

WP B: The Role of the UK Development Industry in Brownfield Regeneration

Objectives

The overall aim of the project is to critically examine the dynamics and role of residential and commercial property development in relation to the assessment, remediation and reuse of brownfield land (which may or may not be 'contaminated') in the UK.

In particular, the proposed research will seek to:

- Scope and systematically review the existing research literature, theoretical frameworks of the development process (set within the sustainable land use agenda), and policy initiatives in order to develop a conceptual framework or model that can be applied to the brownfield development process.
- Explore international experience (particularly in Europe and the USA) of brownfield land development to develop further opportunities for constructing alternative approaches in the UK.
- Examine and assess the relative influence of the main forces that drive and constrain the brownfield development (residential and commercial) process, including the regulatory and policy framework.
- Analyse the role of individual stakeholders (developers/investors, local authorities, scientists, government and other statutory agencies and the general public) in the brownfield development process.
- Examine the processes by which risk is defined, assessed and communicated in the development process and the way in which remediation technology 'diffusion' and 'lock-in' may operate in the development process over time.
- Investigate the existence, and reasons for, any 'dysfunction' and 'dereliction' in local urban property markets (residential and commercial) in Thames Gateway and Greater Manchester.
- Assess and analyse the relative importance of 'stigma' to different actors in local property markets post clean-up.
- Develop a decision-making tool kit, based on key Quality of Life Indicators (and linking with the SUBR:IM Metrics work package), which can be used by strategic policy-makers and project co-ordinators to guide the process by which development actors are encouraged and persuaded to undertake brownfield development projects. This would:
 - Enable the range of actors and interests involved in the development process to better engage;
 - Help the driving forces which (dynamically) structure that process to be utilised or reshaped;
 - Provide opportunities for using different remediation strategies and techniques, including the potential for process and product innovation, to be assessed; and
 - Enable associated barriers to the development and the reuse of brownfield sites to be overcome.

Conceptual Model

The UK development industry plays a central role in constructing, communicating and managing environmental risks and implementing remediation strategies which structure the process of brownfield reuse and redevelopment. 'Brownfield' is defined in this project (POST, 1998) as: *'any land which has been previously developed and therefore inclusive of derelict and vacant land, and which may or may not be contaminated'*.

An understanding of the cultural and economic dynamics of this industry is an essential component of any research or policy intervention that seeks to make the remediation and reuse of brownfield land a more effective and sustainable process.

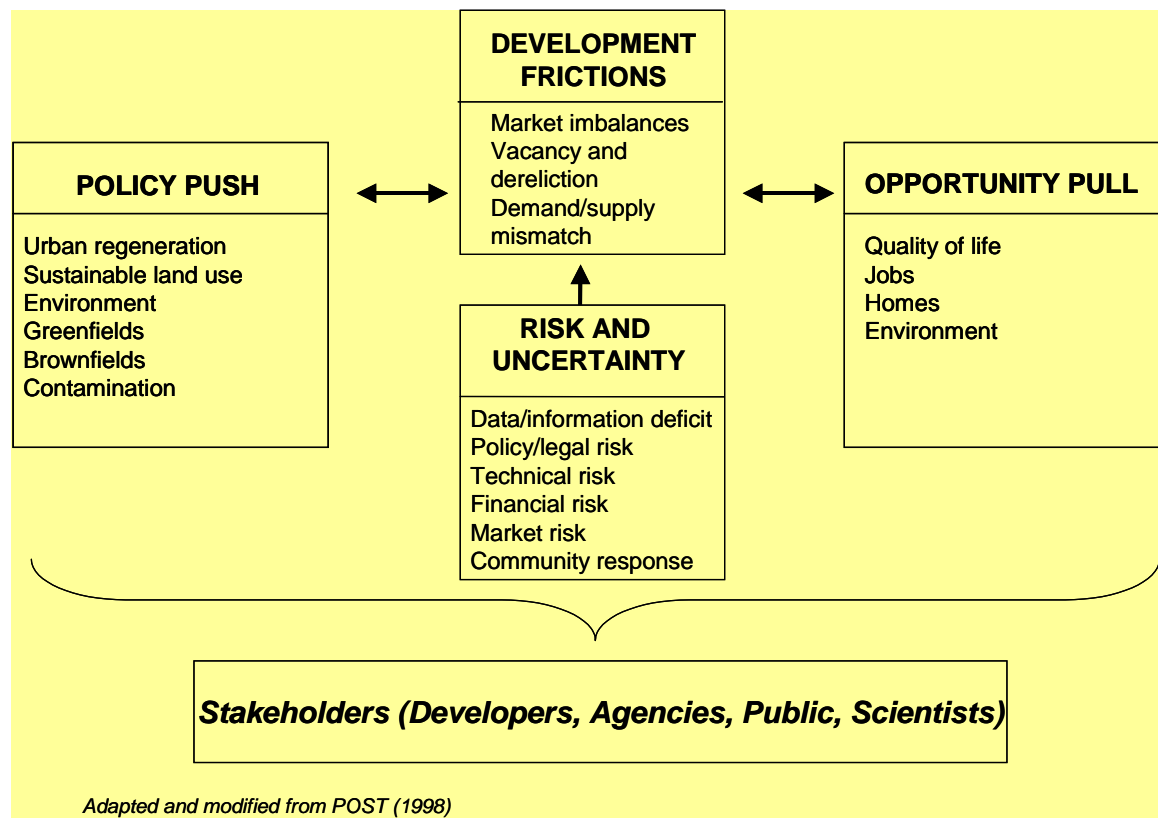
However, the regeneration of brownfield land has been impacted by the absence of a coherent redevelopment framework, the current regulatory system and the previous availability of greenfield alternatives.

Previous research in the property and planning arena in relation to brownfield analysis has tended to focus on three main themes:

- Institutional and structural analysis;
- Drivers and barriers to brownfield development; and,
- Risk perceptions and value impacts.

This project will examine a range of conceptual frameworks as part of the literature but the research problem is best conceptualised in the form of Figure 1.

Figure 1 Conceptual Model (adapted and modified from POST, 1998)



Methods

The research will use survey, interview, and case study techniques to explore the role of the property development industry in brownfield regeneration and its relationship with other stakeholders in the community and decision-making processes. The case study work (which it is intended will include cases prior, during and after remediation) will be based on the databases created for Manchester and Thames Gateway in Project A (Portfolio and Project Management).

The work will be managed by Dr Tim Dixon on a day to day basis with further input from Prof. John Henneberry and Joe Doak. Judith Shephard will be the full-time, lead researcher on this project.

Two committees will have a direct link with the project:

- BCJ (plus D) Social Science Steering Group; and
- Industry sub-group (to be appointed)

References

POST (1998) A Brown and Pleasant Land