



New research reveals urban YIMBYs are key to delivering Government housing ambitions

The report, commissioned by three leading UK developers, highlights positive attitudes towards urban development as British Land, Landsec and Berkeley Group encourage the government to embrace urban development and densification or risk missing its 1.5 million homes mission.

20 September 2024

New research from leading UK community engagement platform Commonplace investigates the public's attitude to brownfield development across four major urban areas to identify what people want to see from development in their local areas.

The results were clear: far from being anti-development, urban communities are overwhelmingly made up of 'YIMBYs' ('yes in my back yard'). 60% of those polled in Cambridge, Camden, Manchester and Newham had strongly negative views of currently underdeveloped brownfield sites, viewing them as ugly, dirty and unsafe. 73% saw the underutilisation of these sites as a wasted opportunity that needs to be harnessed - for example, to deliver more affordable housing, public spaces and green places.

Almost 80% believe that brownfield regeneration would positively impact their local areas, with 75% of respondents wanting brownfield regeneration prioritised over other types of development. The research also shows that urban communities are open to supporting taller or denser development, providing it unlocks greater benefits for the community.

It is clear that broadening local engagement is key to unlocking community support when it comes to planning, making urban YIMBYs a crucial cohort in turbocharging delivery.

To achieve this, British Land, Landsec and Berkeley Group have called on the Government to:

- **Prioritise brownfield development** as the most popular and sustainable route to quicker delivery while improving the public's perception of the places in which they live
- **Reduce time and cost barriers** by reducing policy layering that adds complexity and duplication, allowing for greater flexibility in urban design to overcome bespoke challenges, providing more grant funding to enable infrastructure delivery and unlock sites, and creating investment incentives by recognising costs when incurred rather than when homes are sold.
- **Ensure regeneration benefits are felt and seen locally** by using locally negotiated S106 agreements to agree benefits on large brownfield projects rather than the Community Infrastructure Levy
- **Promote the delivery of affordable housing** by supporting the financial capacity of housing associations, increasing the level and efficiency of grant funding and allowing flexibility to provide a range of affordable housing tenures in response to local needs
- **Enable greater public participation in the planning and development process** by promoting a more open dialogue between developers, councils and communities about the potential benefits development and densification can



deliver, linking brownfield passports to a comprehensive community participation programme and reviewing the statutory consultation process.

Recognising that private sector developers also have an important responsibility to local communities across the UK, British Land, Landsec and Berkeley have unveiled three new commitments which they will be collectively adopting ahead of any policy change:

- Reviewing their own urban brownfield regeneration projects to ensure that they are optimised and that the benefits urban communities want to see are delivered.
- Engaging proactively with local communities to involve them in shaping the opportunities of brownfield development from the outset, as well as during construction and once built.
- Continuing to challenge themselves and explore new ideas to ensure engagement is inclusive, representative and equitable.

Simon Carter, Chief Executive Officer at British Land, said: "This new research - which focused on surveying a true snapshot of those who live, rent and work in urban areas - demonstrates that urban communities are overwhelmingly YIMBY when they are involved in the process and the benefits of development are clearly understood. Contrary to public perception, it is clear that this group want to see brownfield urban regeneration that delivers for the local community, creating a unique opportunity for new pragmatic policies that leverage the support of this critical demographic to unlock delivery and growth."

Mark Allan, Chief Executive Officer at Landsec said: "The Government should feel reassured that their ambitious housing targets can be delivered with the consent of local communities - particularly in the urban areas that made up our study. Our research demonstrates that the public is sophisticated not only in its understanding of what constitutes good development but also the benefits local communities should expect and enjoy from development. They are ready to embrace the opportunities of brownfield urban regeneration. It's now up to policy makers and the property sector to maximise the potential and delivery of these sites across the country."

Rob Perrins, Chief Executive of Berkeley Group, said:

"Our Government clearly recognises that regenerating urban land is the most sustainable way to build new homes and drive growth. This research demonstrates that urban communities also support brownfield development and want to be involved in unlocking the positive potential of these sites. This should be hugely encouraging for ministers as they focus on lifting the regulatory barriers to regeneration and getting more homes built on underused sites."

The report can be found at: https://www.britishland.com/media/jczlfxd/200924_how-to-deliver-more-growth-homes-and-jobs-with-the-support-of-communities.pdf

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About the research

This research used a combination of primary and secondary data-collection methods to provide representative and robust insights into community attitudes towards brownfield urban regeneration. The primary data collection for this research was led by Commonplace and utilised their innovative community engagement platform. Four Commonplace engagement sites were created, one for each of the four locations of interest. The locations of Cambridge, Camden, Manchester and Newham were selected to represent a variety of different urban settings with a diverse range of demographic make-ups, built environments and industrial pasts.

The four Commonplace engagement sites were promoted using a variety of digital marketing methods reaching over 500,000 people and generating 25,000 visitors. The survey collected responses from a total of 1,829 people and involved 23 questions on brownfield urban regeneration.

Once the data was collected, a variety of quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques were used to generate insights. This included the use of pivot charts, the Commonplace dashboard and Trends AI, an innovative natural language processing tool that is included on the Commonplace platform.

About British Land

British Land is a UK commercial property company focused on real estate sectors with the strongest operational fundamentals: London campuses, retail parks, and London urban logistics. We own or manage a portfolio valued at £13.0bn (British Land share: £8.7bn) as at 31 March 2024.

Our purpose is to create and manage Places People Prefer - outstanding places that deliver positive outcomes for all our stakeholders on a long term, sustainable basis. We do this by leveraging our best in class platform and proven expertise in development, repositioning and active asset management.

We have both a responsibility and an opportunity to manage our business in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. Our approach to sustainability is focused on three pillars: Greener Spaces, Thriving Places and Responsible Choices.

Read more about us at www.britishland.com.

About Landsec

At Landsec, we build and invest in buildings, spaces and partnerships to create sustainable places, connect communities and realise potential. We are one of the largest real estate companies in Europe, with a portfolio of retail, leisure, workspace and residential hubs. Landsec is shaping a better future by leading our industry on



environmental and social sustainability while delivering value for our shareholders, great experiences for our guests and positive change for our communities.

Find out more at landsec.com

About Berkeley Group

Berkeley Group builds homes and neighbourhoods across London, Birmingham and the South of England.

Our passion and purpose is to build quality homes, strengthen communities and improve people's lives.

We specialise in long-term brownfield regeneration - reviving underused land to create unique, sustainable and nature-rich places where communities thrive and people of all ages and backgrounds enjoy a great quality of life.

Find out more at www.berkeleygroup.co.uk

About Commonplace

Commonplace supply websites for local community engagement that are used by local authorities, communities, private developers and other organisations to inform the public about plans and also gather feedback. We are both a platform and a service: with tools to gather the most meaningful data possible while also being available to support and guide all customers throughout their project's lifecycle.

Commonplace data is distinct in that there is a huge number of respondents who are self-selecting. This is because Commonplace is fundamentally an engagement tool, aiming for wide community participation.

It provides rich insight, but it is incumbent on policymakers to access other data if certain demographic groups are under-represented. The Commonplace dashboard provides real-time data that facilitates this additional activity.

Find out more at: commonplace.is