

Chris Brown

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Thanks very much, Philipp [Rode]. Alice has just made most of my points for me, which is extremely helpful.

The first point, and probably the one that I would most want you to take away is that brownfield land is a renewable source and I do sometimes take issue with CPRE when they come out with numbers saying, "We have this amount of acres or this capacity of brownfield land." That number tends to stay the same all the time but we keep developing it. It is because we are getting more, and I will come back to that in a second.

The second one I am going to take issue with to a certain, Dieter [Helm], but certainly the economists this week, the idea that there is lots of degraded land out there; simply not true. Then finally a potential solution around the technical areas of public transport accessibility levels (PTALs) and others, but I will come back to that.

Therefore, first just some definitions, because we use these words but we do not necessarily agree with what they mean. You see the first one there. Is everyone familiar with the work of MITS? Hands up if you are familiar.

No. OK, that is the 'man in the street'. Therefore, the man in the street assumes that brownfield land is vacant, it is derelict and it is contaminated. It is not a bad definition but it is just not the one we use in this country in any way at all. Therefore, when we count land - and we do not count it anymore - in the national land use database, we use that second definition, which, as you can see, is pretty wide. Therefore, it has the potential for maybe getting planning permission. It counts. The one we actually use in the planning system, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), is any land and its curtilage which is or was occupied by a permanent structure. You are sitting on brownfield land. Everything, every building that you can see around you is brownfield land, bear that in mind when we are having these discussions.

Sorry, I have skipped one point ahead. Apologies. I am trying to do two things. I cannot multitask! That is just another garage's site. It just happens to be across the road and it is now in the process of becoming 28 homes - same point as Alice [Roberts]. The next one is this idea of degraded land. I am lucky enough to work in something called the Future Cities Catapult, where my London team is based, therefore, we have all these techy things we can use. I thought I would just go and find all this degraded land that the economist is talking about and find out who owns it, which is, for me, more interesting. It took forever. It is really hard to find in London degraded green belt. I did eventually find this bit. I actually found some other ones beforehand. The first half dozen that I found were all owned by local authorities or other public agencies. Therefore, when people talk about this just remember actually we own a lot of the degraded public land. This is one that is owned by a developer. You probably cannot read that. That is the Land Registry title. At risk of being libelled, having done a bit more research into them, I would describe them as a dodgy developer. I am of course myself an evil developer, therefore, I can talk about my friends that way. However, even more interesting is

the list of people who have lent them money; dodgy financiers. If the lawyers could form a queue outside!

This is my final point and this is: if we are not going to develop on the green belt where are we going to develop? Ben [Derbyshire] is going to talk about this in much more detail. However, this is Meridian Water. This is actually a site for 10,000 homes, very much like some of the images Alice [Roberts] was using. These are the PTAL ratings, public transport accessibility levels for those that are not aficionados. Basically, apart from the light blue, the other colours mean you can build bungalows if you are lucky but not much else. It is a genuine constraint within London.

Now, some really clever people - not me - young creative planners, have come up with the idea of ATAL, active transport accessibility levels. This is the idea that actually people can walk to the bus and the train and get a bike, and things like that, if there is a little bit of investment in walking and cycling infrastructure. If you do that in this part of east London you see the colours change massively. This is just literally building one decent bike path up the Lea Valley, and, actually, the bike path already exists. You just have to calculate the numbers in a different way.

It does not take much to increase densities in London. The three points I made: brownfield is a renewable resources and we are not running out of it any time soon; the green belt actually is manicured for most part to within an inch of its life within London, although it is probably not publicly accessible and you might want to talk about that; and a small change to the planning system, ATALs in addition to PTALs, and we can make the most of what we have. Thank you.