



BROWNFIELD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER PRINCIPLES

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Smart Growth UK welcomes the Government's announcement that it will seek ways of building more homes on brownfield land.

We agree that local development orders have a role in helping make this happen, though consideration must be given to existing occupiers of such sites and any current planning permission for development on them.

Prioritizing brownfield development is an important part of securing sustainable development and we believe the Government also needs to introduce stronger planning policies and financial incentives to prioritize brownfield over greenfield, not just in LDO areas.

Where LDOs are used, we recommend local authorities and developers to use the following principles to choose locations for the zones and in planning them.

ZONE LOCATION

1. **Brownfield.** Zones should consist overwhelmingly of previously developed land and small areas of greenfield land should only be included in exceptional circumstances.
2. **Location.** Zones should only be designated within the built-up footprint of existing major urban areas.
3. **Transit-oriented development.** Any designated zones should be in places well served with public transport, rail-based where possible, or where firm plans exist for their inclusion in such networks.
4. **Protected areas.** Zones should not be designated within green belts or environmentally important areas.
5. **Flooding.** Zones should not be designated within areas at high risk of flooding.

ZONE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. **Housing mix.** The zones should have a mix of dwellings appropriate to the area. High proportions of small flats which tend to cause high population turnover should be avoided and the homes should aim to ensure a mixed community including families, couples, single people and older people. High-density alternatives like terraced housing or mansion blocks can provide excellent and desirable alternatives.
2. **Housing densities.** Densities should be appropriate for the cities where the zones are located, avoiding both the very low densities of typical greenfield development and acute town cramming.

3. **Place making.** Substantial 21st century developments require more than just homes and there should be an appropriate mix of other uses with the housing; rigid zoning should be avoided. Those who live and work there will need access to shops, education, healthcare, services and open space. Places should be designed to allow communities to grow, not just to accommodate people.
4. **Design.** The zones should reflect the National Planning Policy Framework's demand for high standards of design, using architecture which respects the traditional designs of the particular locality. This should build on the work done by various organisations on design codes etc. and such standards should be made a requirement.
5. **Layouts.** Street layouts should be designed to allow free and convenient movement on foot or by bike. Zones should be located so as to allow easy access to shops, schools, healthcare, other services and public transport. Provision should be made for present and future fixed-link public transport corridors.
6. **Sustainable building.** Construction in the zones should be to high standards for energy, water usage, etc..
7. **Natural environment.** The zones should "make room for nature" and feature appropriate green infrastructure, including planting and open space. They should reflect the need to investigate and manage existing wildlife.
8. **Conservation.** The zones should protect and enhance existing built heritage within and adjacent to their areas, paying particular attention to the setting of nearby heritage assets. They should respect their areas' existing character and historic environment to create distinctive places. They should also require investigation and protection of archaeology where appropriate.
9. **Consideration for the elderly.** Home zones will need to consider inclusion of substantial quantities of modern flexible housing for older people, given current projections predicting 79% of new households will be over-55s. They might include zones primarily planned for older people.
10. **Ground conditions.** Provision must be made, and resources made available, for treatment of adverse ground conditions including instability, contamination, invasive species and flood risk. Where this cannot be achieved via the commercial return on the development, there must be public support.