities with VDL challenges. It was also suggested that all such funding should have a focus on alleviating blight and deprivation by delivering cleaned-up sites, not “fixing market problems”.

6.44 While consultees felt that more financial mechanisms are required to support delivery of VDL site re-use, no new initiatives were uncovered other than the emerging Glasgow City Region business case. Indeed, some existing support is paused due to funding constraints. The absence of a Scottish equivalent to Homes England which assists with development of brownfield land and attracts developers was noted by a number of consultees. It was suggested that cross-funding the reuse of more challenging land with more valuable land could be an option. Preventative spend to stop sites becoming VDL in the place was mentioned but can be challenged by the financial realities, particularly when a site use is failing, although the long term costs may be higher.

6.45 Consultees highlighted the need to capture wider socio-economic benefits when making decisions about VDL sites and to focus on situations where market forces are not working and to de-risk sites to attract private sector investment. It was felt the work around wider impacts led by the Scottish Land Commission needs to be further embedded in the assessment of sites for re-use. Biodiversity still requires to be properly assessed, and was noted that while greening or part-greening of sites is a positive outcome it is challenge “where there is even the germ of an idea of a capital receipt" for the landowner (a public sector example was offered). The role of the community was discussed in terms of long term custodianship and whether lighter touch options short of Community Asset Transfer, such as leasing agreements and management plans could be considered.

SUMMARY

6.46 The survey and consultations sought to understand VDL trends, in particular around the reuse of sites.

6.47 The majority believe that site numbers will decrease through reuse and some reclassification, although some suggest they may remain around the same. Similarly, most but not all see the flow of VDL new sites as reducing, as the industrial uses then dereliction of the past is not repeated. However, that experience of declining VDL can differ by location, while new structural changes in retailing, offices, public and civic uses may risk creating future VDL (with more ageing and vacant buildings)

6.48 The Task Force helped to boost the profile of VDL. Sites are recognised as causing a range of socio-economic harms. Positive policy change continues to be embedded locally and in cross-cutting guidance, which along with recent funding awards should deliver reuse over the coming years. However, caution was sounded around trying to eradicate VDL entirely, as markets requires a continuing supply and range of sites to function.

6.49 The most challenging are reported as former industrial facilities; examples of long term stalled sites offered include former industry, defence land and hospitals. Least challenging are plots in industrial areas and sites in good housing markets, and of course vacant sites with few or no barriers to reuse.

6.50 Housing needs are a favourable context for the continuing reuse of VDL, although demand may be lower for a period, alongside other development uses including employment, community and greening.

6.51 The main barriers to reuse are costs and markets, and these have worsened recently. These are compounded by physical constraints and by unwilling ownership of difficult sites. Policy alone can be insufficient to promote reuse and additional solutions can include taking land ownership (as a last resort) and public funding. Funding has improved and is welcomed, but some consultees would prefer regional, patient capital (of which there are some examples) to one-off competitive rounds. The different needs and roles of major area-based interventions and small infill sites were noted. The absence of a Scottish equivalent to Homes England's brownfield support fund was seen as a deficiency.

6.52 This is consistent with the 2019 exercise which found similar trends in types of sites, harms associated with VDL and ranking of barriers to reuse (which tended to compound each other). Residential redevelopment was identified as the main prospect in 2019 with supporting potential for leisure, employment, community and greening. Funding, policies and programmes were being used to support VDL reuse at that time, and as above VDL is now an enhanced priority both in the policy cascade and cross-cutting many areas.

07

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

7.1 Ryden was appointed by the Scottish Land Commission to report on progress with the reuse of Scotland's vacant & derelict land (VDL). A 2019 baseline report found that the steady reuse of VDL masked some long term, problematic derelict sites. This 2024 study assesses whether there is evidence of a positive change in the reuse of VDL, as well as a reduction in the creation of new sites.

7.2 The **sustainable reuse of VDL is more thoroughly embedded in land use policy strategy and policy**, and also in cross-cutting areas such as health, communities and biodiversity. There is also a focus on slowing the creation of new VDL by maintaining and reusing existing assets. The lack of a specific national priority or programme for VDL which was highlighted in the 2019 report is addressed by this policy matrix.

7.3 **Funding sources to support the reuse of VDL sites have increased**. The Scottish Government offers a suite of funds which specifically target reuse among all or qualifying local authorities, although funding has been cut for 2024/25. Broader national and regional funds also frequently lead to the reuse of VDL and have the advantage of being allocated (rather than competitive) and sustained over a number of years. The lag effect from funds being committed to activity on site will ensure reuse of VDL over the short to medium term.

7.4 **Scotland's stock of VDL sites is reducing**. Sites number fell by 15% to 3,277 and land area by 21% between 2017 and 2022. The mix of vacant and derelict sites is similar but the regional pattern is variable, with the Clydeplan / Glasgow City Region delivering the most pronounced fall in VDL sites (from the highest opening total). Digital mapping of this dataset is pending and will further aid the wider understanding of Scotland's VDL.

7.5 Positively, **VDL from all time periods since pre-1980s is in decline**. There are fewer very large derelict sites – which are often outside of urban areas – although some of this is due to reclassification. However the remaining stock of major former healthcare, power, industrial, minerals and defence sites still accounts for nearly half (44%) of VDL by land area despite being fewer than 2% of sites.

7.6 Detailed analysis indicates that **1,258 VDL plots were taken-up 2017-22**, at 1,133 sites. The annual average is 252 plots in 227 sites and 440 hectares. Two-thirds were smaller than 1 hectare. Smaller sites/plots below 1 hectare were most commonly reused, accounting for two-thirds of reuse. Residential use accounts for just over half (51%) of the VDL plots taken-up, while industry is next with 10%. Agriculture accounts for 31% of land taken-up, due to some large site sizes. Clydeplan area dominates by numbers of sites reused, followed by Dumfries & Galloway and the Ayrshires then SESPlan (Edinburgh and the East).

7.7 Looking forwards, current challenges in the private and affordable residential sectors may act as a drag on the dominant reuse type for VDL. The greenfield/ brownfield residential development balance and the potential for increased reuse of buildings rather than new development are further considerations. Similarly, a constrained market for new employment, commercial and public sector development is evident. In summary there is **currently lower demand for development land**, of which VDL forms a part.

7.8 **The flow of new sites onto the register has reduced**. In 2017-22 this averaged 62 each year which is down by one-quarter compared with the previous period 2013-17. The geographic distribution is very uneven, with some areas recording no new VDL sites, concentrations in other areas, and Clydeplan – which has the highest incidence and rate of reuse – also recording half of the new VDL sites.

7.9 To explore the persistence of more problematic sites, a suite of sub-categories of sites was re-examined:

7.9.1 Of sixty sites with a skew towards more challenging circumstances, a substantial 18 (30%) were reused in whole or in part. Residential was again the leading use (11 sites) alongside others such as employment, sports and parking. A further 18 (30%) are active in planning or the market. All types of site are making progress, although urban infill move more readily than industrial sites.

7.9.2 The 'DUSTEs' were 589 derelict urban sites (16% of the SVDLS) unused since 2000 or earlier, more prevalent in deprived areas with weaker development options. A substantial 115 (20%) sites were reused in whole or in part. Encouragingly, DUSTEs are also most likely to have been reused for residential development rather than defaulting to softer end uses due to their challenges.

These are very positive findings. **Reuse of sites is benefiting not only the wider VDL register, but also more persistent sites** which are finding positive destinations in reuse, part reuse and in greening.

7.10 **Case studies** show major, private sector-led housing regenerations alongside a public sector-led environmental projects, a unique private sector leisure project funded by patient capital and a community-led urban growing project. An update on a derelict hospital site from 2019 finds that it too has attracting private sector residential-led regeneration. A thematic review of 25 case studies finds additional complexities affecting site feasibility, often requiring public sector upfront investment but also with community involvement and private sector development delivery in many instances.

7.11 A survey and consultations elicited the **view that VDL will continue to decrease** and that the **flow of new sites will slow** as the industrial dereliction of the past is not repeated (although those historic sites still present the most ongoing challenges). Housing remains the leading solution for the reuse of VDL sites. However, the experience of VDL varies by location and **new structural changes in retailing, offices, public and civic uses may risk creating future VDL** (with more **ageing and vacant buildings** as well as unused land). The **main barriers to reuse - costs and markets - have worsened recently** and can be compounded by physical and ownership constraints, which enhanced policy alone cannot overcome. Funding has improved and is welcomed, but some consultees would prefer **regional, patient capital** to one-off competitive rounds. The different needs and roles of **major area-based interventions** and **small infill sites** were noted.

7.12 Table 7 on the next page summarises the findings of this progress report into the reuse of Scotland's vacant and derelict land. The **vacant and derelict land progress report is positive**. The reuse of sites for residential and other development and for greening has been sustained, while large land areas of VDL ave been removed through naturalisation. The flow of new sites onto the SVDLS register is reduced and may continue to reduce, but potentially against a background of increased building vacancy. There is a very encouraging reuse of stubborn sites, although some larger problematic sites do persist. Crucially, at this point in time the policy drivers are more positive than the tighter market and funding potential which are required to deliver reuse. These current headwinds suggest that sustaining both the current rate (and mix) of VDL sites reuse, and the reduced flow of new sites, are reasonable short to medium terms aims.

RYDEN LLP
APRIL 2024

TABLE 7:
REUSE OF SCOTLAND'S VACANT & DERELICT LAND: PROGRESS REPORT

Measure	Change	Trend	Comment
Site numbers	Reduced by 12% from 3,731 sites in 2017 to 3,277 sites in 2022	POSITIVE (CONTINUING)	The rate of reduction in the total numbers of sites on the SVDLS register continues to fall at a broadly comparable rate to the 2019 analysis. The reduction is a net figure of sites reused, removed or reclassified against new sites added.
Land area	Reduced by 21% from 11,980 ha. in 2017 to 9,512 ha. in 2022	VERY POSITIVE	The rate of reduction in total VDL land area is much higher than the reduction in site numbers, as it is disproportionately reduced by removal of very large former coal and air fields.
Reuse rate	1,258 plots reused 2017-22 in 1,133 sites totalling 2,200 ha. Annual averages 252 plots in 227 sites and 440 hectares.	POSITIVE (STEADY)	The reuse rate is broadly comparable to the previous 5-year period 2013-17 at 1,472 plots (2,233 ha.) reused from a higher initial stock. The focus remains upon residential (half of sites); 680 VDL sites benefited from residential reuse during 2013-17 and a similar 640 2017-22. Sites from all age bands have been reused. Reuse is focused on plots of less than 1 hectare. Clydeplan/ Glasgow City Region is most active.
New sites	Mean flow 62 new sites per annum 2017-22	POSITIVE (FALLING)	The flow of new VDL onto the SVDLS register has reduced by one-quarter since the 2019 report.
60 Sites	30% were reused in whole or part 2017-22	VERY POSITIVE	The rate of reuse of this 60-sites sample is very high and in addition a further cohort of sites has positive planning and market activity ongoing.
DUSTEs (589 sites)	20% were reused in whole or part 2017-22	VERY POSITIVE	The rate of full or partial reuse of these long term derelict sites is very encouraging. In particular, the residential-led mix provides active land uses. A further 56 DUSTES removed confirms a notable reduction in these sites over a 5-year period.
Policy	*See Section 2 and summary for review*	POSITIVE (MATRIX)	Strengthened and cross-cutting policy focus on reuse of brownfield sites and existing buildings and infrastructure, from national down to local.
Markets	*See Section 5 summary review*	NEGATIVE	Short to medium term reduced housing, commercial, employment and public sector demand for development land (including VDL).
Funding	*See Section 3 and summary for review*	NEUTRAL/ MIXED	Improved scale and mix of competitive and patient capital is already allocated / on site or is tightening over at least the short term.

Sources: SVDLS and Ryden
Notes: includes sites in settlements with less than 2,000 population

APPENDICES

A - 60 Sites

B - Survey site suggestions

C - Consultees & topic guide

Appendix A - 60 Sites

SITE NAME
Borrowmeadow Farm, Stirling
Lochshore North, Glengarnock
Kilbagie, Clackmannanshire
Former Armitage Shanks, Barrhead
East Fortune Hospital, East Lothian
NACCO, Irvine
South of 6 Vaila Place, Glasgow
Monument Crescent, Prestwick
Former Oil Terminal, Bishopbriggs
Etna Road, Falkirk
Prinlaws Mill, Leslie, Fife
Former Limeworks, Cults Hill, by Pitlessie, Fife
Heatheryford Gardens, Plains
Glaitness Road, St Ola, Orkney
East Stevenston, Stevenston
Inches Road, Ardrossan
Thermalite Works, Ferry Road, South Alloa
West Park Drive, New Cumnock
Southcroft Road, Rutherglen
Burntisland Docks
Old Works, Ben Nevis IE, Fort William
Ex Gasholder, Armadale
Former Gartloch Distillery, Chryston
Greenlaw Farm, Carnoustie
West of Dee Street, Glasgow
Former Urray House, Muir of Ord, Highland
Site 4, Fullarton Dr/Clydesmill Rd, Glasgow
Gasworks Site, Mansfield Road, Hawick
Land @ Coachmans, Belmont Rd, Stranraer
Site 1, Cunninghame Road, Farme Cross
Old Ruins, Kinlochbervie, Highland
Ground at former B.R. Monikie, Angus
Whitehill Industrial Estate 3, Glenrothes
Former Pentland Autos, Wick, Highland
Former Fish Works, Palmerston Rd, Aberdeen
195 Victoria Rd/Butterbiggins Road, Glasgow
Land @ Babylon Road, Orbiston, Bellshill
South of Glenpark Street, Wishaw
NE of 117 Newarthill Rd, Carfin, Motherwell
The Anna, Pleasance/ Bridge St, Jedburgh
Providence Brae, Bo'ness
St Johns Church, Piedmont Road, Girvan
Greendykes Road 2, Edinburgh
Ayrshire Central Hospital, Irvine
Darnley Mains, Glasgow
Meat Market(N), Bellgrove St/ Duke St, Glasgow
Kelburn Terrace, Kelburn, Port Glasgow
Clepington Road, Dundee
Muirston, Meadowside, Beith
Former Bucksburn Primary School, Dyce
Former St David's School Playing Field, Plains
Railway Sidings, Normand Road, Dysart, Fife
Former Torry Nursery, Oscar Road, Aberdeen
Kildermorie Rd, M8/Westerhouse Rd, Glasgow
Depot, Carsphairn Road, Dalmellington
Abandoned Compound(W), Unthank Rd, Bellshill
Corsehill, Kilwinning
North of St James Rd at Castle St, Glasgow
Craigowan Road, Dundee
Pearl Street ex-Fire Station, Callendar

Appendix B - Survey site suggestions

Q11. Please describe an example of a successful productive re-use of vacant and derelict land in your local area. Summarised examples were:

- Levern Water, Barrhead - town centre derelict land used to create new public greenspace, river restoration and climate adaptation flood capacity
- High Street, Annan and Station Road, Dalbeattie - examples of successful housing development on brownfield sites
- Former Sunnyside Hospital, Hillside, Montrose
- Former Strathmartine Hospital, outskirts of Dundee
- Former Bishopbriggs High School - redeveloped to accommodate a supermarket (partial) and residential development.
- North Lanarkshire Council's Allotment Project at Hillrigg, Wattston
- Craigpark Quarry, Ratho, Edinburgh – Disused quarry currently being developed for recreation/leisure centred on a wave-garden for surfing
- Loch Goil community garden - community acquired funding to purchase an area of vacant land in the village
- Extensive block of predominantly vacant shop units (8-48 High Street) on the riverside side of the High Street situated between Old Bridge Street and New Bridge Street, Ayr. Re-development incorporated hgh quality public realm in complement of a new purpose-built building named the Cutty Sark Centre dedicated for community events space use.
- Fernoch in Lochgilphead (130/ 2006/28) - now fully occupied with housing.
- Former health centre site in the centre of Inverurie redeveloped for retail store
- Former Ellon Academy school site - partly redeveloped for council housing with further housing expected on the remainder of the site in the future.
- Former industrial Blockworks site in Westhill - redevelopment for affordable housing started in 2022.
- Heugh Community Garden Project
- Former mine site in rural location now used for storage and recycling of construction waste
- Former filling station on Port Glasgow Road, Greenock – long term vacant site now taken up for 7 business and industry units
- Kyle Road, Irvine – redeveloped to provide an industrial unit
- Quarry Road, Irvine – redeveloped to provide office accommodation as part of a larger regeneration masterplan
- Former Abertay Steelworks in Tayport – ownership ransferred to local community trust and now hosts a community hub.

- Eden Campus, Guardbridge – ground remediation/preparation works for a solar photovoltaic array to complement existing investment in the main body of the site.

- Former Flax Mill at Silverburn Country Park, Levenmouth – building made wind/watertight to support the ongoing major regeneration of the park.

- Station Road, Thornton - ground decontamination works to make safe a council-owned site framed on both sides by residential properties.

- Methil Docks area – ground preparation works to enable installation of a solar photovoltaic array adjacent to New Bayview Stadium close to the Fife Renewables Innovation Centre.

- Numerous sites associated with industrial estate regeneration across Fife, e.g. Hillend and Donibristle (Dalgety Bay), Muiredge, Mountfleurie (both in Levenmouth), The Avenue (Lochgelly) and Queensway Industrial Estate in Glenrothes.

- Energy Park Fife - support to onshore oil and gas infrastructure decommissioning activity. As a result of this injection of funding an end-use operator for the site was identified.

- Mixed-used development including affordable housing and commercial space including sites in Cupar (Bonnygate/Inner Court), Cowdenbeath (High Street/Factory Road) and Lochgelly (High Street/Hall Street former Fabtek Factory site).

- Former waste transfer site in Kirkcaldy - Acquisition and remediation by the Council

- Greyfriars Garden - transformed into a community allotment/garden

- Mixed-use development at Greenmarket, Dundee

- Site on Johnston Avenue, Cornton - redeveloped to provide 24 social houses for social rent.

- Former Caravan Storage Site, Huddersfield Street, Galashiels – redeveloped to provide 35 flats

- East: 394600 north:810550 Intown Road/Broadfold Road. Ex car garage to 2 drive throughs

- Shawfield, Clyde Gateway – site infrastructure including new pedestrian bridge, decontamination of long-standing chromium issues. Development of Magenta office park.

- Lionthorn Policy Bing, Falkirk - now transformed into a vibrant open space for residents and visitors
- Dumbarton Harbour – re-developed for housing

- Bangour Hospital, West Lothian

12. Please describe an example of a long term stalled vacant and derelict site in your local area. Summarised examples were:

- Shanks site in Barrhead
- Former Interfloor factory in Dumfries
- Ex Oil Terminal, Westerhill, Bishopbriggs.
- Former Hartwoodhill Hospital
- Land at Granton Harbour.
- Former Loch Long Torpedo Range in Arrochar
- Site 1E West Sanquhar Road Ayr.
- St Peter's Seminary, Cardross
- Former military camp on outskirts of Fraserburgh, former Glen O'Dee hospital in Banchory, former Brick and Tile Works at Cruden Bay.
- A number of former independent petrol stations, such as at Hillside, Portlethen.
- Former Archeaolink Pre-history Park at Oyne
- Tantallon, Gin Head
- Former paper mill in remote location
- Smithy Brae, Kilmacolm
- The Ardeer Peninsular
- Levenmouth area.
- Chemiss/School Road in Methilhill
- Listed buildings at entry to Ravenscraig Walled Garden site in Kirkcaldy/Dysart.
- Site in Rosyth with potential for memorial
- Cowlairs, North Glasgow
- Borrowmeadow Farm
- Bandeath North B
- SVDLS site NTWWES100
- Broadford Works Hutcheon Street, Balgownie Centre N Donside Rd/Ellon Rd/ Bellfield Rd
- Whitecross. Former brickworks site.
- Strategic Development Opportunity Site at Bowling (former Exxon site)
- H-AM 15, Lower Bathville, Armadale, West Lothian LDP

13. Are there particular sites or types of sites which could be readily re-used within the next 3 years? Please name the site and state why. Summarised examples were:

- Robslee Drive allocated for 125 houses in the current LDP – development anticipated to commence in 2025 but dependent on private company initiating a planning application.

- The most likely sites to be reused are those within centres of population that would be suitable for social housing. Empty office space in town centres has good potential to be redeveloped as housing.

- In Angus, there are a number of different types of site all with the potential to be re-used, dependent on appropriate planning permissions being obtained and sufficient developer interest.

- Several sites on the register have live planning consents or were otherwise considered developable in the shorter term, i.e. Crowhill Road - Bishopbriggs, Milton Road West - Kirkintilloch, Drumclog Avenue - Milngavie, Cloberfield Road - Milngavie and Canal Side Street – Twechar.

- Sites that are regarded as being vacant land and that have a previous use as prepared ground have the potential to be quickly taken up as these are located almost exclusively within existing Industrial and Business locations and are usually regarded as being vacant land rather than derelict land with few physical constraints to their redevelopment. However, the issue with these sites tends to be marketability and an oversupply of land in the wrong locations.

- Large site at Newbridge – former continental tyres manufacturing. Allocated for housing in development plan but has some viability problems. Site has recently been given consent for industrial use, effectively releasing it from development plan allocation.

- 'Former Hotel Site' (Carrick Castle H1) - Planning permission has been approved for the erection of three houses.

- Yes - typically, sites in the ownership of a party seen to have achieved planning permission. Most commonly, these are RSLs delivering social housing. Alternatively, stately villa conversions or wholesale redevelopments of sites within such areas can be attractive to boutique developers due to the significant market premium achievable for this style of residence in their particular host locality.

- Erection of 14 flats at 21-23 Miller Road, Ayr. Applicant Grey Homes. Application approved 17 November 2021

- Former Lochgilphead Primary School - site is now cleared and is suitable for residential use

- Sites located centrally within larger settlements have reasonable prospects for residential redevelopment, such as the former Blythewood Care Home site in Inverurie and former school sites such as Ellon Academy. Prepared sites on existing industrial estates, such as the Tarlair Business Park in Macduff, could be readily reused subject to sufficient demand from business and industry users.

- Former Wallyford Primary School - site has been cleared is available and likely to be developed within the next 3 to 5 years.

- Yes, small sites within settlements with funding / ownership issues

- Scott Street, Greenock - currently being marketed by the Council

- i3, Irvine - included within Ayrshire Growth Deal Strategy, our Growth and Investment Team are seeking out interested parties.

- We currently have a focus on delivery across circa 20 sites across a number of programmes. A range of other sites will be subject to planning and development activity independently by site owners.

- Several sites in Glasgow that could be readily re-used. Sites that have no contamination, no barrier to ownership, have access to funding and have viable proposals for their re-use are most likely to be brought forward. E.g.- Cadder Woods

- Former Dundee Gasworks, potential Eden project site. Education and housing sites re-used quickly due to public ownership

- Approximately 8.8 hectares of the site of Killearn Hospital - in the process of remediation for contamination in order to be redeveloped for housing.

- Borrowmeadow (D) BB - The site has planning permission for five Class 4 units, five Class 5 units and a Drive Thru.

- Land at Dingleton Hospital - site adjacent to an existing residential area in Melrose with planning consent for residential development.

- All the former school sites, Former Milltimber Primary, Former Torry Nursery, Former Craighill Primary – these are Council sites proposed for housing

- Council owned sites, future marketing will assist.

- The sites at Queens Quay have outline planning consent, are serviced and ready to be taken forward. WDC Housing are working on proposals for 351-389 Pappert. Bonhill PS has been VDLIP grant for raised bed allotments underway. Lidl has a planning consent at Mitchell Way. Aldi are proposing a store at Former Allied Distillery. Persimmon have consent at Former OLSP High School. Turnberry have a consent at RHI Site. Miller Homes have consents at Playdrome and Former Notre Dame Convent. It is anticipated that these will be brought forward in the next 3 years.

- Not 3 years, but Kirkton Campus, Livingston offers potential for redevelopment - would require a masterplan process identifying technical issues.

14. Please highlight any policies, strategies, programmes or projects in your area designed to encourage the re-use of vacant or derelict land. Summarised examples were:

- East Renfrewshire LDP2 promotes productive re-use of brownfield land, the LDP promotes housing development on 18 VADL sites and business and employment uses on a further 8 sites. One site is designated for development of a community growing space.

- Dumfries & Galloway Council has developed and is implementing a vacant and derelict land and property strategy

- Dumfries & Galloway Council provides funding under the Town Centre Living Fund for development of town centre sites. This is funded by council tax revenue from the long term empty property charge. The council has an officer responsible for implementing the VDLP strategy with a particular focus on housing.

- Angus Local Development Plan (2016) - Policies DS1, DS3, DS4, TC2, TC8, TC13, TC15, PV8. National Planning Framework 4 - Policies 8, 9, 17, 29. The premise of NPF4 is to achieve net-zero and reach climate outcomes, therefore most policies in this document relate to the reuse of brownfield, vacant, or derelict land in one way or another.

- East Dunbartonshire LDP 2 includes support for the redevelopment of certain vacant/derelict sites, the masterplans set out above seek to tackle land in certain areas and the work being undertaken by the Glasgow City Region as mentioned will provide data to inform future decision making with respect to vacant and derelict sites. The preparation of LDP3 is now underway, and it too will include policies and strategies informed by those masterplans and studies to encourage the re-use of vacant or derelict land.

- NPF4, South Ayrshire LDP2, Ayr Town Centre Draft Framework. Council currently in the process of drafting an Inward Investment Strategy.

- The Ardyne site is 169 hectares - former oil plant and the largest of our vacant sites. A1006 (Area for Action) - strategic, development and environmental enhancement. P1006 (Potential Development Area) - Mixed use - tourism/business/ leisure/ housing/ marine/ aquaculture related.

- Policies within the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023. In addition, the reuse of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings is supported by NPF4. The ambition for 'Peterhead 2040' is to develop a vision for a successful place. The project focus is to develop a vision that identifies current, planned, proposed and aspirational investment, infrastructure, assets, and social capital within the town and environs. The vision seeks to be spatial, and will consider land use issues such as, historic assets, underused land, infrastructure and vacant and derelict land.

- There is on-going work to bring to use land associated with the former Cockenzie Power Station. A dedicated project manager post is in place to ensure this work is prioritised.

- LDP Policy EA25 The development of brownfield unstable and contaminated land

- LDP Policy 2 Priority Projects and Policy 3 Priority Places

- North Ayrshire VDL Strategy, Ayrshire Growth Deal, NPF4, Regeneration Development Plan

- NPF4; Fife Council's Local Development Plan; Plan For Fife 2017 - 2027; Fife Economic Strategy 2023; Fife Council's Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy 2019; Scottish Government Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance; Scottish Government Land Use Strategy 2021-26

- Glasgow's Strategic Plan discusses the importance of reducing VDL. Glasgow's Strategic Development Frameworks also encourage re-use of VDL. Glasgow's allocation of the Vacant & Derelict Land Fund invites applications for projects on long-term VDL. Glasgow also submits a number of applications to the Scottish Government's VDLIP. The AHSP continues to contribute to the reduction of VDL.

- Development Plan; Council employs Vacant Property Development Officer

- Dundee City Centre Strategic Investment Plan

- Current consultation on a new ‘Stirling Forthside Masterplan and Design Guide’. Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2016 – Policy ED5 Regeneration which encourages the redevelopment of brownfield sites

- Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2016 – allocated redevelopment opportunities within the Plan with site requirements. The Scottish Government Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme – SBC recently applied in relation to Fairhurst Drive, Hawick which is a long term DUSTE site. SBC completes the annual SVDLS which ensures we have an up to date record of vacant and derelict sites in the Borders. This can then be used to identify sites for potential funding through the VDLIP or for inclusion within the LDP. The Borderlands Place Programme is looking at regeneration of unused sites and buildings as part of its remit. This centrally funded programme is being run in synchronicity with Local Place Plans in Galashiels, Hawick, Jedburgh and Eyemouth.

- NPF4 and 20 minute neighbourhoods is pushing the new LDP in this direction.

- SLC LDP2 - Policy 2 Climate Change

- Falkirk Greenspace Strategy

- Our City Deal project is focused on a VDL site, Former Esso Terminal. Carless is also a key priority in the Economic Development Strategy

Appendix C - Consultees & topic guide

Scottish Government	David Cowan	Head of Regeneration, Architecture and Place Unit
	Gillian Gunn	Architecture and Place Unit
	Tom Winter	Planning, Architecture & Regeneration
	Andy Kinnaird	Head of Transforming Planning
	Alan Cameron	Policy Manager, Planning, Architecture & Regeneration
	Adam Henry	Senior Planner, Planning, Architecture & Regeneration
	Charles Brown	Senior Assistant Statistician, Centre for Housing Market Analysis
Scottish Land Commission	Kathie Pollard	Policy Officer
Scottish Property Federation	David Melhuish	Director
Homes for Scotland	Fionna Kell	Director of Policy
Scottish Futures Trust	Mhairi Donaghy	Associate Director - Place, Housing & Economic Investment
	Pamela Grant	Associate Director – Real Estate
SURF	Euan Leitch	Chief Executive
SEPA	David Harley	Interim Chief Officer Circular Economy
SFHA	Annabel Pidgeon	Policy Lead
	Susie Fitton	Policy Manager
Glasgow City Region PMO	Rami Zaatari	Regional Economic Projects Manager
Fife Council	Ian McCrory	Lead Professional, Economic Regeneration
	Chris McMenemy	PPRI Co-ordinator
	Javier Albert	Planning Information Officer
Dundee City Council	Gemma Watson	Planning Officer

Vacant and Derelict Land Re-Use: Progress Report

Stakeholder Consultation Topic Guide

The Scottish Land Commission has appointed consultants Ryden to provide a progress report on the re-use of Scotland's Vacant and Derelict Land (VDL). This follows the establishment of the Vacant & Derelict Land Taskforce by the Commission and SEPA in 2018, Ryden's baseline Phase One report in 2019, and the publication of the Taskforce recommendations in 2020.

The policy context has changed significantly since 2020, and this study seeks to understand whether positive change has been realised in the reuse of vacant & derelict land as well as a reduction in newly vacant and derelict sites.

As part of this work, we are keen to engage with key stakeholder organisations to seek informed views and evidence of any particular progress. This topic guide has been prepared as a guide to consultations but is not designed to be overly prescriptive and consultees are encouraged to share any further views beyond what is covered by the questions.

1. Discussion of Taskforce recommendations (see overleaf)

2. What are your views on current levels of VDL in your area/sector of expertise, i.e. are overall levels increasing/decreasing, why?

3. To what extent do you think the current numbers on the register will change in the future? Will it increase/decrease for particular types of sites?

4. Are there any particular type of sites which represent a challenge within your area/sector of expertise, e.g. ex-industrial, ex-defence, open space etc.?

5. What are the principal barriers to the re-use of these sites, e.g. site size/configuration, planning, ownership, market etc.?

6. Are newer policies around VDL and 'stuck sites' leading to greater site re-use, e.g. brownfield v greenfield development?

7. In your opinion does funding and support focus on the right areas or would you suggest any policy/funding changes that could assist re-use?

8. Do you have any examples of sites, initiatives or information sources which you think are relevant for this study?

VDL Taskforce Recommendations (summarised)

Making Better Use of Data to Drive Decisions	
1.	Scotland's VDL Register should be reformed to provide a clearer focus on sites that have significant barriers to reuse and details on what these barriers are, e.g. flood risk, ownership, contamination etc.
2.	The information on the Register should be fully digitised and brought together in a publicly accessible, map-based format.
Aligning Policy to Support Delivery	
3.	Scotland's regeneration strategy should be updated to help embed a strong focus on place-based regeneration and land reuse and ensure that the opportunities of community empowerment, planning reform and community wealth building can be fully realised.
4.	A more proactive approach to initiating and driving development should be adopted across the public sector including a stronger focus on VDL within Scottish Planning Policy and the next Infrastructure Investment Plan.
5.	Action should be taken to make it easier to overcome ownership barriers to land reuse, e.g. new legislation for compulsory sales orders, a review of existing land assembly mechanisms, and reform of the current approach to public sector land disposals.
Aligning Strategic Funding to Support Delivery	
6.	Dedicated funding to support local authorities' efforts to bring VDL back into use should be increased and an evaluation of the VDL Fund should be undertaken to ensure that funding criteria are fit for purpose.
7.	Scottish Government should initiate a review of strategic funding streams to ensure that they are aligned around the Place Principle and include new approaches for appraising capital investment that go beyond financial measures and provide a clearer focus on wellbeing.
8.	New approaches to funding the remediation of VDL should be developed, e.g. compensation for unavoidable biodiversity loss offset by improvements to derelict sites elsewhere, a new fund to enable derelict sites to be remediated to create a publicly-owned development land bank, and a community fund to tackle harmful and persistent small scale sites.
Stemming the Flow of New Sites	
9.	The principle that it is unacceptable for land to be allowed to become derelict or to be left vacant indefinitely (if this has an adverse impact) should be embedded within corporate social responsibility objectives across the public and private sector.
10.	Landowners should be expected to adopt proactive estate management policies that enable assets at risk of obsolescence to be identified early and put plans in place to avoid sites falling into disuse and becoming problematic.
11.	The Government should identify options for using the tax system to incentivise landowners to repurpose surplus commercial property for socially beneficial uses to prevent the emergence of a new legacy of VDL.
Tackling the Legacy	
12.	Scotland should establish a major national green infrastructure investment programme to bring our legacy of stuck sites back into use in ways that will contribute to a fair and green recovery, support job creation and skills development and help rebuild community resilience.
13.	Government should make a clear commitment to work toward the complete eradication of urban dereliction, put in place arrangements for monitoring progress toward this objective, and appoint a national coordinator to drive delivery.

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