



Press Release

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For immediate publication

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LONDON'S WASTED LAND AT RECORD HIGH

Government figures published yesterday[1] indicate that the recent decline in the amount of vacant previously-developed ('brownfield') land in London has suddenly and dramatically reversed, with the amount leaping from 3080 hectares in 2005 to 3640 hectares in 2006 (an 18% increase). This is against the overall trend across England[2], which indicates a continuing slight decrease from 63,490 hectares in 2005 to 62,730 hectares in 2006.

CPRE London[3] is concerned that these figures might mean that more urban brownfield land in London is going unused while there continues to be enormous pressure to develop greenfield land in the Green Belt and beyond. The figures are accompanied by a note suggesting that London's 3640 hectares of brownfield land is sufficient to accommodate 130,000 new homes – the entire quantity planned for London for more than the next four years.

However, it must be recognised that the figures may in fact be a result of a more thorough assessment having been made of the availability of brownfield land in London, and therefore indicate a step in the right direction.

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The Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

Registered charity number 802622

Nigel Kersey, Director of CPRE London said:

'I sincerely hope that these figures mean that data collection on London's wasted land is improving, rather than showing that more and more opportunities are being missed to meet London's housing needs within London. However, it will be for the Mayor and the London Development Agency[4] to answer that one.'

- END -

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- [1] *Previously-Developed land that may be available for Development: England 2006. Results from the National Land Use Database of Previously-Developed Land.* Department for Communities and Local Government, June 2007.

URL:

http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/329/PreviouslyDevelopedLandthatmaybeavailableforDevelopmentEngland2006_id1511329.pdf

See especially Table 4 on page 13:

Previously-developed land by planning status, suitability for housing and dwellings by Government Office Region: England 2006

- [2] Equivalent figures from the National Land Use Database since 2001 are as follows:

Hectares

YEAR	ENGLAND	LONDON
2001	65,500	4,590
2002	66,110	3,520
2003	65,760	3,430
2004	64,130	3,290
2005	63,490	3,080
2006	62,730	3,640

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[3] CPRE London is the London Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. CPRE exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. We promote positive solutions for the long-term future of the countryside to ensure change values its natural and built environment. Our Patron is Her Majesty The Queen. We have 59,000 supporters, a branch in every county, nine regional groups, over 200 local groups and a national office in London. CPRE is a powerful combination of effective local action and strong national campaigning. Our President is Bill Bryson.

[4] The LDA is part of the Greater London Authority and is responsible for undertaking much of the work and investment necessary to bring brownfield land in London back into beneficial use. The LDA website is at: <http://www.lda.gov.uk/server/show/nav.001>

[5] In February, CPRE published *Untapped Potential: identifying and delivering residential development on previously developed land*. The study for the report comprised a review of urban capacity studies across England, case studies, interviews and site visits, and found that:

- Councils vary widely in their approach to identifying capacity for development on brownfield land;
- many Councils significantly underestimate the potential of brownfield land to accommodate new homes;
- the contribution from small sites in particular is seriously underestimated – in some areas, up to 90% of new homes are built on small sites – estimates are typically far lower than this;
- better monitoring and site surveys (as opposed to desk top surveys) are essential to give an accurate picture of the number of new homes that can be built on brownfield land, and;
- the existence of a thorough capacity study provides no guarantee that brownfield land will be developed, even where market and site conditions are promising. A commitment on the part of decision makers, planners, developers and communities to making the most of brownfield land is essential.

Untapped Potential is available at:

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/library/results/housing-and-urban-sprawl>

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