



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION  
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SEPA

# Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce



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11,000 hectares of VDL (3,500 + sites)

Large, diverse and fragmented amount of land

...huge potential





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**NOT SO**

**PRETTY VACANT**

Transforming vacant and  
derelict land in Scotland

[www.landcommission.gov.scot/notsoprettyvacant](http://www.landcommission.gov.scot/notsoprettyvacant)  
#notsoprettyvacant

***Transform Scotland's approach to tackling vacant and derelict land, create the conditions necessary for eradicating persistent dereliction in urban communities and realise the social, economic and environmental benefits of returning unloved derelict urban land back to productive use.***



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# The Recommendations





# MAKING BETTER USE OF DATA

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**1.** Scotland's register of vacant and derelict land to be reformed to include a wider range of information to bring sites back into use.

**2.** The information on the register to be presented on a map that is easy to understand and that everyone can access.

# LAND AS PART OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

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3.



Reform Scotland's regeneration strategy to focus on place-based regeneration and land reuse to empower communities.

4.



The public sector to take an active role in development. Fixing up 'brownfield' sites should be a priority in the next national Infrastructure Investment Plan.

5.



Easier to buy land for reuse. New laws for compulsory sales orders – making people sell land if unused, and a review of the current ways land is bought and sold by the public sector.



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# Vacant & Derelict Land – Community Impact Tool

## What is it

This tool is made up of a survey with a scoring system that has been designed to help understand and collect evidence of how a vacant or derelict site makes communities feel. It is intended to help gauge and measure how sites impact community wellbeing and neighbourhoods.

It is **qualitative**, capturing the real lived experience of people living near neglected land or buildings.

This survey tool can be used with other tools such as the [Place Standard](#) or the [Town Centre toolkit](#).

The findings from using the survey and its results can help to provide the evidence to inform decisions and, most importantly, demonstrate the harm that these sites cause to communities.

There are also some additional ideas for gathering data about sites. These are suggested below and can help to further demonstrate the impact of the site on the local community.

### This tool can support local authorities and local organisations in collecting evidence to inform:

- feasibility studies
- funding applications
- planning and place-making
- investments and interventions.

## Additional ideas

### 1 DATA AUDIT

Identify VDL sites and available data

- SIMD
- Health Statistics
- Environmental Analyses

### 2 IMPACT

Collate all available qualitative and quantitative information

- LDP Main Issues Report
- Community Workshops
- Charities

### 3 RANKING

Review material and score sites

## The survey

### Q1 Physical Health

Which statement do you agree with most:

The site stops me from walking, cycling or doing exercise in my neighbourhood	3
The site makes me less likely to walk, cycle or do exercise in my neighbourhood	2
The site has no impact on me walking, cycling or doing exercise in my neighbourhood	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:

### Q2 Wellbeing

Which statement do you agree with most:

The site often makes me feel anxious, stressed or angry	3
The site sometimes makes me feel anxious, stressed or angry	2
The site never or rarely makes me feel anxious, stressed or angry	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:

### Q3 Crime

Which statement do you agree with most:

Anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, vandalism or fires often takes place on the site	3
Anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, vandalism or fires sometimes take place on the site	2
Anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, vandalism or fire raising rarely takes place on the site	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:

### Q4 Economy (housing)

Which statement do you agree with most:

I feel strongly that the the site has an impact on people buying or renting houses here	3
I feel that the site might have an impact on people buying or renting housing here	2
The site is not putting people off buying or renting housing here	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:



# SUPPORTING DELIVERY THROUGH FUNDING

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6.



Increase funding to local authorities to bring vacant and derelict land back into use and review the allocation of the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund.

7.

The Scottish Government to review how funding is allocated to ensure that money goes to areas most in need. New ways of appraising investment that includes wider benefits and not just financial return.



8.



Develop new ways of funding improvements to vacant and derelict land, including: compensate loss of biodiversity by balancing it with improving derelict sites; a publicly-owned development bank of land; and communities developing local derelict sites.

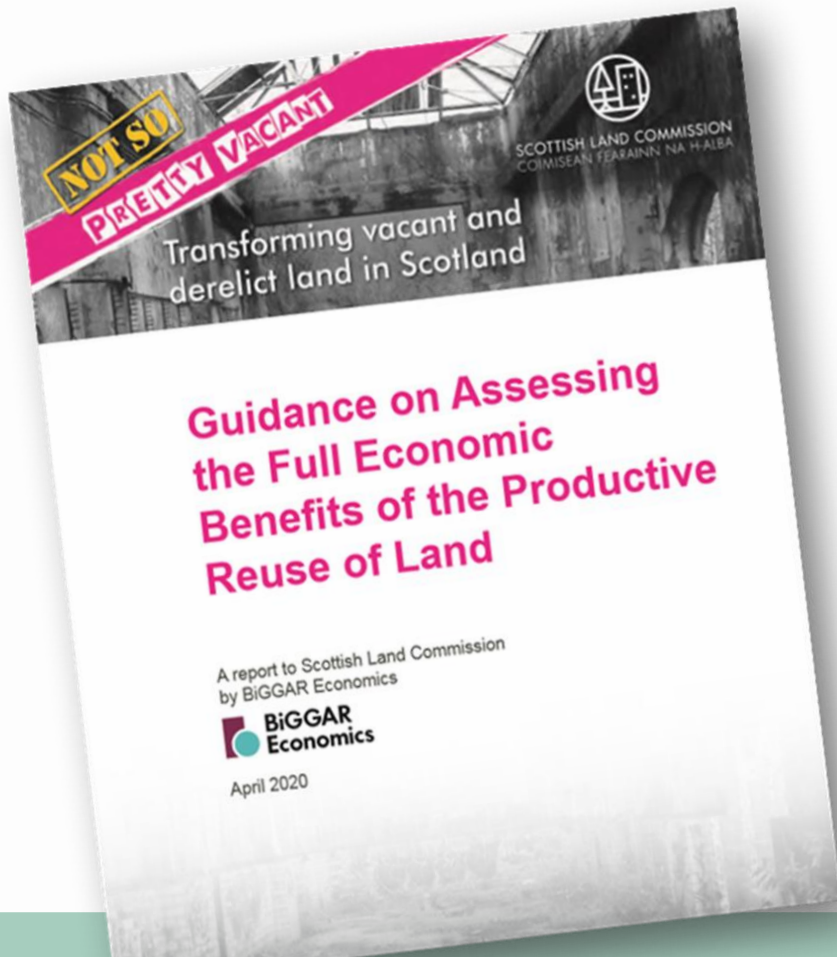




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# Evidence Base

[BiGGAR Economics \(2020\), The Case for Change: A New Approach to Assessing the Benefits of the Productive Reuse of Land](#)



- Public sector investment decisions
- The profit motive Vs public interest
- Need for new approach to appraisal
- The case for change
- Practical guidance

# STOPPING THE FLOW OF NEW VACANT AND DERELICT SITES

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It must be unacceptable for land to be derelict or left vacant indefinitely. Organisations should embed this into corporate social responsibility objectives.



Public funding only given to responsible landowners. Public land and property that is lying empty to be brought back into use.



Landowners to review their land and buildings frequently, to identify and avoid sites falling into disuse. Support for public sector asset disposal expanded to help with this.



Government should use the tax system to encourage landowners to repurpose empty commercial property. This could help prevent a new legacy vacant and derelict land resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

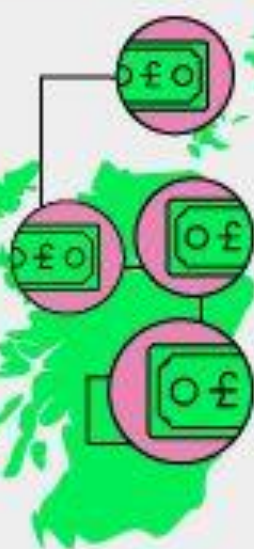


# TACKLING THE LEGACY

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12.

A national programme investing in green infrastructure, to bring derelict land and buildings back into use in ways that will help tackle climate change.

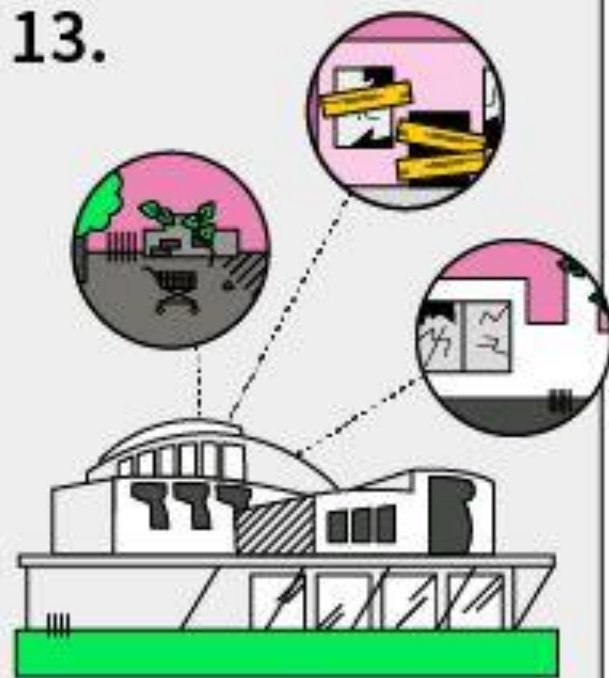


This should support jobs and skills development and help rebuild community resilience.



The programme should focus on urban green spaces, community-led regeneration, renewable energy and low carbon housing and attract investment. Local authorities should take responsibility for coordinating this and prioritise reusing sites that meet the needs of the community.

13.



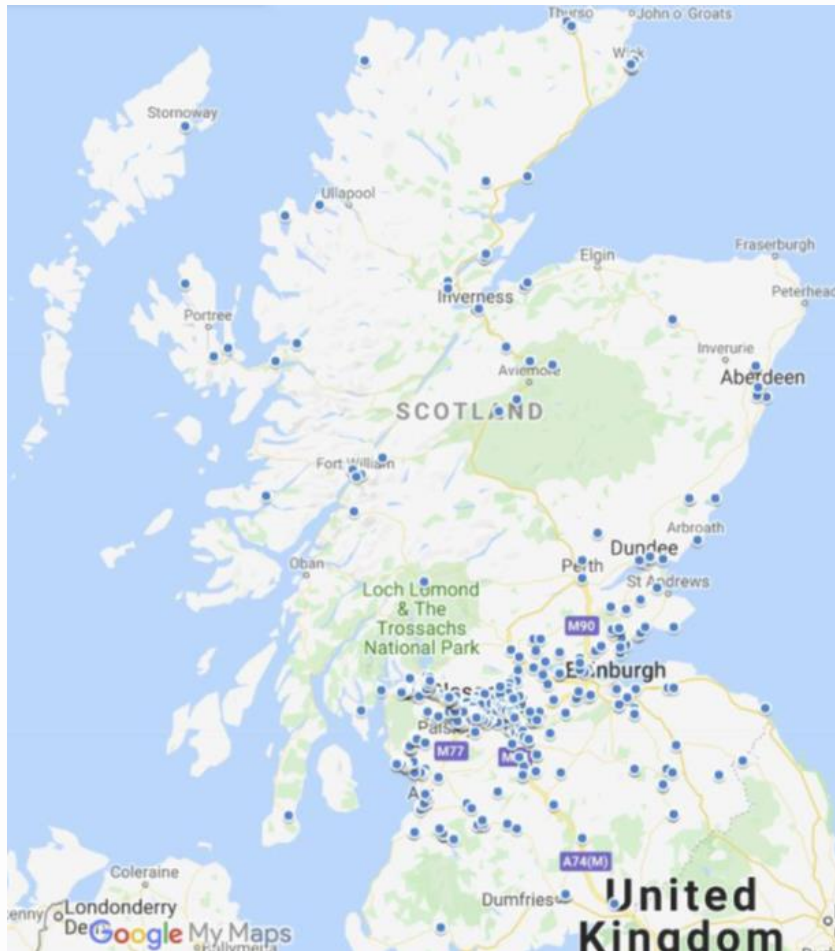
Scottish Government should make a commitment to eradicating urban dereliction, keeping track of this goal and appointing a national coordinator to help achieve this.





# Evidence Base

## [Ryden \(February 2020\), Understanding Scotland's Stuck Sites](#)



- 589 DUSTEs - **Derelict Urban Sites** unused since **2000** or **Earlier**
  - Most challenging
  - Most harmful
  - Most stuck
- Prevalence in deprived communities
- Private and complex ownership
- **comprehensive list of national priorities**



# Resources

- [All research reports and resources](#)
- [DUSTE map](#)
- [Funding sources for site reuse](#)
- [Guidance on assessing the benefits of productive land reuse](#)
- [Community impact assessment tool](#)