

**Where we are**



## The National Brownfield Forum objectives

- Promote the sustainable use of land.
- Bring together private and public sector organisations to take a strategic overview of current and future land use issues
- Consider social, economic and environmental factors informing the development and implementation of Government policy
- Support the development, dissemination and adoption of good practice by regulators, practitioners and problem-owners
- Identify key challenges as they arise and seeking appropriate resolutions
- Openly report on progress and outcomes.



# Brownfield sector review 2023/2024

- Despite supportive planning policies, complex barriers exist which challenge the development of brownfield land. Under its remit to facilitate knowledge exchange around the use of brownfields, NBF conducted an industry-wide sector review in 2023 about barriers.
- The results of the sector review can be used as evidence to assist members of the NBF and other organisations in focusing their collective resources and stimulate future discussions around the questions raised.
- The NBF cannot guarantee the delivery of time-limited solutions to the problems identified. However, the NBF can via its membership seek to inform the development and implementation of Government policy and industry initiatives by widely sharing and highlighting the views expressed.



## Highlights of the results of the NBF 2023/24 sector review include:

1. Overwhelming support by respondents for **proactive Government policies to support the development of brownfield land** in the UK;
2. **Barriers** to expedient and cost-effective development **are complex and interdependent**, including a lack of consistency in regulatory approaches to excavated soils and waste management, land contamination, environmental permitting, and land use planning regimes;
3. A need **improve our understanding of the wider social, environmental, and economic values of brownfield development**;
4. Strong sense of **importance and value for the regulatory role** offered by local authorities and national agencies;
5. **Regulatory roles are insufficiently funded**;
6. A call for **greater fiscal and financial support** for both the public and private sector to support brownfield development;
7. An opportunity to **improve the quality and efficiency of land contamination advice and support** available to the brownfield sector both from public and private sector perspectives;
8. Professional **competence frameworks** such as the National Quality Mark Scheme exist but **more needs to be done to widen its use** and acceptance; and
9. **Recruitment into the sector remains challenging**, despite clear proactive organisational policies and initiatives such as equality, diversity and inclusion and training.

# NBF Policy interaction report outputs

## Insights

- Complex interactions
- Communication Gaps
- Wider implications
- Policy conflicts
- Enhanced communication
- Regulatory silos

## Calls for Action

- Living evidence base
- Evaluate Policy clarity
- Investigate improved Governance
- Explore a parliamentary group
- Extend the NBF mandate

**Key themes: Duplication, excessive timeframes, poor collaboration, competency**



# Extend the NBF mandate

National Brownfield Forum

Volume 709: Parliamentary debate on Tuesday 21 April 2009

- The National Brownfield Forum has been established....
- The role of the forum was referred to as the aim of “promoting a more cohesive and inclusive approach to policy development”.
- The forum's remit is to
  - 1) oversee the implementation of the national brownfield strategy
  - 2) to improve co-ordination on contaminated land and brownfield policy between Government, devolved Administrations, regulators and practitioners
  - 3) encourage the exchange of best practice and knowledge.

# Living evidence base

Maintain a living evidence base for case studies on the NBF website

- Develop a database
- Make available a case study template (use one from 2025 report)
- Make membership aware and seek contributions

# Evaluate Policy clarity

- Collate and share critical obstacles /contradictions to practical delivery working with Policy makers; break down some silos.
- Better liaison when developing policies to highlight potential issues and make sure delivery is effective in practice not just on paper (BNG, NN current examples).
- Statutory Consultee for new polices that interact with Brownfield Regeneration through planning regime
  - formal responses from NBF actively sought
  - NBF response given weight
  - should not replace members ability to comment independently

# Investigate improved Governance

- Raise standards, recognise the importance of Regulation and suitably skilled and trained Regulators
- Improve focus on brownfield skills- linking to importance of the brownfield regeneration objectives, particularly environment and health benefits
- Framework for effective Regulation on brownfield regeneration
- Co-ordinated brownfield focused regulation looking at outcome not process (example LCRM approach v permit / waste approach)
- Respect, sign-post and follow the guidance available, avoid confusing the picture
- Demand competency in Industry (ref BSA)

# Explore a parliamentary group

- BF is a hot topic, and public awareness is ever increasing with some good and bad journalist reporting – parliament need facts to make evidence-based decisions and this needs to come from reliable source with Brownfield expertise (NBF can provide this and was what Government intended to start with – but seems to have been forgotten?)
- Communicating risk, understanding brownfield risks and how this links to the planning regime can be a challenge
- Updates to the House Mag would be a start, but should updates be more direct?

What next?

Terms of reference update

