

The economic impacts of fulfilling brownfield housing potential

A Cebr report for Ecotricity and GBF

June 2026

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London, June 2026

Contents

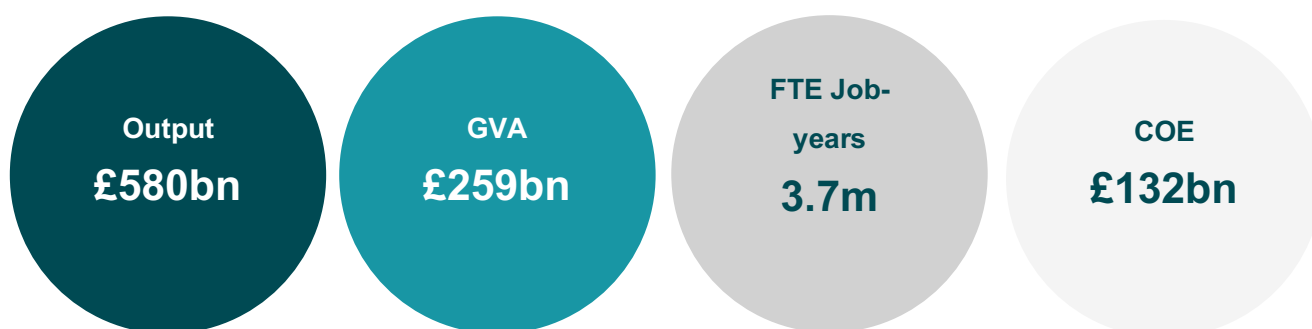
Executive summary	6
1. Introduction	10
2. Brownfield housebuilding potential across England	12
2.1 Total brownfield housebuilding potential	12
2.2 Brownfield housebuilding potential at local level	14
2.3 Brownfield housebuilding by tenure	16
2.4 Incorporating vacant homes	17
3. Direct economic impacts of brownfield housebuilding	19
3.1 Direct output provided by housebuilding	19
3.2 Direct GVA generated by housebuilding	21
3.3 Direct employment supported by housebuilding	23
3.4 Direct compensation of housebuilding employees	25
4. Aggregate economic impacts of brownfield housebuilding	28
4.1 Wider output supported by housebuilding	28
4.2 Wider GVA generated by housebuilding	30
4.3 Wider employment supported by housebuilding	32
4.4 Wider employee compensation generated	34
5. Local economic impacts of brownfield housebuilding	37
5.1 Impacts of brownfield housebuilding on local economies	37
5.2 Brownfield housebuilding relative to local economies	40
5.3 Deprived local authorities and housebuilding impacts	42
6. Economic impacts of social and affordable brownfield housebuilding	45
6.1 Economic impacts of social housing construction in baseline scenario	45
6.2 Economic impacts of social housing construction in scaled-up scenario	51
6.3 Government investment required to support social housebuilding	52
6.4 Benefits of investment in social housebuilding	54
Appendix 1: Methodology	55

A.1 Establishing brownfield housebuilding potential	55
A.2 Distributing brownfield housebuilding	56
A.3 Estimating construction costs for housebuilding	56
A.4 Deriving direct housebuilding impacts	57
A.5 Modelling wider economic impacts	58
A.6 Social housing and cost-benefit modelling	58

Executive summary

The Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) is pleased to present Green Britain Foundation with a **comprehensive assessment of the economic impacts associated with fulfilling national brownfield housing potential, in redeveloping all residential sites.**

Cebr's analysis leverages official data from brownfield registers to estimate the number of homes that could be built on identified residential brownfield sites. Full economic contributions associated with building these properties over a ten-year horizon are modelled using Cebr's economic impact framework. **We estimate 1.4 million homes could be built across England, of which the discounted aggregate economic impacts**



over entire period are:



HOUSEBUILDING DELIVERED ON BROWNFIELD SITES

- **1.4 million homes could be built across England if all existing brownfield sites were developed** -- this is the baseline scenario modelled in our analysis, assuming all new houses would be delivered over a ten-year horizon.
- **Just under half (48%) of the 1.4 million, approximately 674,000 homes, already hold planning permission yet remain unbuilt.**
- **London dominates geographically**, accounting for an estimated 374,000 new homes (27% of the national total), followed by the North West and the West Midlands.
- **By tenure, the split is near-even:** an estimated 51% (721,000 homes) would be private market while 49% (680,000 homes) would be affordable housing, spanning social rent, affordable rent, and affordable ownership.
- **London is the affordable-housing leader by share**, with an estimated 75% of its brownfield homes (~280,000) dedicated to affordable tenures.
- **At local-authority level, Birmingham tops the table with 105,294 developable brownfield sites** – nearly double second-placed Barking and Dagenham (~59,600).
- **Planning-permission readiness varies sharply across authorities:** Barnet has 100% of sites permitted and Greenwich 88%, while Manchester (the third-ranked at total 57,858 sites) shows no sites have yet received permission.
- **Factoring in England's ~303,000 vacant homes alongside full brownfield development would lift the total number of possible new homes to 1.7 million**



DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF CONSTRUCTION

- **Delivering England's full brownfield housing potential would generate £232.6bn in direct output (present value) across the housebuilding sector over the decade**, equivalent to a sustained pipeline averaging more than £23bn of activity per year.
- **Direct output is geographically concentrated:** London alone generates £71.6bn (30.8%), followed by the South East at £32.0bn (13.8%) and the North West at £31.3bn (13.4%) -- together these three regions account for 58.0% of the national total.
- **Brownfield housebuilding would generate £88.8bn in direct GVA (present value)** equating to roughly 38p of value added per £1 of output.
- **Direct GVA mirrors output's regional pattern**, with London generating £27.4bn (30.8%), followed by the South East (£12.2bn) and North West (£12.0bn); notably, the Midlands and northern regions together capture 38.6% of direct GVA.
- **The scenario would directly support 1.35 million FTE job-years (134,600 jobs per year on average)**, with annual employment ramping from ~13,100 FTEs in 2026-27 to a peak of 296,700 in the final two years.
- **Direct employment is similarly London-weighted, supporting 413,700 FTE job-years (30.8%) in the capital**, with the South East (185,000) and North West (182,000) next, and the Midlands and northern regions collectively sustaining 520,600 job-years.
- **Of the value added, £40.6bn flows directly to workers as employee compensation (present value)**, with London accounting for the largest regional share at £12.5bn. This total COE represents 45.6% of direct GVA and reflects the labour-intensive nature of construction, equating to to £4.1bn COE per year.



AGGREGATE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF CONSTRUCTION

- Once supply-chain (indirect) and employee-spending (induced) effects are layered on, **brownfield housebuilding supports £579.7bn in aggregate UK output (present value) -- driven by an output multiplier where every direct £1 generates a further £1.49 across the economy.**
- Indirect output is the single largest layer at £263.0bn (45.4%), with induced impacts adding £84.2bn (14.5%), **meaning well over half of total output supported arises beyond construction itself, through supply chains and wider spending.**
- Aggregate GVA reaches £259.3bn across the UK (present value), underpinned by a multiplier of £1.92 of wider GVA for every £1 generated directly by construction.
- **The scenario would support 3.7 million total FTE job-years across the UK, more than 2.5x the direct figure**, as a further 1.75 job-years are supported per direct job-year.
- Indirect employment dominates at 1,757,800 job-years (47.5%), with induced effects adding 594,400 (16.1%), **confirming that most jobs supported sit in the supply chain and wider economy rather than on-site.**
- Aggregate employee compensation totals £132.0bn (present value), reflecting the strongest multiplier of all four indicators -- **£2.25 of wider compensation for every £1**



LOCAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF CONSTRUCTION

- **Economic impacts of brownfield housebuilding are highly concentrated in urban, densely populated local authorities** - construction impacts follow the distribution of potential brownfield homes.
- **Top three local authorities in terms of direct GVA generated are Birmingham, Barking and Dagenham, and Manchester.** Brownfield housebuilding in these local authorities generates £12.9bn in direct GVA over the ten-year horizon in present value terms - 14.5% of the nationwide total.
- **Large urban conurbations dominate brownfield housebuilding impacts.** Of the top 10 local authorities by direct GVA generated, 9 are in either Greater London, the West Midlands CA or Greater Manchester CA - the only exception is South Cambridgeshire.
- **London local authorities dominate in terms of brownfield housebuilding impacts relative to the size of local economies.** Barking and Dagenham, Lewisham, and Haringey would benefit most strongly.
- **Barking and Dagenham also topped the rankings in terms of average annual job years generated as a proportion of the local labour force (6.1%),** followed by South Cambridgeshire (3.1%) and Salford (3.0%).
- **Brownfield housebuilding impacts disproportionately benefit deprived areas and communities.** The most deprived decile of local authorities by overall index of multiple deprivation account for 18.9% of total direct GVA generated, £16.8bn over the ten-year horizon, and 255,000 total job-years.
- **The top decile of local authorities in terms of highest unemployment account for 21.7% of total job-years generated nationwide by the construction programme** -



BENEFITS AND COSTS OF SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION

- Cebr modelling also drilled down by housing tenure to **isolate the impacts of social brownfield housing construction.** In line with tenure distribution of housing completions over the past five years, this represented 467,000 total homes.
- **This brownfield social housing construction would deliver £28.1bn in direct GVA over the ten-year programme horizon,** in present value terms, and £82.0bn in aggregate impacts.
- **We also modelled a hypothetical, scaled-up social housing delivery scenario of 1m total brownfield social homes,** which would generate £60.1bn in discounted direct GVA and 909k direct job years over the ten-year horizon.
- **Cebr also modelled expected government investment (grants) required to deliver this scale of social housing.** In the baseline scenario, total grant requirements to deliver 467k social homes are £49.7bn in present value terms.
- Comparing economic impacts (benefits) of brownfield social housing construction with required government investment (costs), **produces a cost-benefit ratio of 1.65** - for every £1 government invests in delivering brownfield social housing, £1.65 of aggregate GVA would be generated from construction.

1. Introduction

Cebr is pleased to present this report to the Green Britain Foundation, evaluating the potential economic impacts generated by brownfield housebuilding throughout England.

Few issues in British public and political discourse generate the consensus now attached to the housing crisis. There is near-unanimous, cross-party agreement around inadequate housebuilding, leading to persistent, chronic under-supply. The National Housing Federation and homelessness charity Crisis estimates put England's annual requirement at around 340,000 new homes, of which 145,000 should be affordable,¹ against delivery that has consistently fallen well short of even the Government's own 300,000-home target.

This undersupply carries acute human and economic costs. More than 1.3m households sit on social housing waiting lists with around 131,000 more in temporary accommodation at a cost to local authorities of £2.8bn in 2024-25.² Unaffordable housing suppresses household formation, deepens regional inequality and impairs labour mobility. These impacts dilute agglomeration effects, constrain household consumption and lead to a misallocation of capital, acting as a sustained drag on productivity and economic growth.³

Crucially, building more homes would not only relieve undersupply but deliver substantial benefits to the economy. This is recognised across the political spectrum, with successive governments committing to around 300,000 homes a year and current policy targeting 1.5 million new homes this Parliament. Planning reforms alone were estimated to add £6.8bn to the UK economy (0.2% uplift) at the Spring 2025 budget.⁴

To demonstrate the significant impacts of increased housing delivery in concrete terms, Cebr set out to assess England's housebuilding potential. Specifically, we quantified the impacts generated by construction and development activity, which are layered on top of housing accessibility, availability and wider social benefits. Our research revolves around the land and housing opportunities that are most accessible and least controversial for development: brownfield sites already identified by local authorities in their own land registers. A significant proportion of these sites have already secured planning permission.

This research is formed of two fundamental components. We first established the total brownfield housing capacity nationwide, drawing together every site identified in the brownfield land registers of all local authorities across the country. Leveraging this total capacity, we constructed a scenario in which all potential brownfield homes are delivered

¹ [NHF and Crisis \(2018\) Housing supply requirements across Great Britain.](#)

² [Shelter \(2025\) Bill for homeless accommodation soars by 25%, hitting £2.8 bn](#)

³ Greater London Authority, NERA (2024) Housing Affordability and Economic Productivity

⁴ HM Treasury (2025) OBR concludes planning reforms will bring housebuilding to its highest level in 40 years

over a ten-year development programme, adopting an evidence-based tenure, geographic and temporal profile.

Cebr then robustly modelled the impact of this scenario on the wider economy, capturing the economic activity supported by the construction and development of all potential brownfield homes. The analysis is not intended to serve as a forecast or prediction of the housing market, but rather as a demonstration of the economic impacts that could be realised were the nation to fulfil its entire brownfield housebuilding potential. These impacts layer on top of the wider gains from housing availability, affordability and mitigating the housing crisis more broadly.

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** details the total brownfield housing potential across England, in terms of number of homes and their distribution across areas, tenures and years;
- **Section 3** presents the direct economic impacts of brownfield housebuilding, across the four core measures of output, GVA, employment and COE;
- **Section 4** provides the wider, aggregate economic impacts of brownfield housebuilding, incorporating the indirect and induced impact layers;
- **Section 5** covers economic impacts at a hyper local level, comparing this with deprivation measures to understand how brownfield housebuilding impacts disadvantaged communities;
- **Section 6** presents the social housing-specific component of the modelling, including the modelled benefits (economic impacts) and costs of this scenario, comparing the two to derive a cost-benefit ratio; and
- **Appendix 1** covers the full methodology employed to deliver this analysis.

2. Brownfield housebuilding potential across England

This module sets out the maximum number of homes that could be built across England if all existing brownfield sites were developed. We present breakdowns at the national, regional, and local authority level, as well as by tenure. This comprises the baseline scenario that the economic impact analysis throughout this report is based on.

We also consider how the maximum number of additional dwellings would increase if also including currently vacant homes, although these do not feed into our subsequent economic calculations.

2.1 Total brownfield housebuilding potential

We estimate that, **across the whole of England, 1.4 million homes could be built if all existing brownfield sites were redeveloped.** This volume of housebuilding is equivalent to almost the totality of Labour's stated objective to deliver 1.5 million homes,⁵ most of which would be delivered in urban, highly concentrated areas, where brownfield sites are most prevalent. It would also constitute a 5.4% expansion of England's total number of dwellings which, in 2025, stood at 25.8 million.⁶

The redevelopment of brownfield sites, therefore, holds immense potential for alleviating pressure from the housing market in England, while avoiding the new development of greenfield sites where possible. This is particularly relevant considering average rent in England in the 12 months to December 2025 increased by 3.9% while house prices increased by 2.5%.⁷

Of the total 1.4 million homes that could be built across England, nearly half (48%) have already been granted planning permission. **That amounts to approximately 674,000 homes that have permission to be built on brownfield sites but have not yet been developed.**

The economic analysis in the rest of this report refers to the impacts associated with the scenario in which of these homes, both those with planning permission and without it, are built over the next ten years. Table 1 presents the timeline over which we modelled the 1.4 million homes being delivered, as further detail around this is set out in the methodology.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/housing-targets-increased-to-get-britain-building-again>

⁶ Table 100: number of dwellings by tenure and district, England, accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

⁷ Private rent and house prices, UK: January 2026, Office for National Statistics, January 2026, available [here](#).

Table 1: Yearly number of homes built between 2026-27 and 2035-36

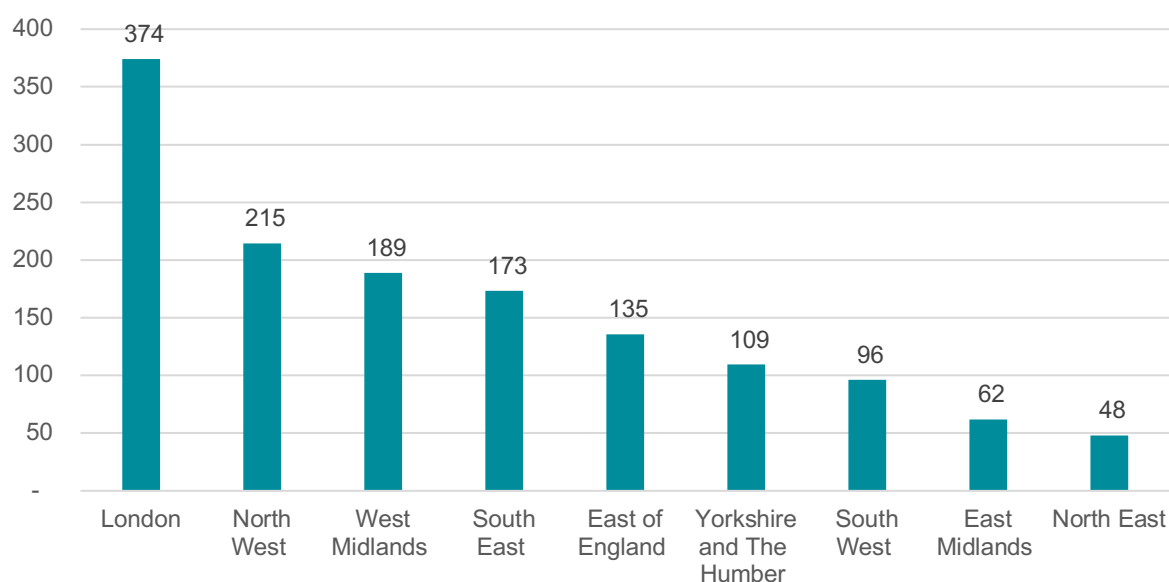
Year	Number of homes built
2026-27	13,477
2027-28	13,477
2028-29	26,954
2029-30	56,055
2030-31	83,009
2031-32	112,110
2032-33	224,220
2033-34	253,321
2034-35	309,376
2035-36	309,376

Source: Cebr analysis

Note that in our modelling we account for the fact that homes without planning permission will not be immediately buildable, and as such introduce a 3-year lag. Hence why, from 2028-29 to 2029-2030, modelled housebuilding more than doubles.

Figure 1 below shows how the new 1.4 million homes would be distributed across England.

Figure 1: Regional distribution of the homes that could be built in England if all brownfield sites were developed (000s), in 2026



Source: Cebr analysis

As can be seen, the largest number of sites to be developed are in London, where we estimate 374,000 new homes could be built (27% of the total), followed by the North West (215,000 homes or 15% of the total), and the West Midlands (189,000 homes or 13%). Given that brownfield sites tend to concentrate in urban areas, it is unsurprising that

regions which hold England's largest urban centres – like London, Birmingham, and Manchester – have the most redevelopment potential. New housing development can be particularly beneficial to these cities, counteracting the impact of limited housing stocks on rising rent prices. In the capital, for instance, redevelopment of all brownfield sites would be associated with a 9.7% increase in the current number of dwellings.

2.2 Brownfield housebuilding potential at local level

As with regions, the number of homes that can be built at a Local Authority (LA) level depends on local distribution of brownfield sites. Our modelling allows us to capture a level of local granularity and calculate impacts of housebuilding by LA. Table 2 below shows the top 15 local authorities with the largest number of brownfield sites that could be converted to homes, as well as the share of them for which planning permission has already been obtained.

Table 2: Top 15 local authorities with most brownfield sites that could be converted to homes and share of them for which planning permission has been obtained, 2026

Local authority	Total brownfield sites	Share with planning permission
Birmingham	105,294	45%
Barking and Dagenham	59,639	56%
Manchester	57,858	0%
Salford	44,169	47%
Wandsworth	29,785	66%
Lewisham	29,587	55%
Leeds	26,814	54%
Brent	26,637	43%
Haringey	25,667	45%
Sheffield	22,653	40%
South Cambridgeshire	22,242	68%
Croydon	21,181	23%
Greenwich	20,988	88%
Bristol, City of	18,893	85%
Barnet	18,058	100%

Source: Cebr analysis

Birmingham tops the chart with over 105,000 homes that could be redeveloped, considerably more than the next local authority on the list, Barking and Dagenham, where approximately 59,000 homes could be developed. Of the top 15 authorities, eight are in London, demonstrating the capital's significant redevelopment potential, as also shown in Figure 1.

Of the LAs on the list, Greenwich and the City of Bristol are the two with the highest share of already-obtained planning permissions, at 88% and 85%, respectively. Others such as Manchester and, to a lesser extreme, Croydon, lag behind in terms of providing permissions for brownfield redevelopment. These are local authorities where brownfield

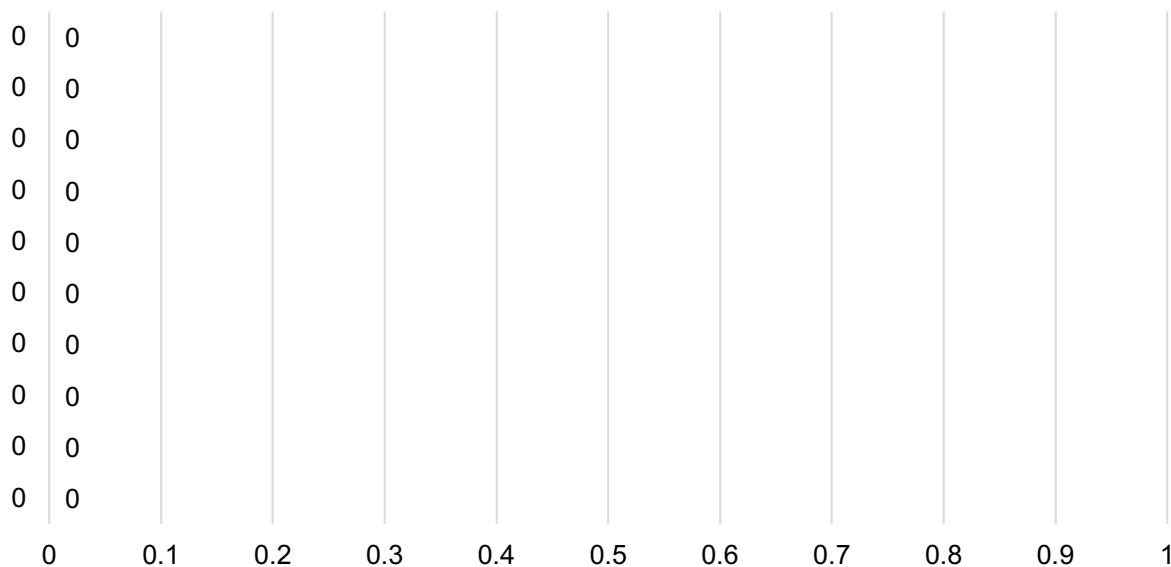
sites may have been identified, but where no or few steps have yet been taken to secure planning permissions.

In Barnet, on the other hand, all brownfield sites have already obtained permission for development. Other authorities not on the list but where all or almost all sites have been granted planning permission include Derby (with approximately 3,300 sites), Liverpool (2,400), and Enfield (2,100).

It is worth noting, additionally, that the top decile of local authorities (the top 30) account for 50.4% of the total brownfield housing potential, with the top ten alone accounting for 30.5% of the nationwide total. A large share of additional brownfield housing, therefore, could be delivered by building on just a small share of England's land.

Figure 2 shows the top ten LAs in terms of potential new brownfield homes per 100,000 residents.

Figure 2: Top ten LAs with the largest number of new brownfield homes per 100k in the population

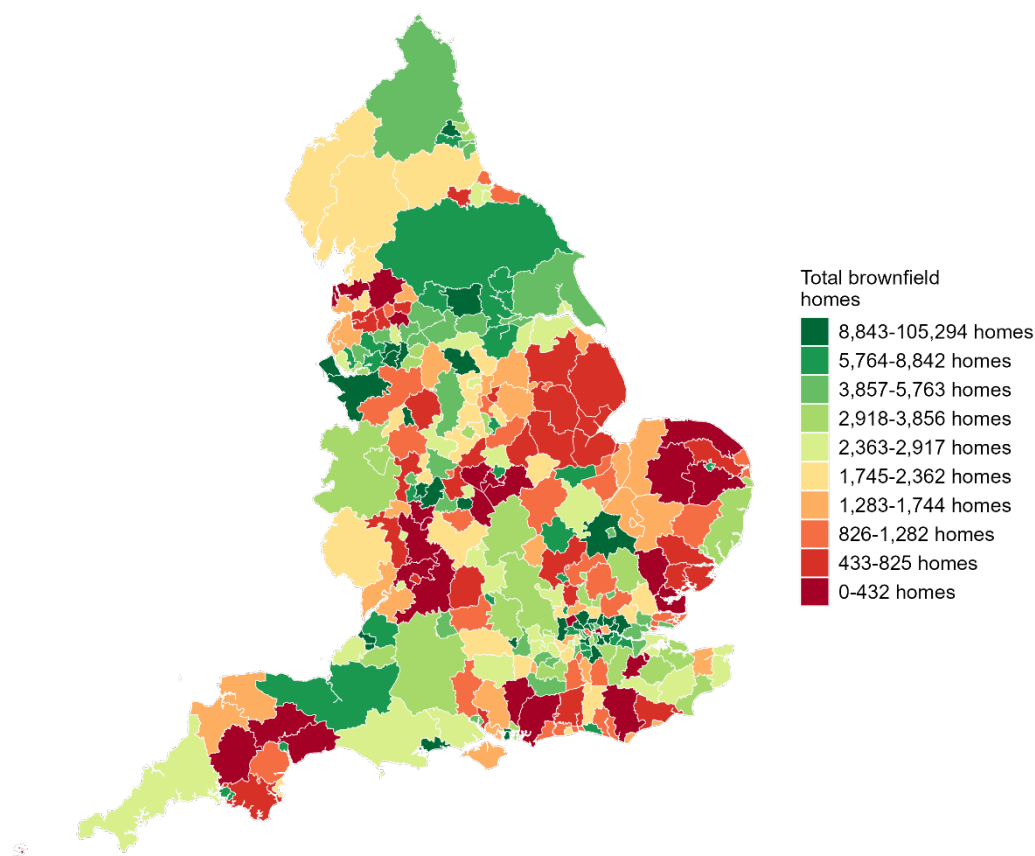


Source: Cebr analysis

In Barking and Dagenham, approximately 25,600 homes could be built for every 100k residents in the local area while in Salford, the equivalent number would be of 15,000 for every 100k local residents.. The results show the LAs in which redevelopment of brownfield sites could have the largest impact on local housing markets, creating new homes in densely concentrated areas.

Finally, we also show each local authority's brownfield redevelopment potential in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Number of brownfield homes that could be built in each local authority across England



Source: Cebr analysis

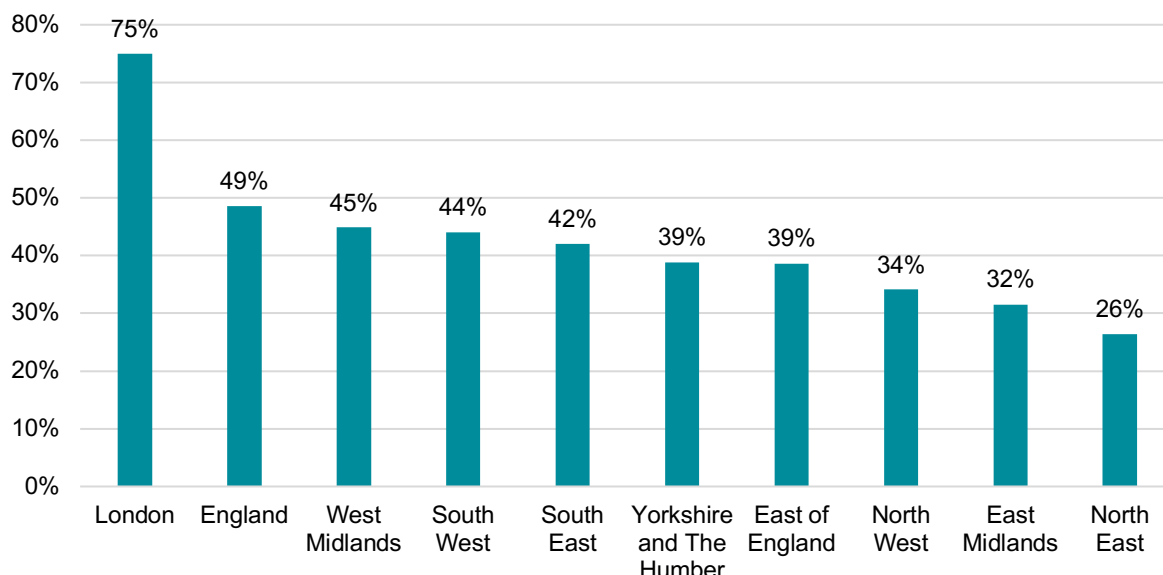
As has been discussed, brownfield redevelopment potential concentrates around urban centres and densely populated areas where such sites are more likely to exist in the first place. The country's most populous areas, like London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Newcastle, are also where most new brownfield homes would be delivered.

2.3 Brownfield housebuilding by tenure

Of the 1.4 million homes that could be built on brownfield sites, we estimate 51% (721,000) would be let on the private market while the remaining 49% (680,000) would constitute new affordable housing, which includes social rent, affordable rent, and affordable ownership properties. Properties that would be dedicated to affordable housing have slightly higher rates of pre-obtained planning permission, at 51% of brownfield sites, compared to 45% of private market properties.

Figure 4 below shows the share of redeveloped brownfield sites in each region which we estimate would be dedicated towards affordable housing.

Figure 4: Share of redeveloped brownfield sites in each region that would be dedicated towards affordable housing



Source: Cebr analysis

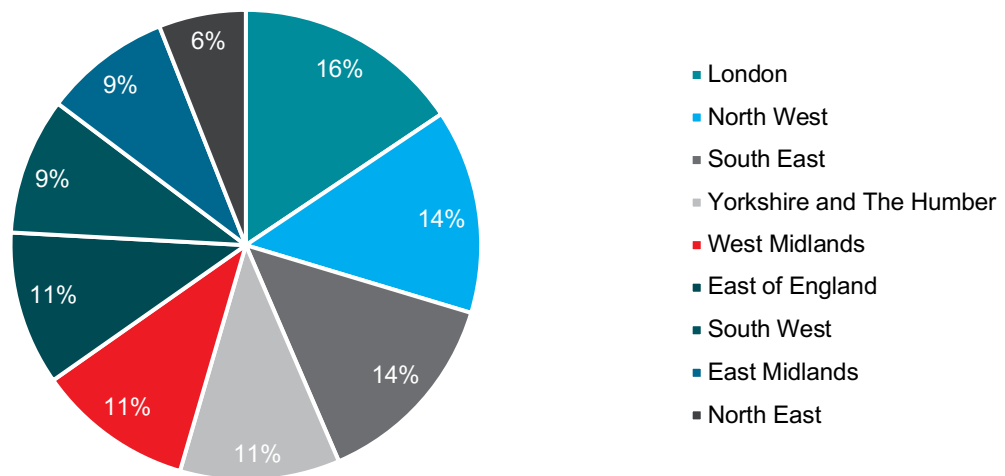
London would lead in terms of new affordable housing delivery, with 75% of homes built on brownfield sites (approximately 280,000) estimated to fall within this tenure. Other regions, like the East Midlands (32% of homes) or the North East (26%) would dedicate a considerably smaller share of the redeveloped housing stock to affordable housing. It is likely, therefore, that London inflates the overall proportion of new brownfield homes in England that would be dedicated to affordable housing, reflecting the high rates of this type of tenure in the capital, relative to other regions.

2.4 Incorporating vacant homes

Finally, although we do not incorporate the impact of filling vacant homes into our economic analysis, we estimate that, **if the approximately 303,000 vacant homes that exist in England were made habitable or filled, while all brownfield sites are also developed, the total number of new homes would come to 1.7 million.**

The largest share of these additional 303,000 are in London, where there are approximately 47,000 vacant homes, or 16% of the total.

Figure 5: Distribution of vacant homes across English regions



Source: Cebr analysis

As can be seen, the North West and South East follow behind London, each accounting for about 14% of empty homes in England. London, the North West, and the South East are also regions where brownfield redevelopment potential is high, due, in part, to larger populations and denser urban centres. Hence, the potential for the creation of new dwellings is particularly large in these parts of the country if both redeveloped brownfield sites and filled vacant homes are combined.

3. Direct economic impacts of brownfield housebuilding

This section sets out the economic impacts generated directly by the development of all potential brownfield homes established in Section 2. Direct impacts here therefore reflect the economic activity supported in a scenario where 1.4 million homes across England are constructed over a ten-year time horizon, modelled by local authority and tenure then aggregated to a nationwide figure. Economic impacts are captured through four core indicators of output, GVA, FTE employment, and employee compensation (COE).

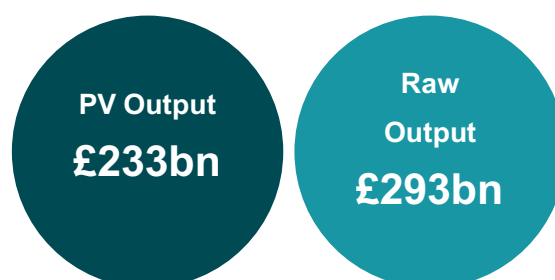
Given the time horizon associated with this multi-year construction scenario and resulting economic impacts, future financial impacts are discounted to reflect the social time preference for money, in line with HMT guidance and best practice. Discounted impacts are presented as ‘present value’ (PV) estimates throughout our analysis and should be interpreted as the core findings, however we also present undiscounted (raw) estimates for completeness. All monetary figures are presented in constant 2026 prices throughout. Non-financial employment impacts are not discounted, but given the multi-year nature of this analysis are provided as total ‘job-years’ estimates.

3.1 Direct output provided by housebuilding

Delivering England’s full brownfield housing potential would generate £232.6bn in direct output across the housebuilding sector over the next decade, expressed in present value terms. As shown in Figure 6, on an undiscounted basis, the direct output supported over the coming ten years reaches £293.9bn. Direct output here measures the total gross value of construction activity stimulated by the brownfield housebuilding scenario before any wider supply-chain or income effects are layered on. The broadest of the four impacts indicators, output anchors the scale of the opportunity, as a sustained, decade-long

Figure 1: Total direct output generated by brownfield housebuilding over full 10-year time horizon, raw undiscounted and present values (2026 prices)

pipeline of activity worth more than £23bn per year on average.

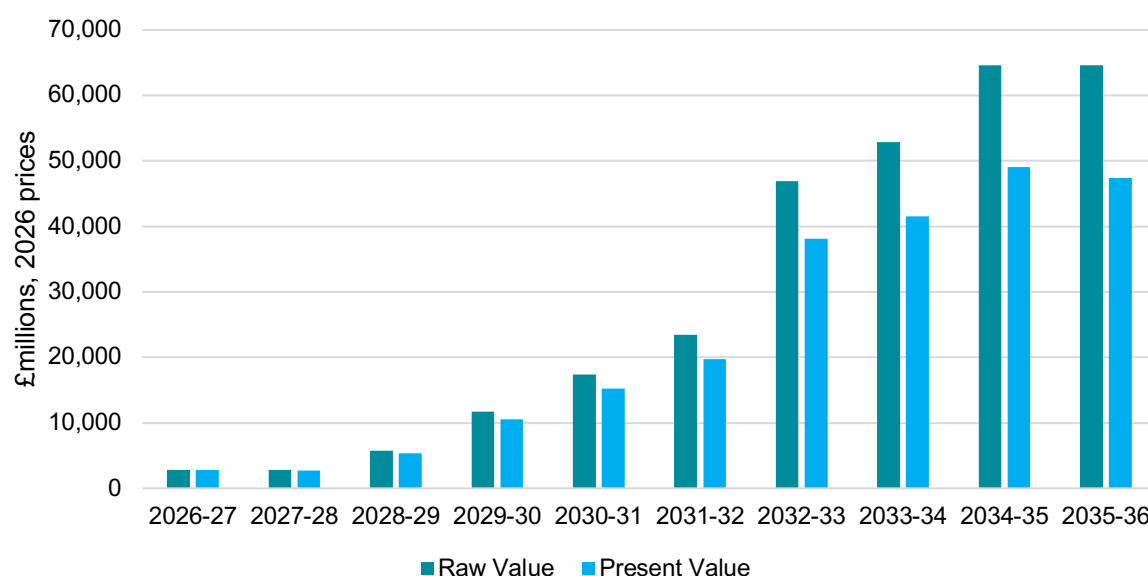


Source: Cebr analysis

Direct output builds steadily across the construction programme with the bulk of activity concentrated in the later years. This profile is visualised in Figure 6, and is a function of

assumptions around the phasing of build-out across the time horizon, with construction ‘ramping up’ throughout the period (detailed in methodology). In undiscounted, raw terms, annual output starts modestly at around £2.9 billion in 2026-27 and rises to a plateau of roughly £64.6 billion by 2034-35 and 2035-36. As a result, the second half of the decade accounts for 86.2% of total output, with the final two years accounting for 44.1%. Discounting reshapes this trajectory slightly with output peaking in present value terms at £49.1bn in 2034-35. Under this perspective, the final two years of the time horizon represent 41.4% of total output.

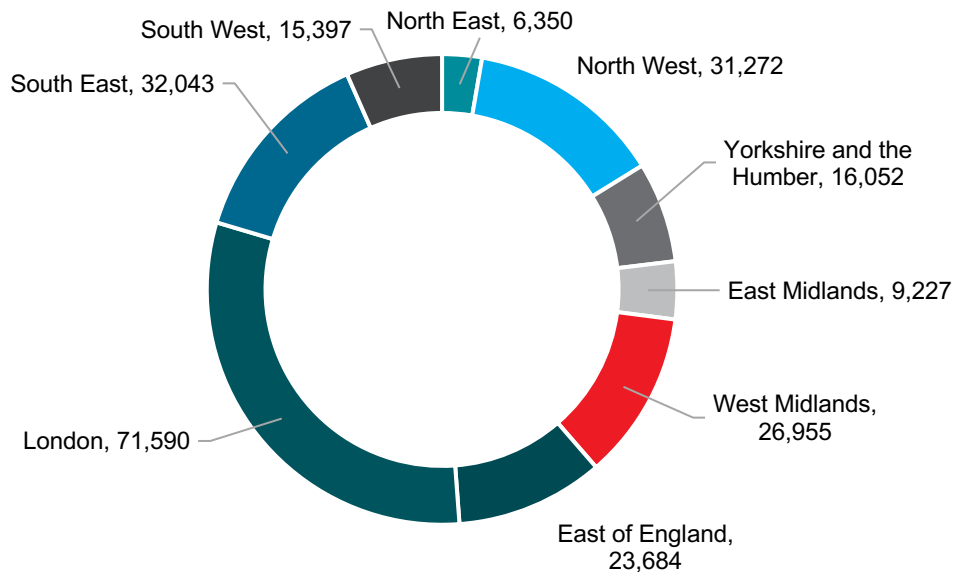
Figure 6: Direct output generated by brownfield housebuilding by year, undiscounted and present values (£millions, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

Direct output is distributed highly unevenly across England, largely capturing where brownfield housing capacity is concentrated geographically. The regional composition of present value direct output impacts is set out in Figure 7. Brownfield housebuilding in London alone generates £71.6 billion in direct output, or 30.8% of the national total, by far the largest regional share. The South East follows at £32.0 billion (13.8%) with the North West close behind at £31.3 billion (13.4%). Together, these three regions account for 58.0% of nationwide direct output. The remaining share is spread more thinly, with the East Midlands (4.0%) and North East (2.7%) at the lower end. This pattern underscores that the output impacts of construction, while national in scope, are weighted towards regions with the largest stock of developable brownfield land and greatest housing construction costs.

Figure 7: Regional composition of total direct output generated by brownfield housebuilding over full 10-year time horizon, present values (£millions, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

3.2 Direct GVA generated by housebuilding

Moving beyond output, total brownfield housebuilding would generate £88.8bn in GVA across the ten-year time horizon, in present value terms. Direct GVA impacts are visualised in Figure 8 and rise to £112 billion in raw, undiscounted terms. GVA represents the more meaningful measure of economic impact here, stripping out the cost of inputs to capture the net value the construction activity itself creates. At roughly 38p of value added for every £1 of output, the ratio reflects the input-intensive nature of housebuilding. Averaged across the decade, this equates to £8.9bn of direct GVA annually, a substantial and recurring contribution to the nationwide economy sustained over the construction horizon.

Figure 2: Total direct GVA generated by brownfield housebuilding over full 10-year time horizon, raw undiscounted and present values (2026 prices)

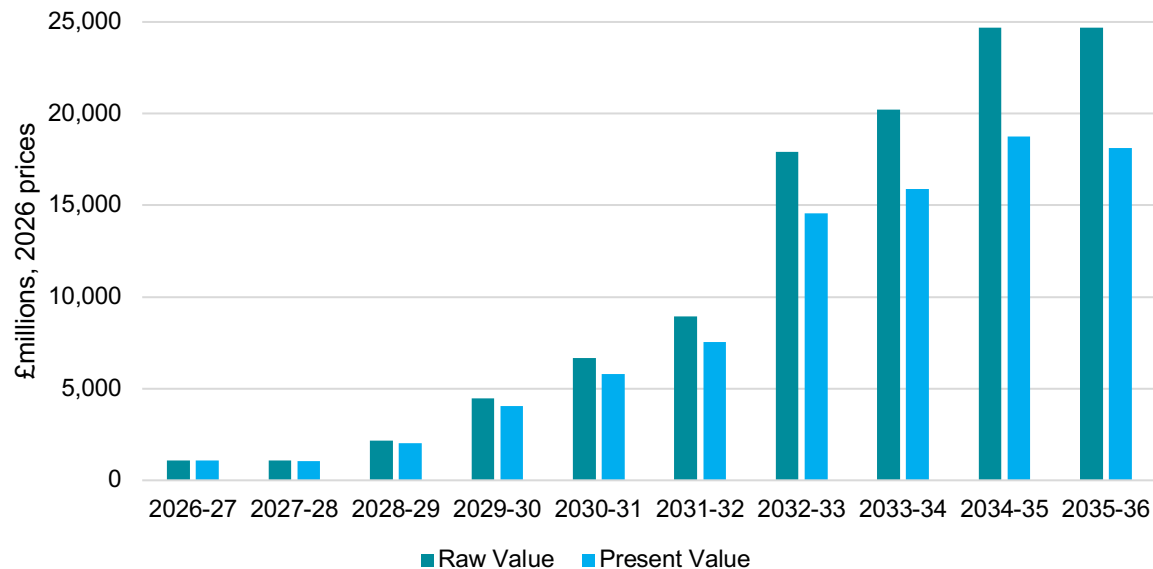


Source: Cebr analysis

Direct GVA follows the same back-loaded trajectory as output and the temporal build-out profile of brownfield housing itself. Annual GVA starts at around £1.1 billion in 2026-27 and climbs to roughly £24.7 billion by 2034-35 and 2035-36 on an undiscounted basis, as shown in Figure 8. Present values track slightly below raw figures in the later years with direct GVA peaking at £18.7bn in 2034-35. The latter half of the decade therefore accounts

for 86.2% of total direct GVA in the undiscounted perspective and 84.2% in present value terms, as GVA benefits of brownfield development accumulate significantly in the latter years of the scenario.

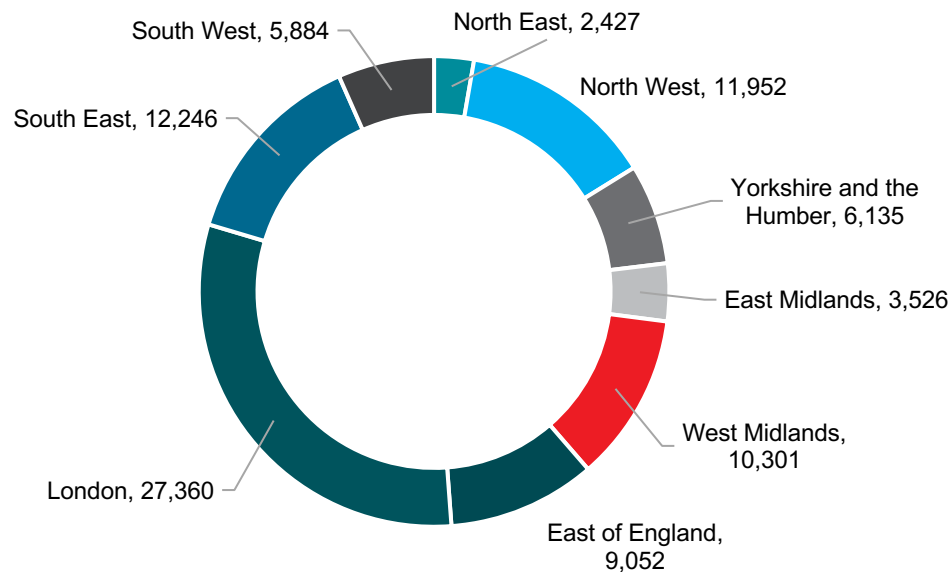
Figure 8: Direct GVA generated by brownfield housebuilding by year, undiscounted and present values (£millions, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

The regional profile of direct GVA closely follows the distribution of brownfield capacity, with London again dominant. Set out in Figure 9, the capital generates £27.4 billion of direct GVA, equivalent to 30.8% of the national total, followed by the South East and North West at £12.2bn and £12.0bn of direct GVA respectively. Notably, the Midlands and northern regions collectively account for 38.6% of direct GVA, indicating that brownfield development would channel significant economic activity and value-added well beyond London and the South East.

Figure 9: Regional composition of total direct GVA generated by brownfield housebuilding over full ten-year time horizon, present values (£millions, 2026 prices)



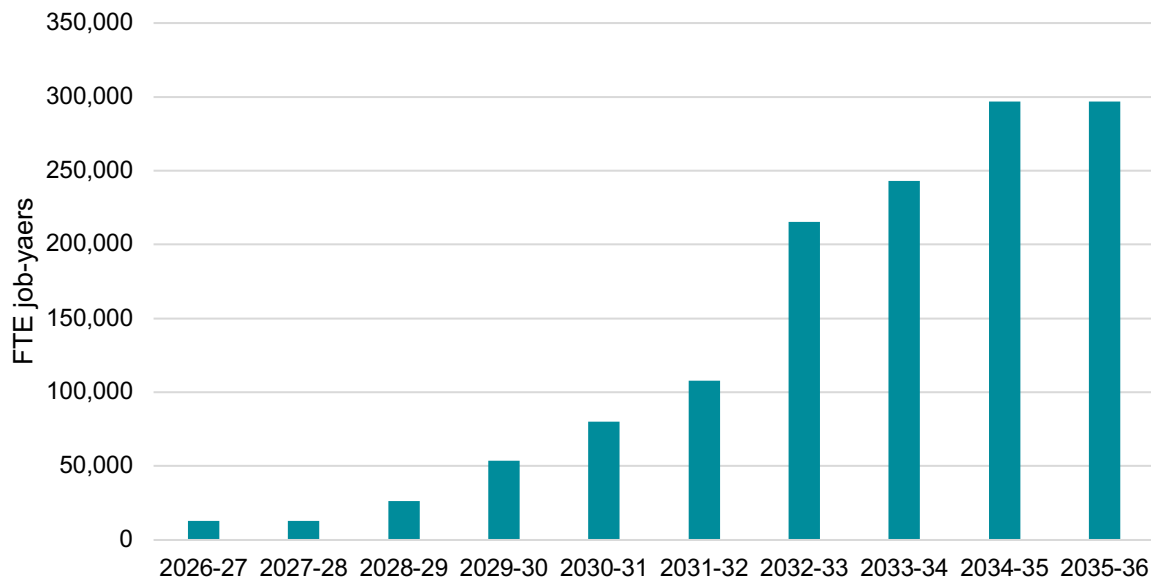
Source: Cebr analysis

3.3 Direct employment supported by housebuilding

Across the full ten-year construction programme, the brownfield housebuilding scenario would directly support 1.35m (1,345,600) full-time equivalent (FTE) job years. Employment impacts are expressed as cumulative job years over the decade where one job year represents one FTE position sustained for a single year. Therefore, on an average per-year basis, brownfield housebuilding would support 134,600 FTE jobs. Employment impacts capture the construction labour required to deliver the total 1.4 million brownfield homes, and points to this housebuilding as a significant and sustained source of direct employment nationwide.

Direct employment ramps up in line with construction and peaks strongly in the programme's final years. Annual FTE jobs rise from approximately 13,100 at the outset in 2026-27 to a peak of 296,700 in 2034-35 and 2035-36, as visualised in Figure 10. The time profile of direct employment impacts reflects underlying build-out assumptions; labour demand intensifies as housebuilding ramps up towards the end of the period. Consequently, the second half of the decade accounts for the vast majority (86.2%) of job years supported.

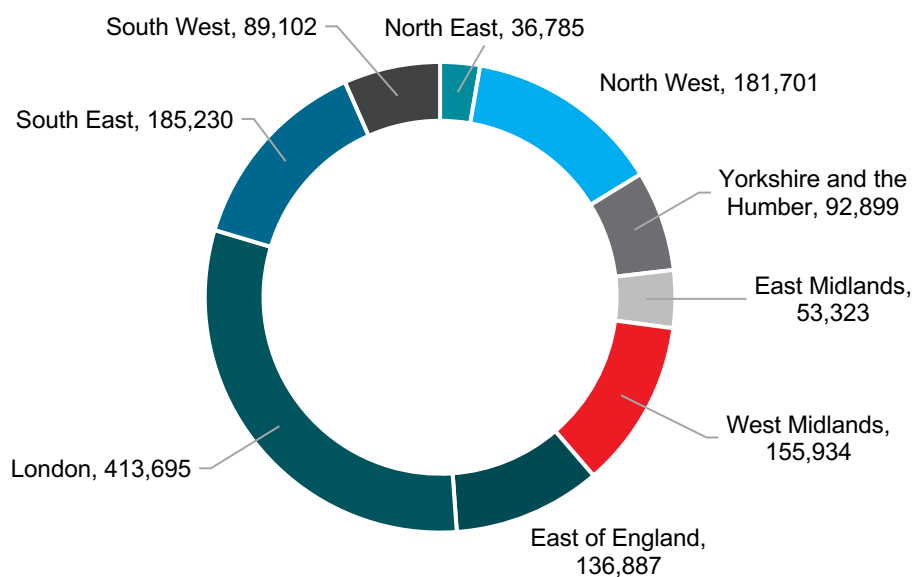
Figure 10: Direct employment supported by brownfield housebuilding by year (FTE job years)



Source: Cebr analysis

The geographic composition of employment mirrors that of output and GVA with job years concentrated where brownfield potential is greatest. Set out in Figure 11, London supports around 413,700 FTE job years, 30.8% of the national total and comfortably the largest regional share. The South East and North West follow, with roughly 185,200 and 181,700 job years respectively. The Midlands and northern regions collectively support 520,600 job years, denoting a meaningful share of labour-market activity distributed beyond the South. Brownfield housebuilding could therefore deliver support substantial construction employment across all regions of England.

Figure 11: Regional composition of total direct employment supported by brownfield housebuilding over full ten-year time horizon, present values (FTE job years)



Source: Cebr analysis

3.4 Direct compensation of housebuilding employees

Of the value added generated by brownfield housebuilding, a substantial share flows directly to workers as compensation (COE). Illustrated in Figure 12, the programme would support £40.6bn in direct employee compensation in present value terms, or £51.1bn on an undiscounted, raw basis. COE captures wages, salaries and employer contributions paid to those whose jobs are sustained by the construction process. As a component of GVA, it represents 45.6% of direct value added, underlining that the labour-intensive nature of housebuilding channels economic benefits into household incomes. Averaged

Figure 3: Total direct COE generated by brownfield housebuilding over full 10-year time horizon, raw undiscounted and present values (2026 prices)

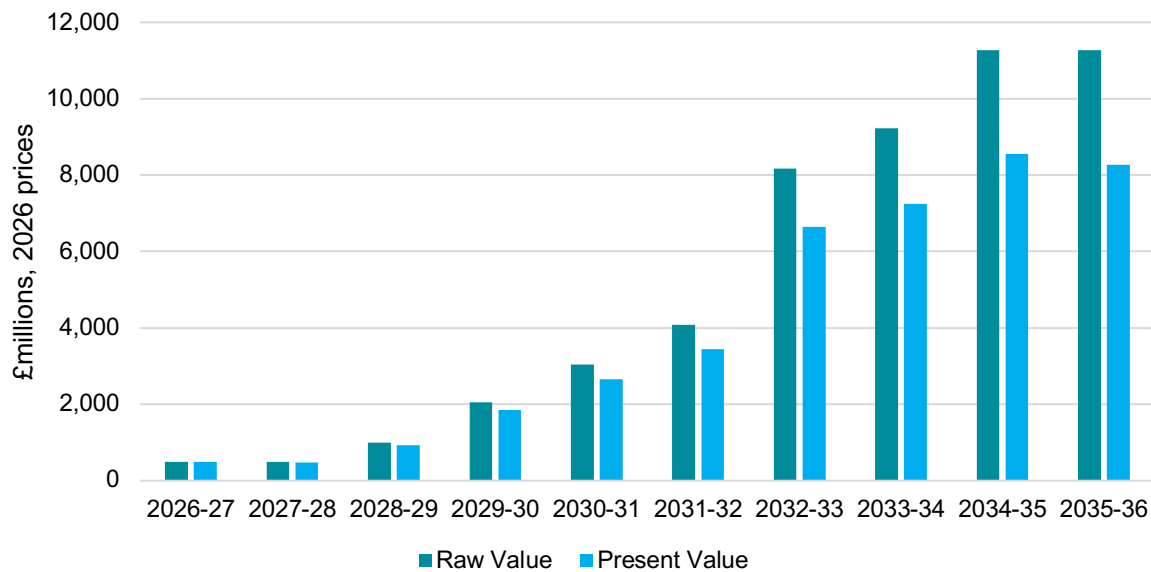
over the decade, this amounts to £4.1bn in annual worker compensation, in present value terms.



Source: Cebr analysis

Direct employee compensation accumulates along the same back-loaded time profile as the other indicators. Annual COE rises from £498m in 2026-27 to a peak of £11.3bn by 2034-35 and 2035-26 on an undiscounted basis, as shown in Figure 12. Under the discounted, present value perspective, direct employee compensation peaks at £8.6bn in 2034-35. The income benefits of brownfield development strengthen as the programme matures, with the largest gains in worker compensation realised once construction reaches peak intensity.

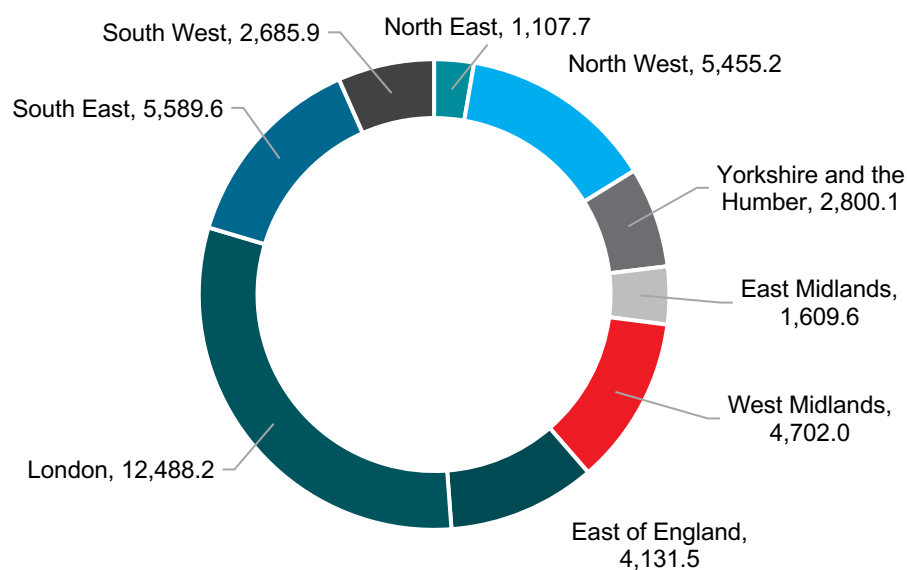
Figure 12: Direct COE generated by brownfield housebuilding by year, undiscounted and present values (£millions, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

Direct employee compensation is concentrated in English regions where building activity is greatest. As visualised in Figure 13, London accounts for the largest regional share of direct COE at £12.5bn. South East and North West are the next two strongest regions with COE totalling £11.0bn, while compensation is lowest in the East Midlands and North East, at 4.0% and 2.7% of the national total respectively. Given the geographic spread of potential brownfield housing, the construction scenario would direct meaningful income into household economies across the country, not solely those of the capital and its surroundings.

Figure 13: Regional composition of total direct COE generated by brownfield housebuilding over full ten-year time horizon, present values (£millions, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

4. Aggregate economic impacts of brownfield housebuilding

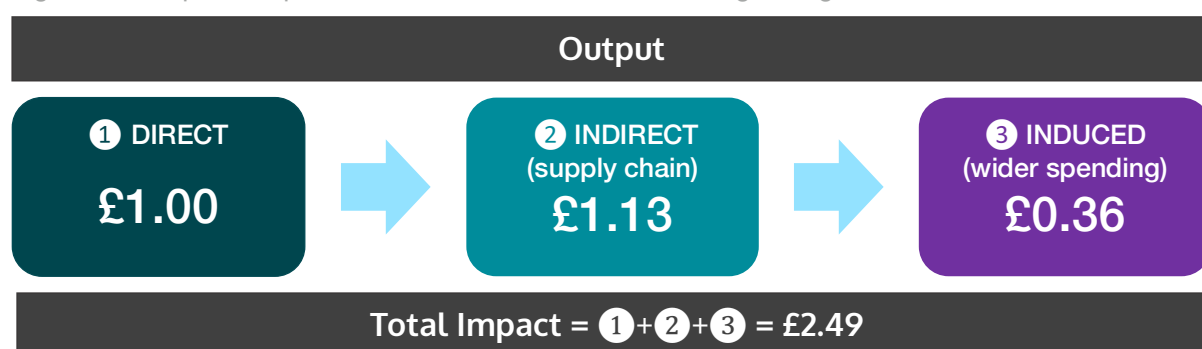
Building upon the direct impacts of brownfield housebuilding, this section outlines the wider, aggregate economic activity supported by the overall construction scenario across the ten-year time horizon. In addition to the direct economic activity generated by construction, the supply chain that underpins this construction stimulates further economic activity, known as indirect impacts. Layered on top of direct and indirect impacts are induced impacts, economic activity that is supported by the spending and consumption of employees both in the construction sector and its supply chain.

Direct, indirect and induced impacts are aggregated to quantify the overall economic impacts of our brownfield housebuilding scenario. These impact layers are calculated using specific economic multipliers, derived through Cebr's bespoke input-output modelling process, and capture the whole UK as opposed to just England. For the four core impact indicators, this section sets out economic multipliers, aggregate impacts and the distribution of said impacts over the modelling time horizon. Again, monetary impacts are presented in constant 2026 prices and discounted to present value estimates.

4.1 Wider output supported by housebuilding

Relative to other impact measures, economic multipliers of brownfield housebuilding are lowest for output, but still indicate substantial ripple effects of construction activity. For every £1 of output directly generated by brownfield housebuilding a further £1.49 is supported throughout the wider UK economy. This comprises £1.13 of output generated within the construction supply chain, along with a further £0.36 supported by the consumption of direct and indirect (supply chain) employees. Figure 14 visualises these output multiplier effects.

Figure 14: Output multiplier effects of brownfield housebuilding throughout the UK, 2026

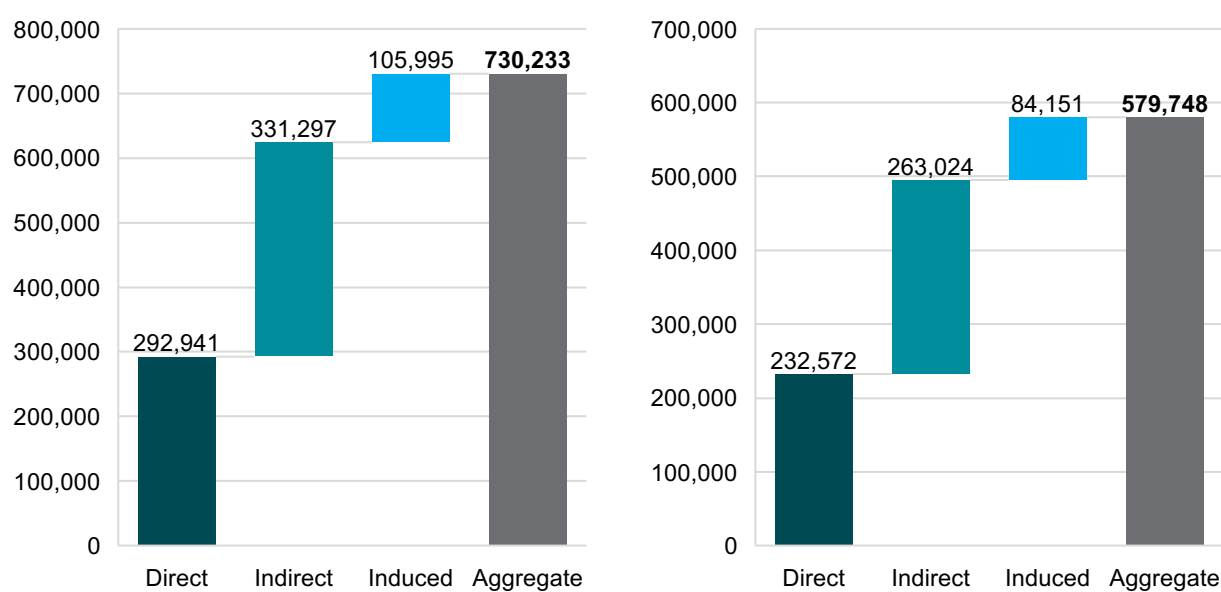


Source: Cebr analysis

Applying these multipliers allows us to estimate that brownfield housebuilding supports £579.7bn in aggregate economic output throughout the UK economy, in present value terms. All impact layers are visualised in Figure 15 along with the undiscounted perspective. Indirect impacts are the largest contributor in output terms at £263.0bn, or

45.4% of the total, capturing the substantial activity generated among suppliers to the construction sector. Induced impacts add a further £84.2bn (14.5% of total) as wages are re-spent across the economy. This composition shows that well over half of the total output supported by housebuilding arises beyond the construction itself, through supply chains and wider employee spending.

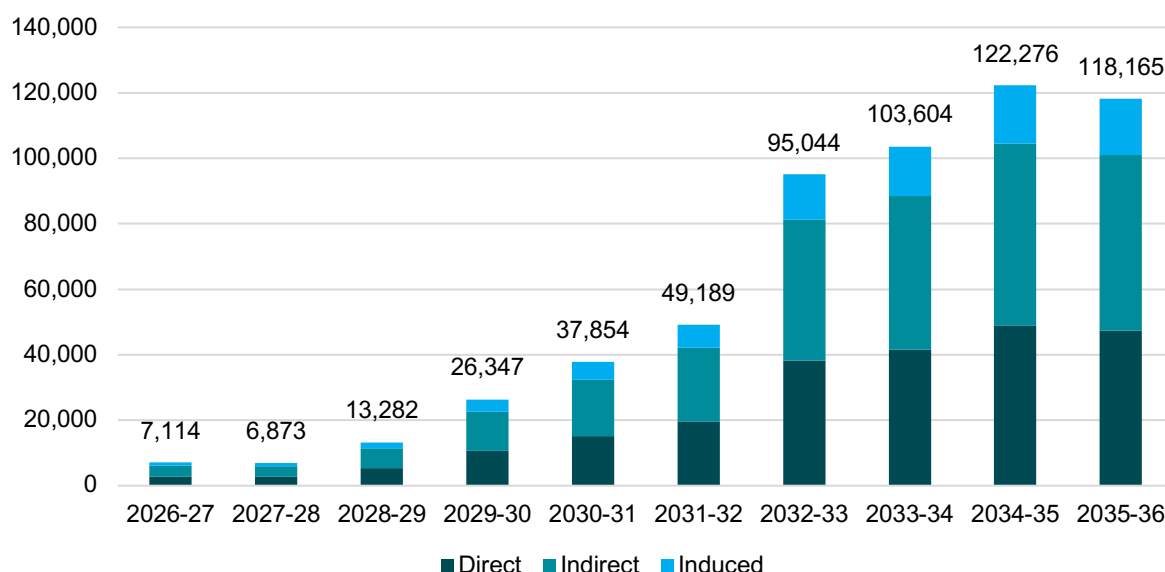
Figure 15: Aggregate output impacts throughout the UK of brownfield housebuilding over full ten-year time horizon, undiscounted (L) and present values (R) (£millions, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

Aggregate economic output builds gradually before peaking in the programme's later years, mirroring the direct profile at a larger scale. The progression of aggregate economic output on a present value basis over the time horizon is visualised in Figure 14 below. Aggregate annual output rises from £7.1bn in 2026-27, to £37.9bn by the midway point of the construction programme (2030-31), to a peak of £122.3bn in 2034-35 on a present-value basis. Signifying the effects of discounting, aggregate output drops off marginally to £118.2bn in 2035-36.

Figure 16: Aggregate output generated by brownfield housebuilding by year, present values (£millions, 2026 prices)

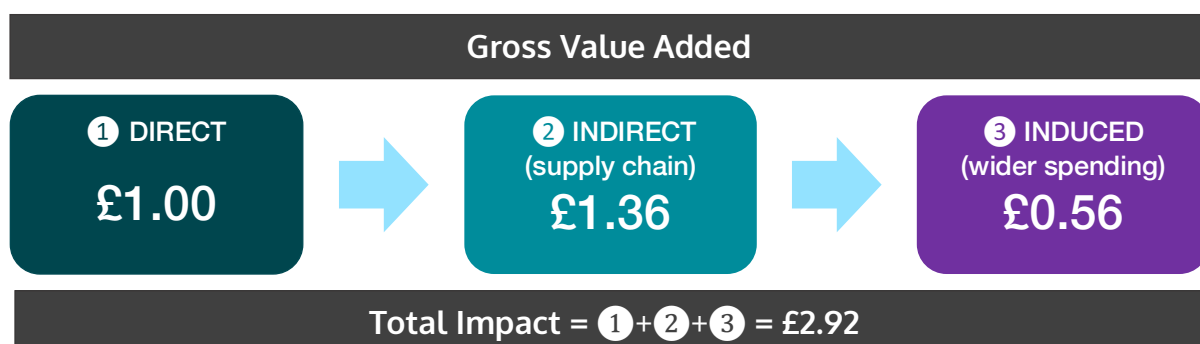


Source: Cebr analysis

4.2 Wider GVA generated by housebuilding

GVA multiplier effects are slightly stronger than the output equivalent. This implies that value added intensity, or GVA as a share of output, is higher in the supply chain and employee spending than brownfield housebuilding itself. For every £1 of GVA generated directly by brownfield housebuilding, a further £1.36 is stimulated throughout the UK, via the upstream economic activity of its supply chain. Layered on top of this, £0.56 in GVA is generated by the consumption of employees, both directly involved in brownfield housebuilding and throughout the supply chain. These impacts build upon one another such that every £1 of GVA generated directly by this construction scenario supports a wider £1.92 throughout the UK economy, set out in Figure 17 below.

Figure 17: GVA multiplier effects of brownfield housebuilding throughout the UK, 2026

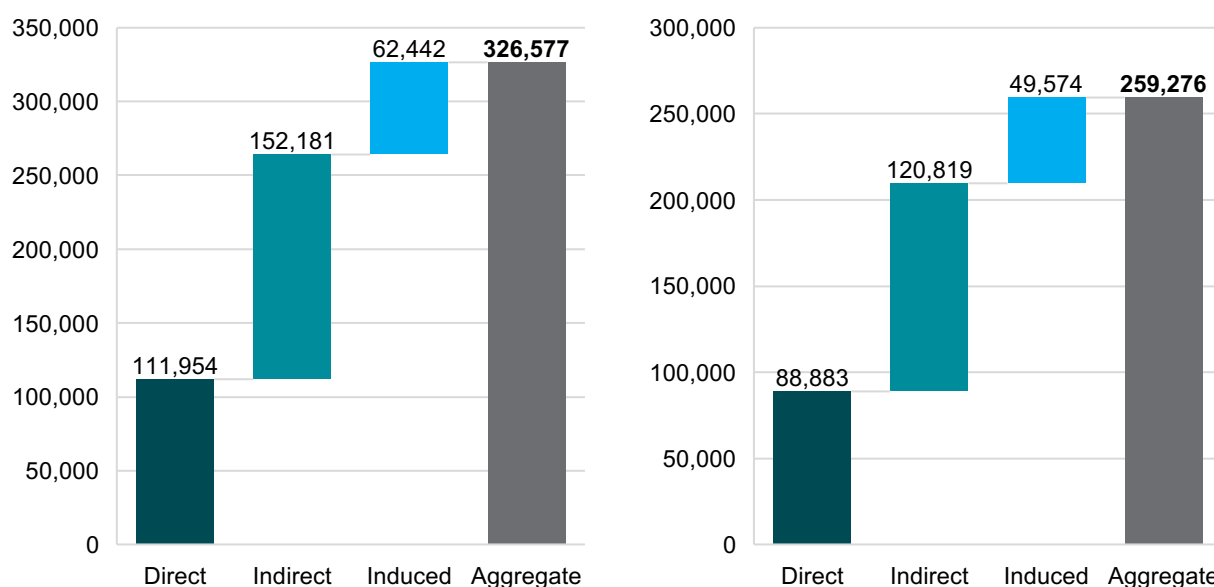


Source: Cebr analysis

Strong multipliers mean GVA impacts of brownfield housebuilding grow substantially from the direct to aggregate perspective. Accounting for supply chain and employee spending activity, the construction of 1.4m brownfield homes would support £259.3bn in aggregate

GVA throughout the UK economy over the ten-year time horizon, in present value terms. Figure 18 sets out all GVA impact layers, along with the undiscounted perspective in which aggregate GVA amounts to £326.6bn. Indirect GVA represents the largest layer at £120.8bn, or 46.6% of the total, while the induced layer contributes a further £49.6bn (19.1% of total). Wider economy effects – incorporating the supply chain and employee consumption – capture close to two-thirds of the total value added, underscoring how economic contributions of brownfield housebuilding radiate well beyond the construction sector itself.

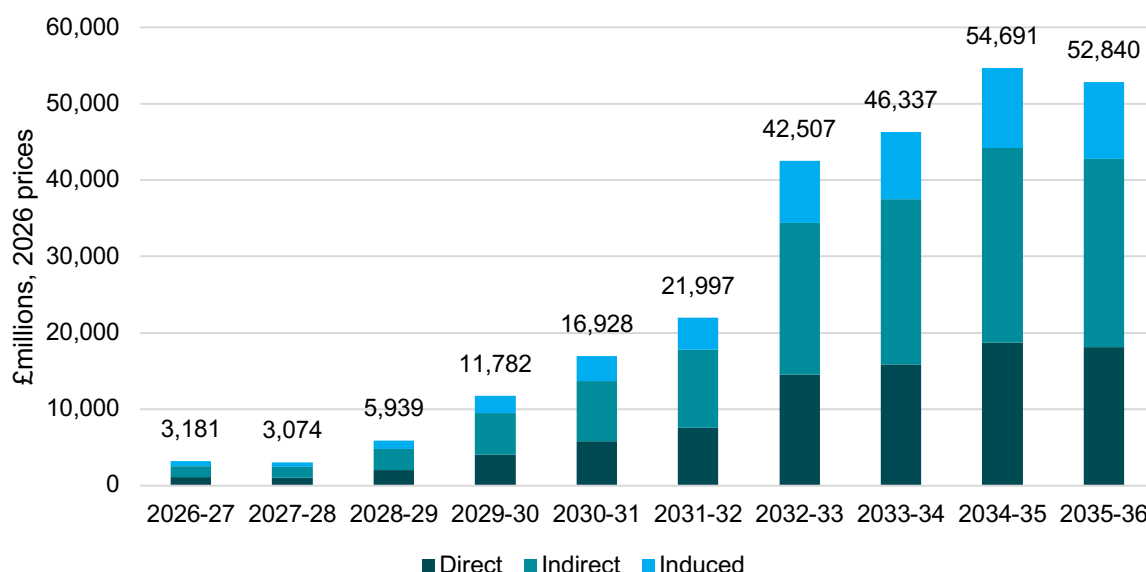
Figure 18: Aggregate GVA impacts throughout the UK of brownfield housebuilding over full ten-year time horizon, undiscounted (L) and present values (R) (£millions, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

The majority of aggregate value added accumulates in later years of construction as GVA follows the same back-loaded path as other measures. Total annual GVA rises from £3.2bn in 2026-27 to a peak of £54.7bn in 2034-35 on a present-value basis, as shown in Figure 19. The latter half of the decade accounts for 84.2% of the total aggregate GVA across the full time-horizon, consistent with the assumed construction profile. Discounting effects cause aggregate GVA to decline slightly in 2035-36 to £52.8bn.

Figure 19: Aggregate GVA generated by brownfield housebuilding by year, present values (£millions, 2026 prices)

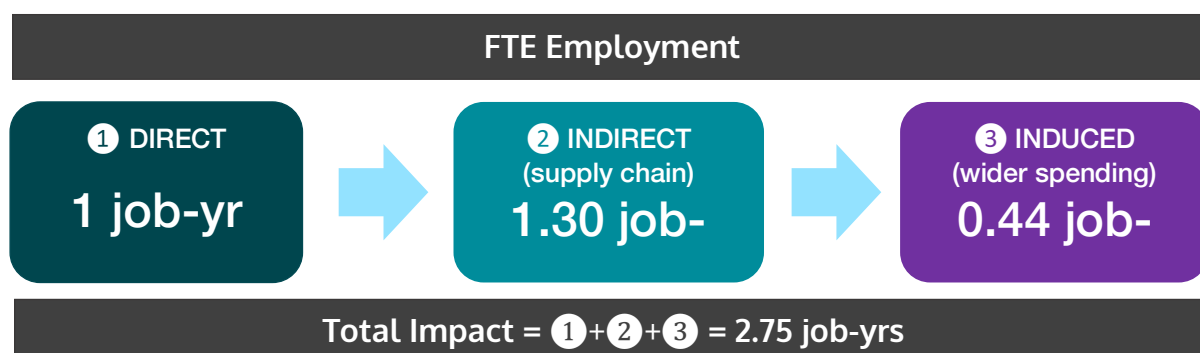


Source: Cebr analysis

4.3 Wider employment supported by housebuilding

For every construction job-year directly supported by the brownfield housebuilding scenario, a further 1.75 job-years are supported throughout the overall UK economy. This multiplier comprises 1.30 job-years embedded within the supply chain underpinning construction activity, and a further 0.44 job-years supported by the consumption of construction workers and employees in the supply chain. Employment multipliers are marginally weaker than equivalent GVA multipliers, denoting that productivity (in terms of GVA per FTE job) is slightly stronger in the supply chain and employee consumption effects, relative to the direct construction itself. Figure 20 illustrates employment multipliers in further detail.

Figure 20: Employment multiplier effects of brownfield housebuilding throughout the UK, 2026

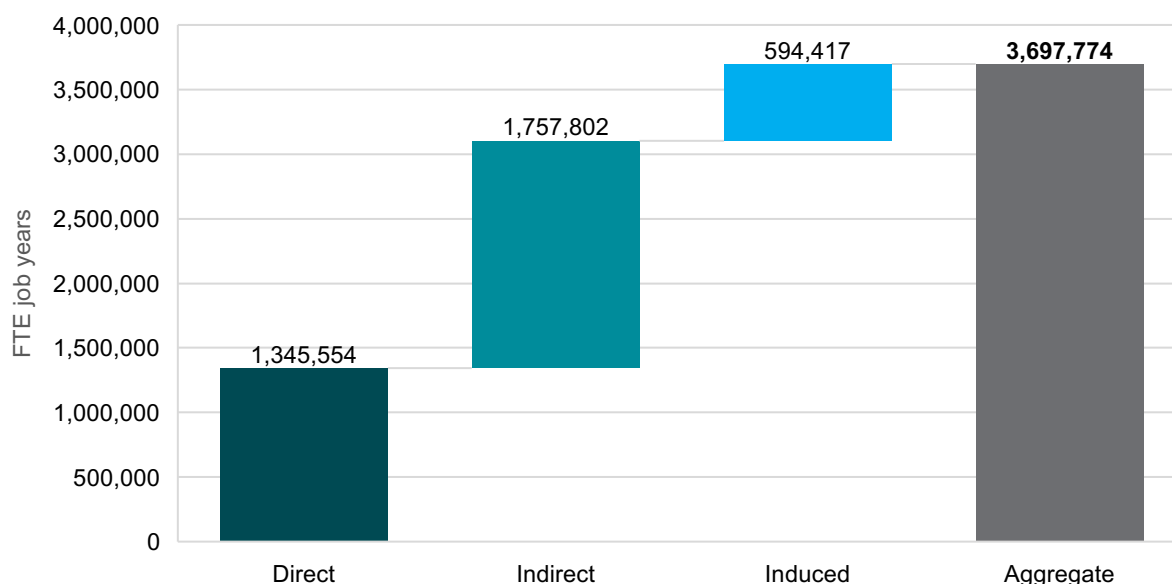


Source: Cebr analysis

Incorporating indirect and induced effects, our brownfield housebuilding scenario would support 3.7m (3,697,800) total FTE job years, across the UK economy over the full time-horizon. Indirect impacts are again the largest contributor to the total, as 1,757,800 FTE

job years (47.5% of the total) are sustained throughout construction supply chains. Through the activity supported via employees spending their incomes throughout the economy, the induced impact layer adds a further 594,400 job years, or 16.1% of the total.

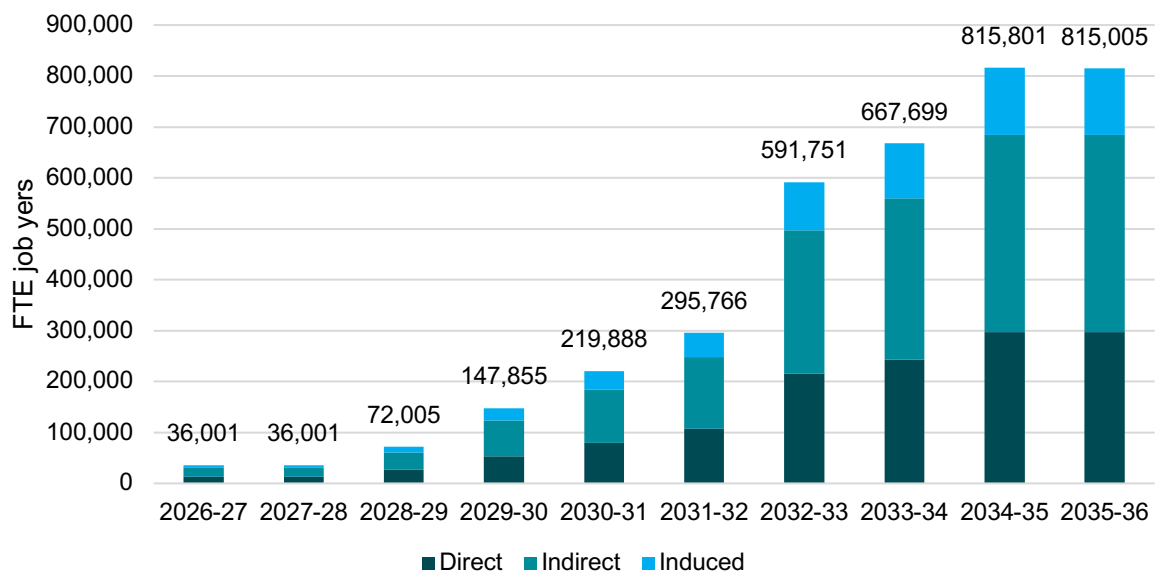
Figure 21: Aggregate employment impacts throughout the UK of brownfield housebuilding over full ten-year time horizon (FTE job years)



Source: Cebr analysis

In line with increasing housebuilding numbers and economic activity throughout the time horizon, labour requirements build up and aggregate employment impacts are concentrated in later years. Aggregate annual FTE jobs rise steadily from 36,000 in 2026-27 to 219,900 at the midpoint of the programme in 2030-31, before growing rapidly to peak at 815,800 in 2034-35. The progression of aggregate employment impacts over the time horizon is visualised in Figure 21. The final two years of the time horizon account for 44.1% of aggregate employment, reflecting intensifying labour demand as more sites move into simultaneous construction.

Figure 22: Aggregate employment supported by brownfield housebuilding by year (FTE job years)

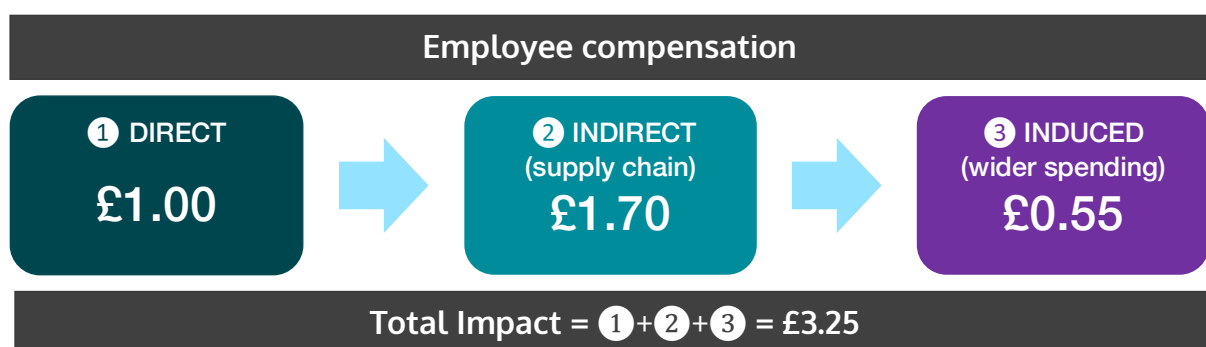


Source: Cebr analysis

4.4 Wider employee compensation generated

Employee compensation exhibits the strongest economic multipliers of all four core impact measures. For every £1 of compensation paid to employees directly involved in the construction of brownfield homes, an additional £2.25 is supported throughout the overall UK economy. This is comprised of £1.70 in compensation for employees in the construction supply chain and £0.55 of compensation supported through the activity generated by employee spending. Larger multipliers for employee compensation than employment imply that average compensation per employee is stronger in the supply chain and employee spending activity, relative to that within the direct construction activity itself. Employee compensation multipliers are displayed in Figure 23 below.

Figure 23: COE multiplier effects of brownfield housebuilding throughout the UK, 2026

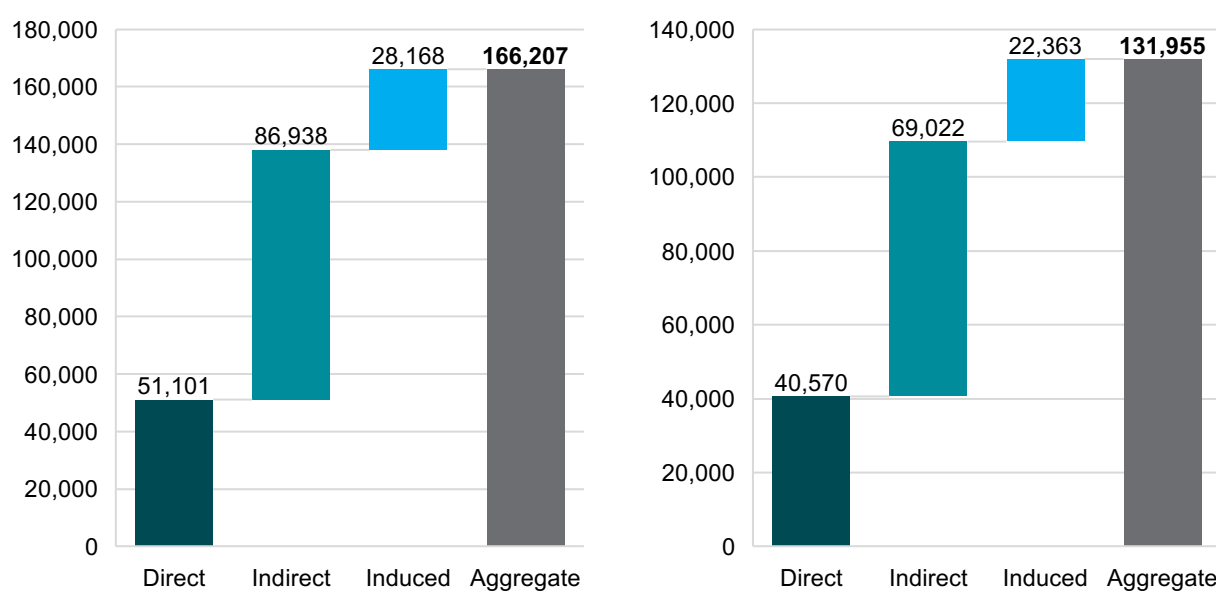


Source: Cebr analysis

Indicating the strength of economic multipliers, the brownfield housebuilding scenario generates £132.0bn in aggregate employee compensation in present value terms, throughout the ten-year period. Figure 24 visualises all impact layers in more detail along with the undiscounted perspective. Indirect impacts dominate again, contributing £69.0bn,

or 52.3% of the total, as wages ripple out through construction supply chains. Induced impacts add a further £22.4bn (16.9%) as those incomes are re-spent across the wider economy. This pattern reflects how labour costs accumulate at every tier of activity, therefore the income benefits of housebuilding extend well beyond the workers directly employed on sites.

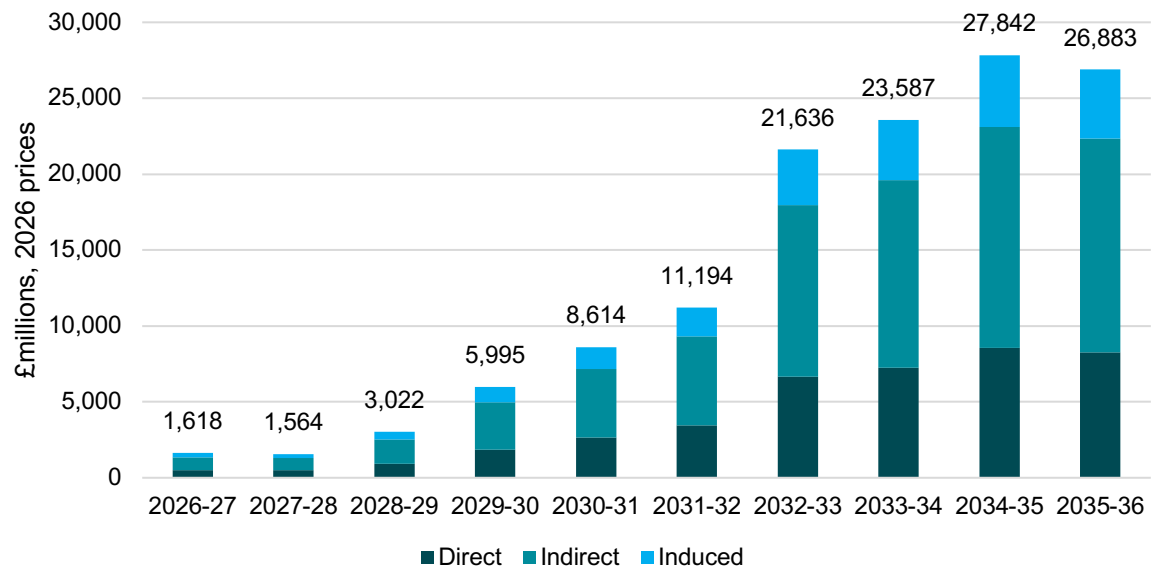
Figure 24: Aggregate COE impacts throughout the UK of brownfield housebuilding over full ten-year time horizon, undiscounted (L) and present values (R) (£millions, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

Similar to the direct perspective and employment impacts themselves, aggregate employee compensation builds steadily before peaking late in the programme. Total annual COE rises from £1.6bn in 2026-27 to a peak of roughly £27.8 billion in 2034-35 on a present-value basis, as shown in Figure 25. Aggregate compensation increases significantly between years six and seven of the programme, growing 93.3% versus an equivalent growth figure the prior year of 30.0%. The effects of discounting mean that aggregate COE declines marginally in the final year of the programme, to finish at £26.9bn in 2035-36.

Figure 25: Aggregate COE generated by brownfield housebuilding by year, present values (£millions, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

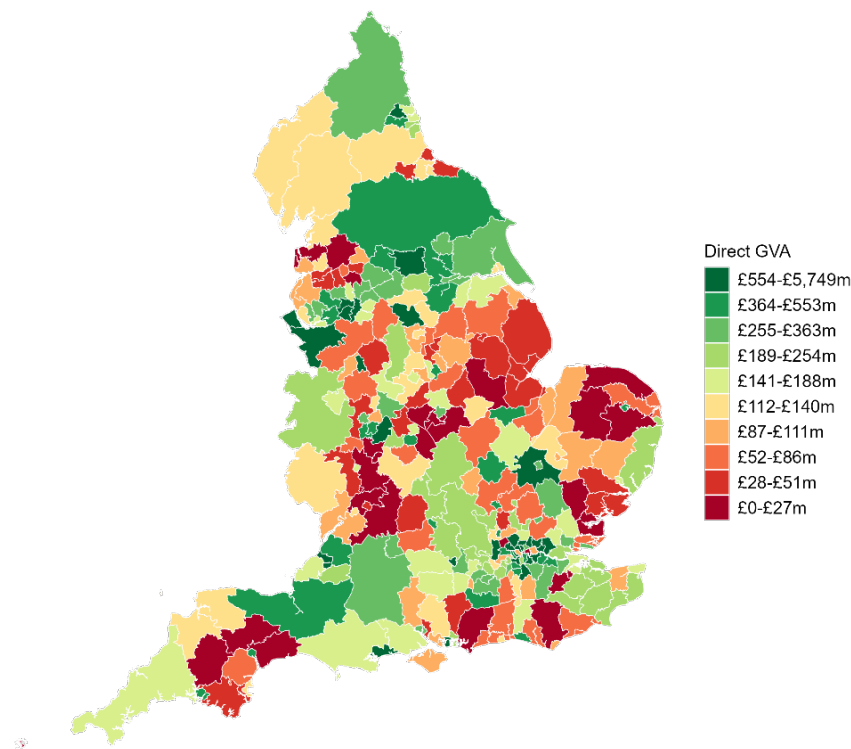
5. Local economic impacts of brownfield housebuilding

The granularity of brownfield registers, further input data and our modelling process enables us to disaggregate the economic impacts of the brownfield housebuilding scenario at a hyper local level. This section sets out the direct impacts generated by the construction of 1.4m brownfield homes over a ten-year time horizon, at local authority (LA) level throughout England. LA impacts are presented in absolute terms, expressed relative to wider local economies and triangulated with deprivation data to demonstrate the benefits brownfield housing could bring to disadvantaged communities throughout the country.

5.1 Impacts of brownfield housebuilding on local economies

Direct GVA generated by our brownfield housebuilding scenario is extremely concentrated in urban, densely populated LAs, visualised in the heatmap below. Economic impacts closely follow the geographic profile of brownfield housing itself, as brownfield sites are disproportionately located in urban areas due to industrial legacy, continual redevelopment, local housing demand and viability. This geographic profile demonstrates the potential of brownfield housebuilding to support urban regeneration while strengthening activity and output in city economies throughout the country.

Figure 26: Heatmap of direct GVA generated across English local authorities from brownfield housebuilding over full ten-year time horizon, present values (£m, 2026 prices)

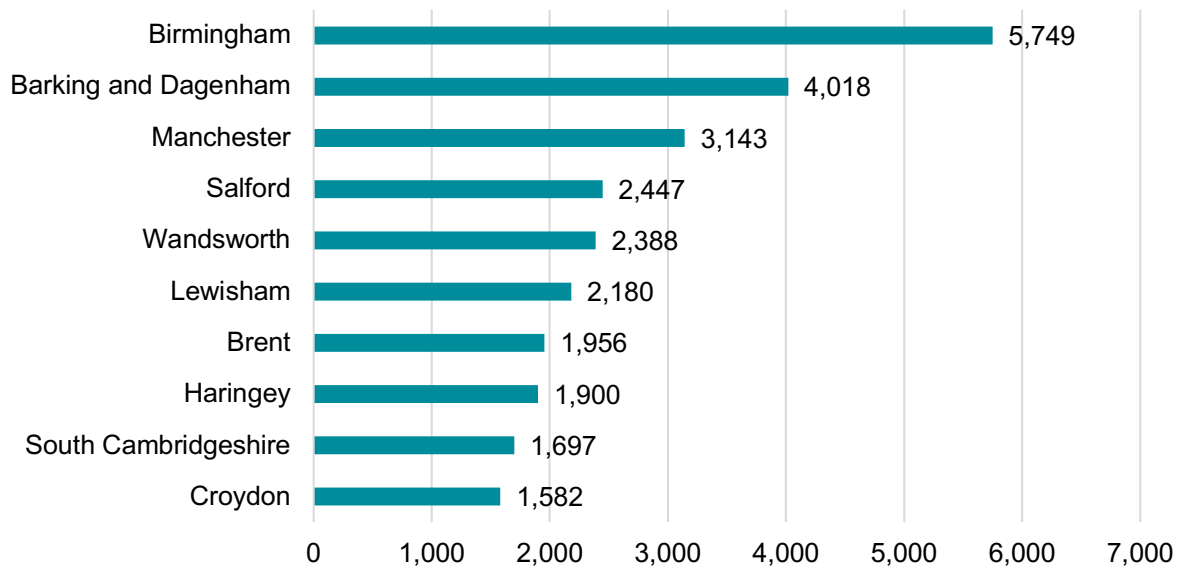


Source: Cebr analysis

Underlining trends of urban concentration, Figure 27 below sets out the top ten English LAs in terms of direct GVA generated by brownfield housebuilding. Nine of the top ten are located in either London, Greater Manchester or the West Midlands Combined Authority. Over the full decade-long programme in present value terms, brownfield housebuilding would generate £27.1bn of direct GVA in the top ten LAs, and £12.9bn in the top three alone. Birmingham tops the rankings by direct GVA impacts at £5.7bn over the full ten-year time horizon, owing largely to the local authority hosting more than 100,000 potential

brownfield homes, followed by Barking and Dagenham and Manchester that each host in excess of 50,000 potential brownfield homes.

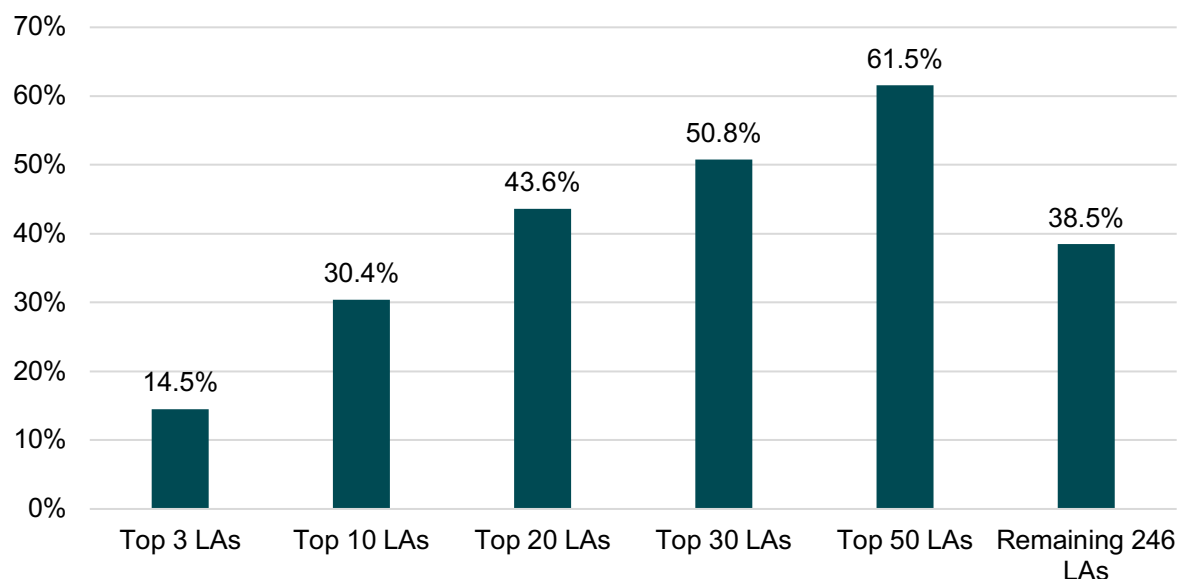
Figure 27: Top ten English local authorities by direct GVA generated from brownfield housebuilding over full ten-year horizon, present values (£m, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

Building upon the trends of urban concentration, the economic impacts of the brownfield housebuilding scenario are also highly concentrated within a select few LAs. Figure 28 below sets out the shares of nationwide direct GVA that are generated by select LA subsamples. The top ten LA by direct GVA contributions, discussed above and representing 3.3% of all English LAs or 7.1% of the country in population terms, are responsible for 30.4% of nationwide direct GVA. The top three LAs alone constitute 14.5% of nationwide direct GVA while the top decile of LAs (30 LAs) are responsible for over half (50.8%) of nationwide GVA. This concentration is a potential risk as national impacts are highly sensitive to delivery in specific local areas, but also demonstrates the substantial economic benefits that could be realised through construction in a comparatively small number of areas.

Figure 28: Concentration of total direct GVA over full ten-year brownfield housebuilding programme for select local authority subsamples, present values (%)

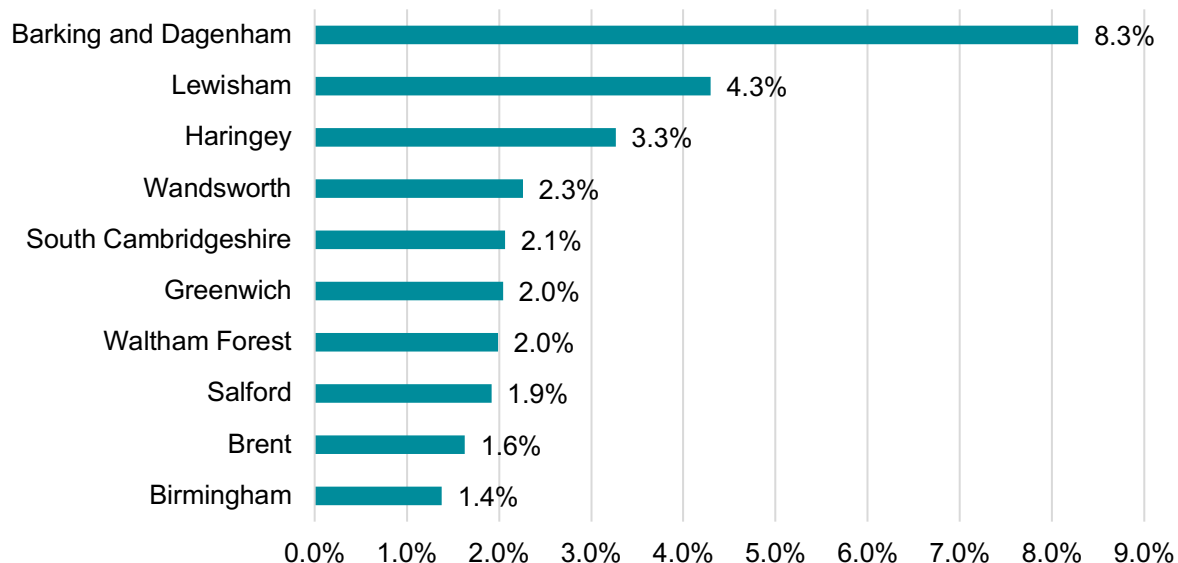


Source: Cebr analysis

5.2 Brownfield housebuilding relative to local economies

Incorporating wider local-level economic data facilitates the calculation of economic impacts relative to local economies, as trends here are largely similar to the absolute perspective. Figure 30 below sets out the top ten English LAs by brownfield housebuilding intensity, measured by average annual direct GVA generated from brownfield housebuilding, as a share of total local GVA. Again, nine of the top ten are located in either London, Greater Manchester or the West Midlands. The top three LAs by brownfield housebuilding intensity are Barking and Dagenham, Lewisham, and Haringey, in which construction activity represents 8.3%, 4.3% and 3.3% of local GVA on an average annual basis. Direct construction GVA constituted more than 2% of the overall local economy in a further three LAs, while in total, brownfield housebuilding accounted for more than 1% of local GVA in 19 LAs.

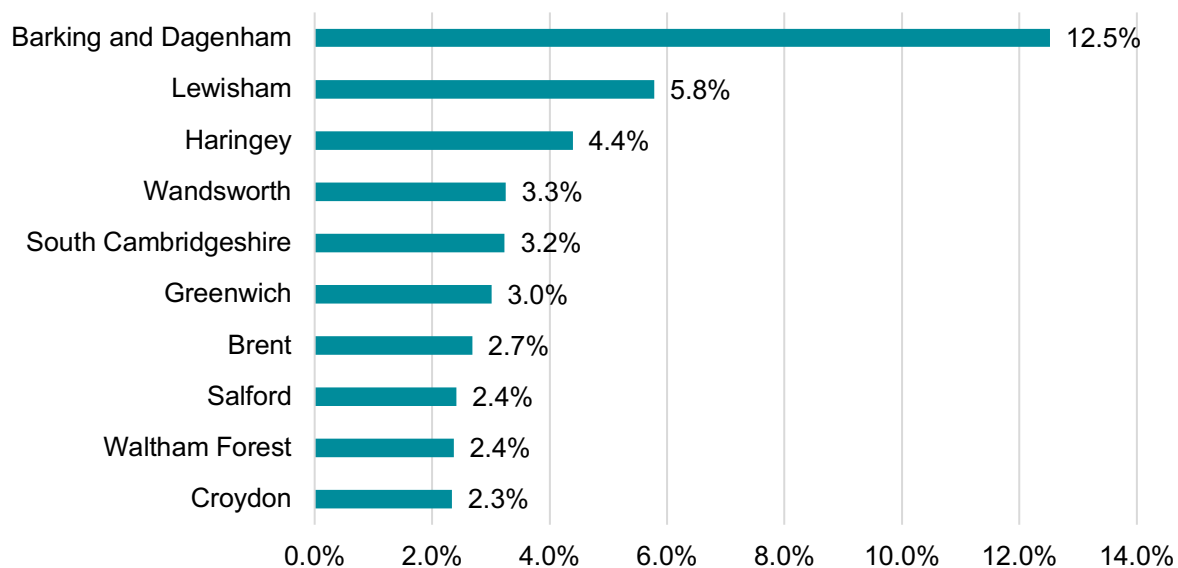
Figure 29: Top ten English local authorities by average annual direct GVA generated from brownfield housebuilding, as share of total local GVA, present values (%)



Source: Cebr analysis

Equivalent relative impacts were calculated for the employment perspective, deriving average annual FTE jobs as a share of the total FTE labour force working within each LA. Figure 31 below details the selection of top ten LAs that is extremely similar to the GVA perspective. The top five rankings are identical, the main difference being in magnitude, that the local intensity of brownfield housebuilding is higher under the employment perspective, across the board. Average annual FTE jobs supported by the brownfield housebuilding scenario amount to more than 2% of the local labour force in ten LAs, and more than 1% in 35 LAs.

Figure 30: Top ten English local authorities by average annual direct FTE jobs supported by brownfield housebuilding, as share of total local labour force in FTE terms (%)

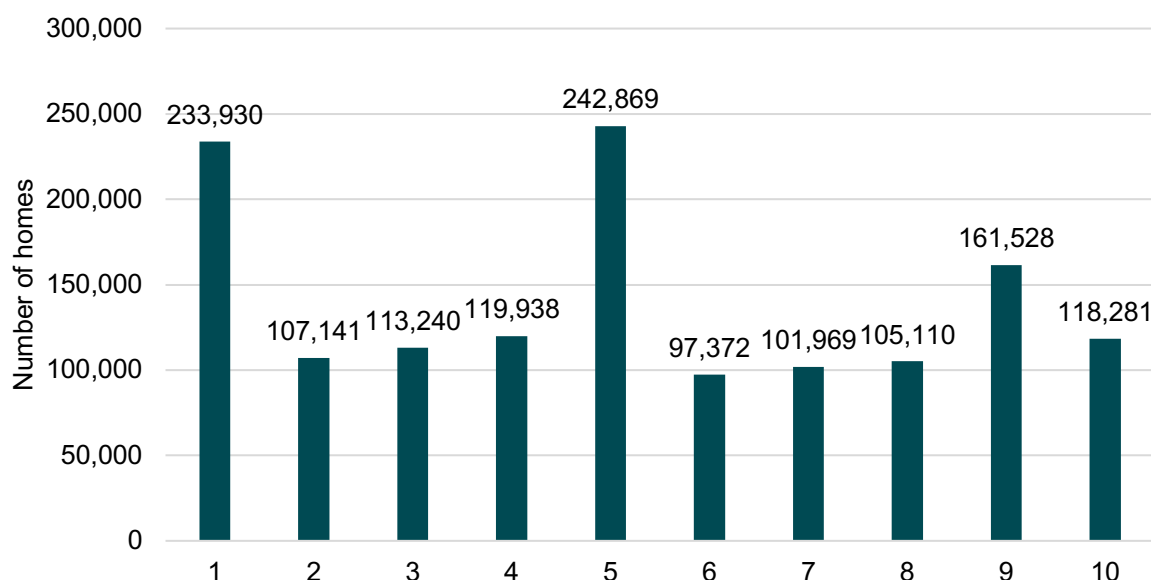


Source: Cebr analysis

5.3 Deprived local authorities and housebuilding impacts

Combining hyper-local impact analysis with wider LA-level data around deprivation reveals that the brownfield housebuilding scenario disproportionately benefits deprived areas and communities. Analysis here largely revolves around the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD),⁸ with all of England disaggregated down to LA level, and organised into deciles ranking from most to least deprived. Figure 32 below focusses specifically on the 'barriers to housing and services' domain of the IMD, setting out the distribution of the total 1.4m potential brownfield homes captured by this research, according to decile of deprivation.

Figure 31: Total potential brownfield homes within each Index of Multiple deprivation decile for 'access to housing and services' (1= most deprived, number of homes)



Source: Cebr analysis

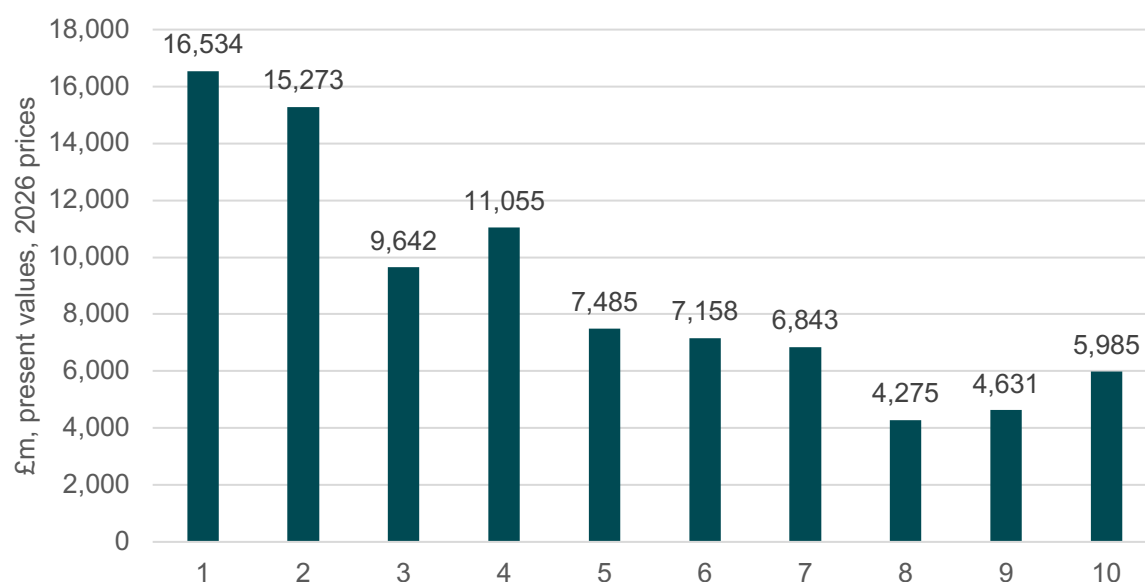
Potential brownfield housebuilding is concentrated in areas where current housing accessibility and availability is poorest. The most deprived decile (1) in this domain (i.e. the bottom 10% of LAs in terms of access to housing and services) host 16.7% (233,900) of total brownfield homes nationwide. Further to this, the five most deprived deciles (1-5) in this domain (i.e. bottom half of LAs in terms of access to housing and services) could benefit from 817,100 potential brownfield homes, 58.3% of the nationwide total.

Broadening out this analysis, the potential economic benefits of the brownfield housebuilding scenario are also very strongly concentrated in deprived areas and

⁸ The IMD is the UK government's official measure of deprivation, that ranks local areas across England from most to least deprived, based on a weighted combination of data and profiles in seven domains: income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment.

communities nationwide. Figure 33 below focusses on the overall IMD measure, which presents a weighted composite measure of seven domains of deprivation, with all English LAs again structured into deciles. The most deprived decile overall (bottom 10% of English LAs) constitutes 18.6% of nationwide direct GVA generated, or £16.5bn in present value terms over the full programme. Compounding this, the second-, third- and fourth-most deprived deciles generate 17.2%, 10.8% and 12.4% of national GVA respectively, as these deprived subsamples all benefit from disproportionately large GVA impacts from brownfield housebuilding (more than 10% of total). The most deprived half of English LAs (bottom five deciles) therefore account for over two-thirds (67.5%) of national direct GVA impacts. This demonstrates strongly that brownfield housebuilding would disproportionately benefit deprived communities nationwide.

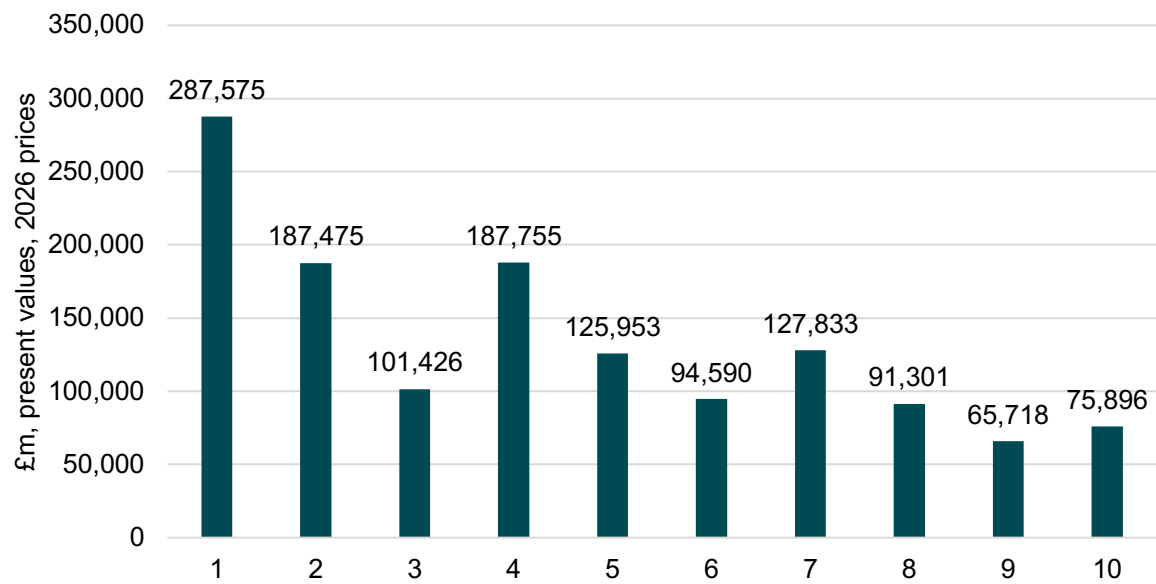
Figure 32: Total direct GVA generated over ten-year brownfield housebuilding programme by overall Index of Multiple Deprivation decile (1= most deprived, £m, present values, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

Finally, this analysis was also extended to cover the employment perspective. Figure 33 below again structures the full sample into deciles, according to unemployment, with the first decile representing the top 10% of English LAs with the highest current unemployment rates. Compounding prior findings, the employment impacts of the brownfield housebuilding scenario are concentrated heavily in areas with higher unemployment rates. The top decile by unemployment would benefit from 287,600 total FTE job-years created across the full ten-year construction programme, equivalent to over one-fifth (21.4%) of the nationwide total. This trend continues down the distribution with the second-highest decile benefitting from 13.9% of nationwide FTE job-years supported, and the top half of LAs with the highest unemployment rates benefit from two thirds (66.7%) of total FTE job years supported.

Figure 33: Total direct FTE job-years supported over ten-year brownfield housebuilding programme by decile of unemployment rates (1= highest unemployment, £m, present values, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

6. Economic impacts of social and affordable brownfield housebuilding

This section presents the economic impacts associated with building specifically social and affordable housing. We model the impacts associated with a baseline construction scenario, where 467,000 social brownfield homes – defined as the portion of potential brownfield homes of social or affordable rent tenures – are built over the next ten years. We also model a hypothetical, scaled-up social housing delivery scenario of 1 million total brownfield social homes over ten years – of which 229,000 are social rent and 771,000 are affordable rent.

We present also our estimates for total government investment in grants required to support the delivery of social homes, in both of these scenarios. Finally, we include Benefit-to-Cost ratios associated with building social homes and find that, for these interventions, benefits outweigh costs.

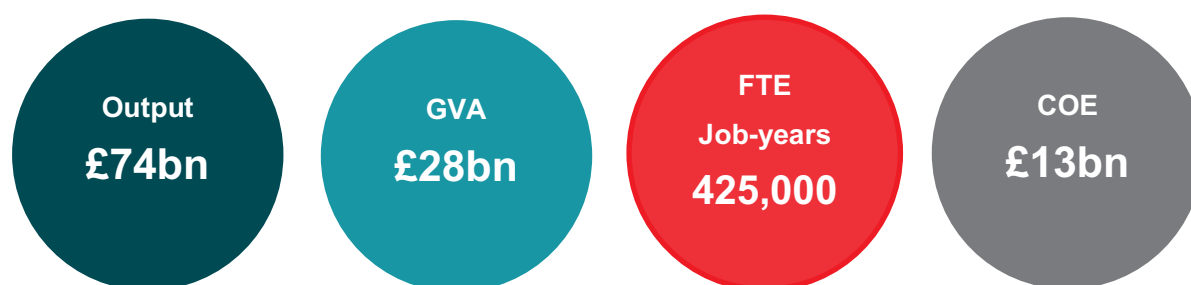
6.1 Economic impacts of social housing construction in baseline scenario

Direct impacts

The redevelopment of all existing brownfield sites in England would be associated with the construction of approximately 467,000 social and affordable rent homes.⁹ Building these homes would bring considerable direct economic impacts, as new construction projects contribute to UK GDP while creating employment. The direct impacts in terms of

Figure 4: Total direct impacts generated by affordable brownfield housebuilding over full 10-year time horizon, present values (2026 prices)

output, GVA, FTE employees, and COE associated with this baseline scenario are presented in Figure 34.



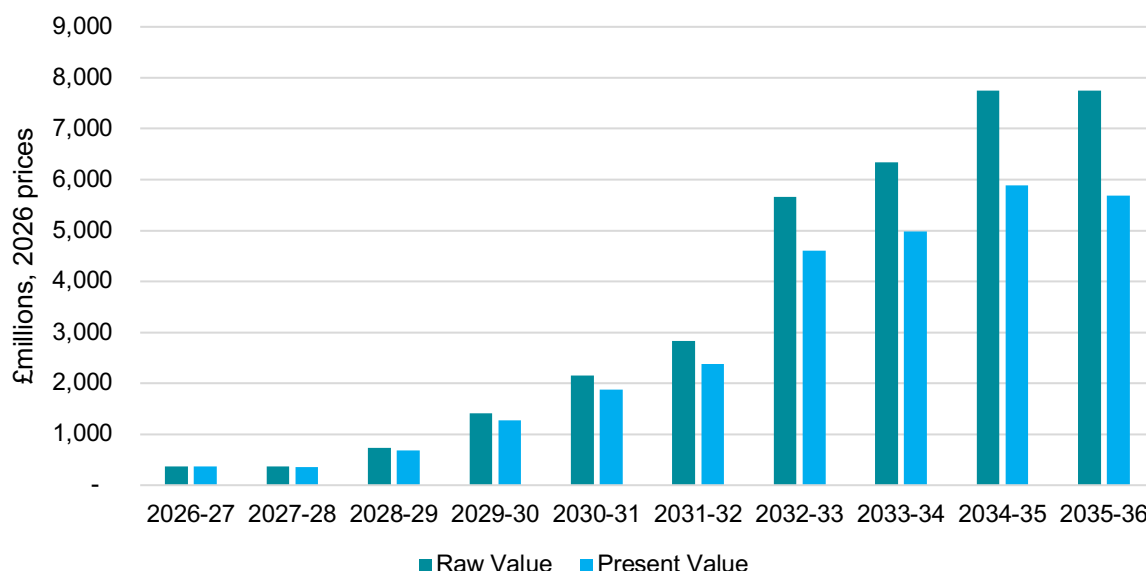
⁹ Affordable ownership homes are not included within the scope of social housing modelling.

Source: Cebr analysis

These impacts relate directly to the construction of new affordable homes, and account for a considerable share of the total economic impact of developing all brownfield sites. In terms of output, for instance, building 470,000 affordable homes over the ten-year horizon would be associated with a present value impact of £74 billion, or 31.7% of the total output impacts in the core scenario of all potential brownfield homes being developed.

Looking at GVA specifically, which can be interpreted as contributions to GDP, the baseline scenario of new affordable homes would be associated with a present value uplift of £28 billion. Figure 34 presents the direct GVA generated by year, for both undiscounted and discounted values.

Figure 34: Direct GVA generated by affordable brownfield housebuilding by year, undiscounted and present values (£millions, 2026 prices)



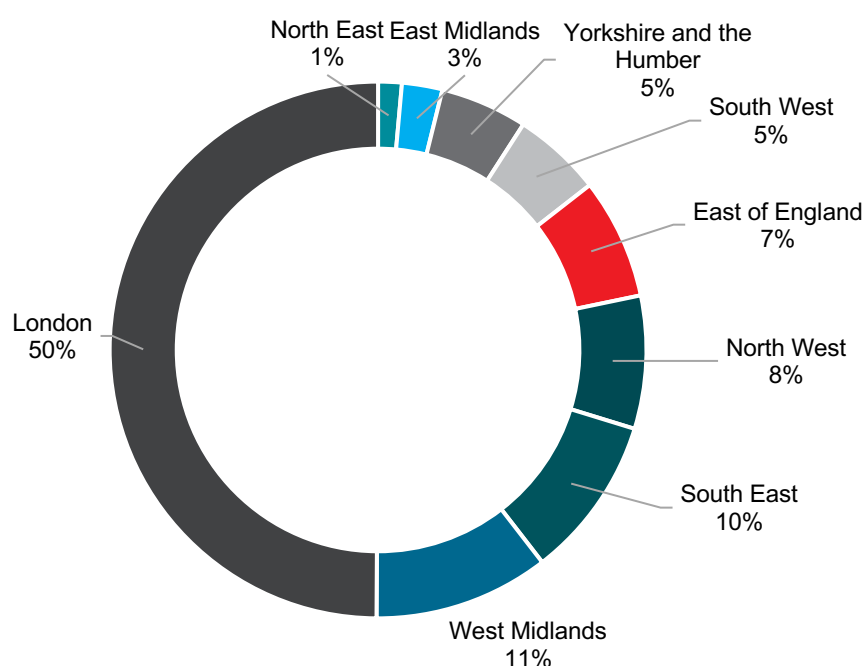
Source: Cebr analysis

The shape of the graph closely resembles that of the GVA impact associated with redeveloping all brownfield sites, irrespective of tenure, presenting slower growth in the first three years as applications for planning permission are made, and picking up from that point onwards.

Over the ten-year construction period, we also expect an additional 425,000 FTE job-years to be generated which, similar to GVA impacts, would increase every year but more so in the last four years of the time horizon. These represent the additional employment generated over the period in order to deliver the baseline social housing scenario.

Figure 35, additionally, disaggregates total job-years associated with the construction of affordable homes by region, to present where most employment impacts would be concentrated.

Figure 35: Regional composition of total direct FTE job-years generated by brownfield housebuilding over full ten-year time horizon, present values (£millions, 2026 prices)



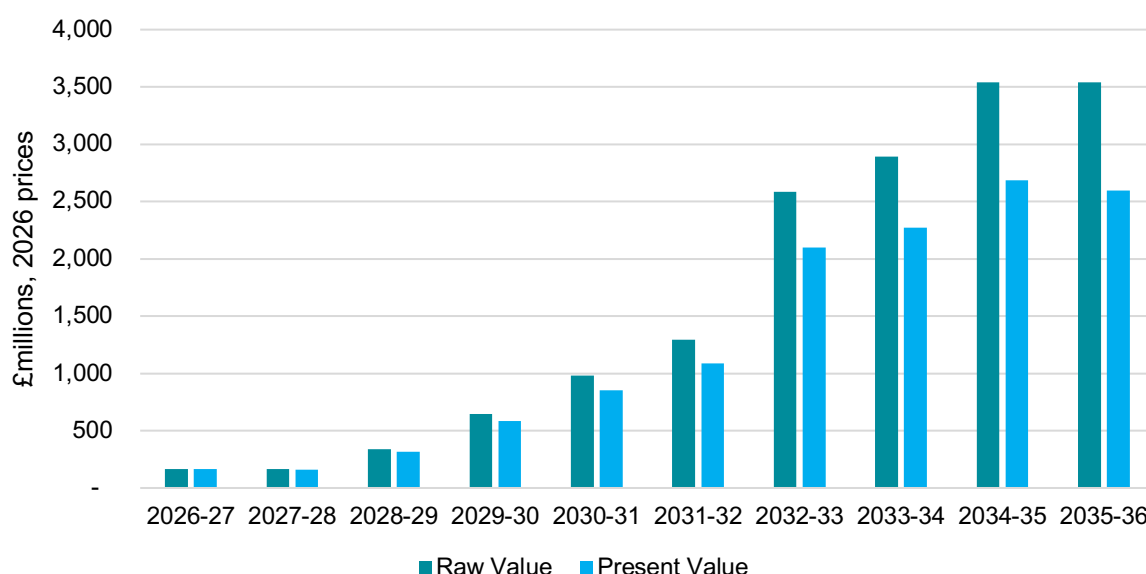
Source: Cebr analysis

As can be seen, we expect half of all the FTE job-years to be concentrated in London. This is unsurprising, given the relatively high share of all new brownfield homes we expect would be dedicated to affordable housing in the capital (75%). The West Midlands and South East are considerably behind London in terms of FTE impacts, accounting for 11% and 10% of the additional job-years, respectively.

This demonstrates that, where more social housing is concentrated, related economic impacts are as well. When looking at construction in brownfield sites for all kinds of tenure, London only accounts for approximately 30% of FTE job-year impacts.

This regional impact distribution is identical for all the economic variables we model (output, GVA, employment, and COE), since it is mostly driven by the regions where we expect most of the building of social housing to happen. Looking more closely at COE, Figure 36, presents the direct COE generated by the construction of affordable brownfield housing by year.

Figure 36: Direct COE generated by affordable brownfield housebuilding by year, undiscounted and present values (£millions, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

As can be seen, the distribution of COE impacts by year closely resembles that of GVA, with impacts picking up as construction accelerates, reflecting a lag of three years associated with obtaining planning permission.

Aggregate impacts

As with homes of other tenures, the construction of affordable homes in brownfield sites is not only associated with direct economic impacts, but also with indirect and induced impacts. The former refers to the economic activity supported throughout supply chains as construction projects ensue, while the latter refers to activity supported through employees spending their salaries.

This means that, for every £1 generated in direct economic impacts, additional amounts are supported throughout supply chains and through employee spending. For the construction of affordable homes, we expect these multipliers to coincide with those outlined in Section 4. That is, although building social homes is associated with a lower

cost-per home than private tenure is (since social homes tend to be smaller), the economic impacts they produce relative to expenditure are similar.

The aggregate economic impacts associated with building all 467,000 affordable homes that could be built on brownfield sites are presented in Figure 37.

Figure 5: Total aggregate impacts generated by affordable brownfield housebuilding over full 10-year time horizon, present values (2026 prices)

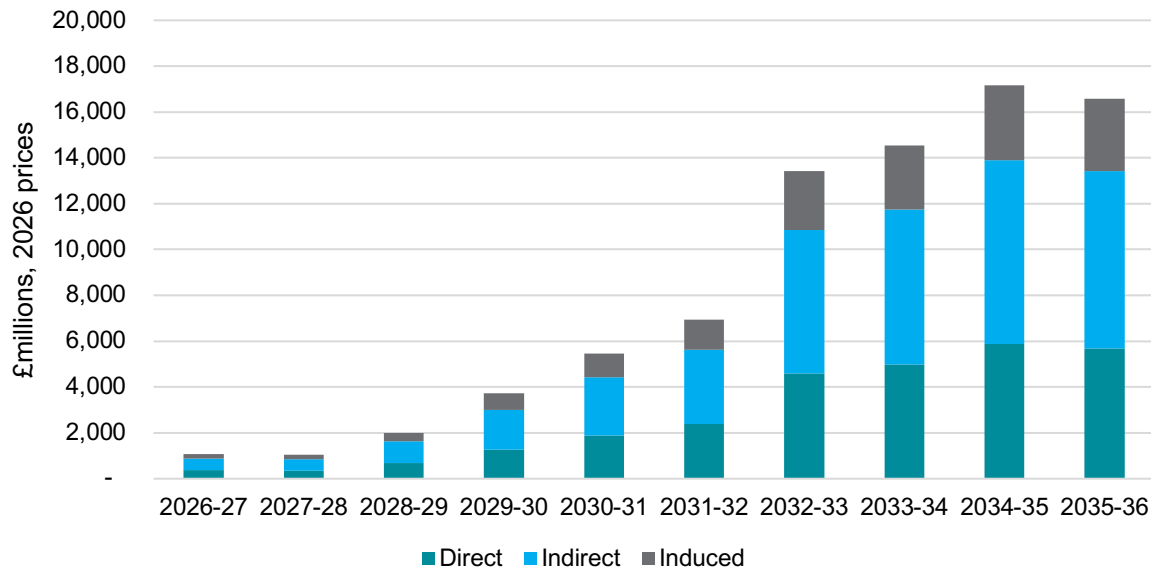


Source: Cebr analysis

The aggregate output impact associated with the baseline scenario over the ten-year construction period is £183 billion, in present value, or 31.6% of the total aggregate output uplift associated with redeveloping all brownfield sites. Aggregate GVA, FTE job-years, and COE, are also considerably higher than the respective direct impacts, since they now also account for all economic activity supported throughout the supply chain and by employee spending.

Looking at aggregate GVA impacts specifically, supply-chain impacts comprise a large share of the total, as shown in Figure 37.

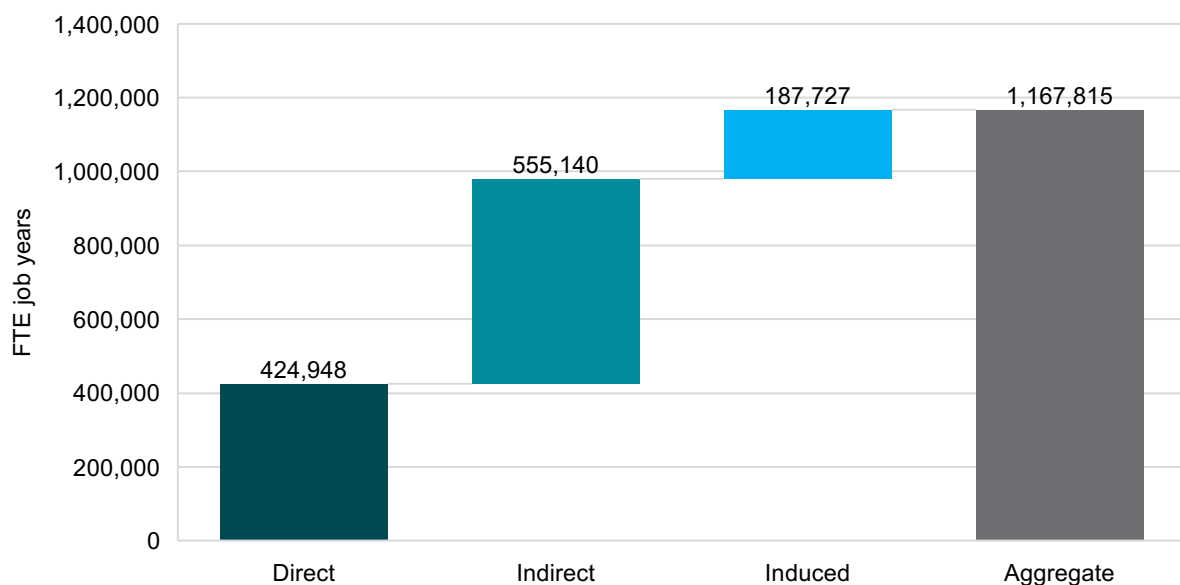
Figure 37: Aggregate GVA generated by affordable brownfield housebuilding by year, present values (£millions, 2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

Indirect GVA impacts pick up after the first three years of the ten-year horizon, and by 2032-33 comprise most (47%) of total aggregate impacts. The larger share of indirect impacts relative to induced impacts reflects the fact that more economic activity would be supported through supply-chain activity than through employee spending. This can also be seen from looking at the FTE job-year impacts expected from widespread construction of affordable housing in brownfield sites, as shown in Figure 38.

Figure 38: Aggregate FTE job-years impacts throughout the UK of brownfield housebuilding over full ten-year time horizon, and present values

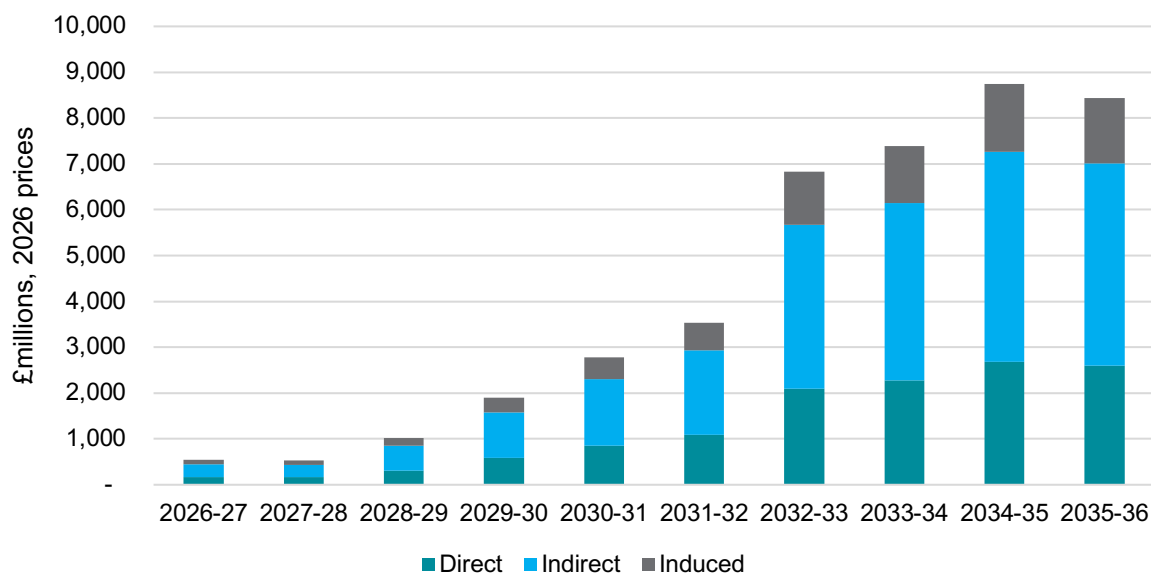


Source: Cebr analysis

The majority of FTE job-years would be generated throughout the supply chain, that is, new jobs would be created in industries which supply the construction industry, or workers in these industries would increase their hours. We estimate the number of indirect FTE job-years generated would amount to approximately 550,000 which, together with 187,000 induced job-years and 425,000 direct job-years, would amount to a total 1.2 million FTE job-years.

In terms of COE, Figure 39 presents the aggregate COE generated by affordable brownfield housebuilding by year, in present values. Once again, the largest impacts are associated with indirect, supply-chain impacts which accumulate towards the last four years of the ten-year horizon.

Figure 39: Aggregate COE generated by brownfield housebuilding by year, present values (£millions, 2026 prices)

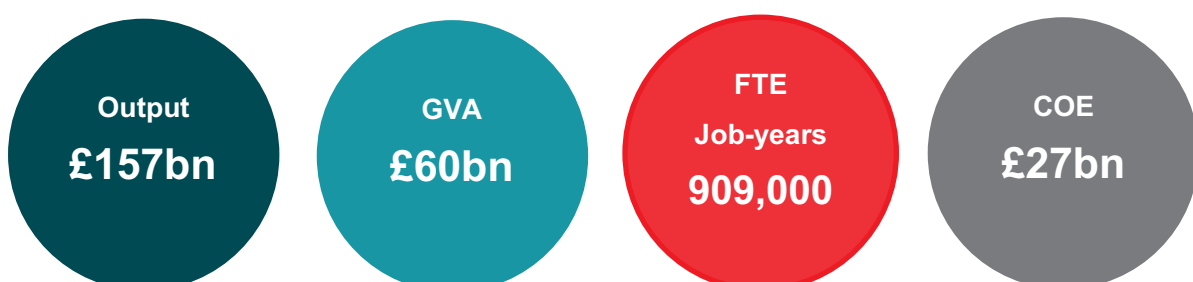


Source: Cebr analysis

6.2 Economic impacts of social housing construction in scaled-up scenario

In a scaled-up scenario, where the total number of social homes delivered rises to 1 million, we estimate the direct economic impacts would scale accordingly, and across the full ten-year delivery period amount to those presented in Figure 40.

Figure 6: Total direct impacts generated by affordable brownfield housebuilding over full 10-year time horizon, scaled-up scenario, present values (2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

As can be seen, impacts would be considerably larger, representative of higher expenditure and, subsequently, a larger scale of economic activity supported. Total present value output, for instance, would increase to £157 billion, with a contribution to GDP of £60 billion.

When considering aggregate impacts, these would of course also be higher, as presented in Figure 41.

Figure 7: Total aggregate impacts generated by affordable brownfield housebuilding over full 10-year time horizon, scaled-up scenario, present values (2026 prices)



Source: Cebr analysis

We estimate that, if 1 million affordable homes were delivered, this would be associated with a present value output uplift of £392 billion, as well as an additional 2.5 million FTE job-years associated with a respective COE uplift of £89 billion, in present value.

6.3 Government investment required to support social housebuilding

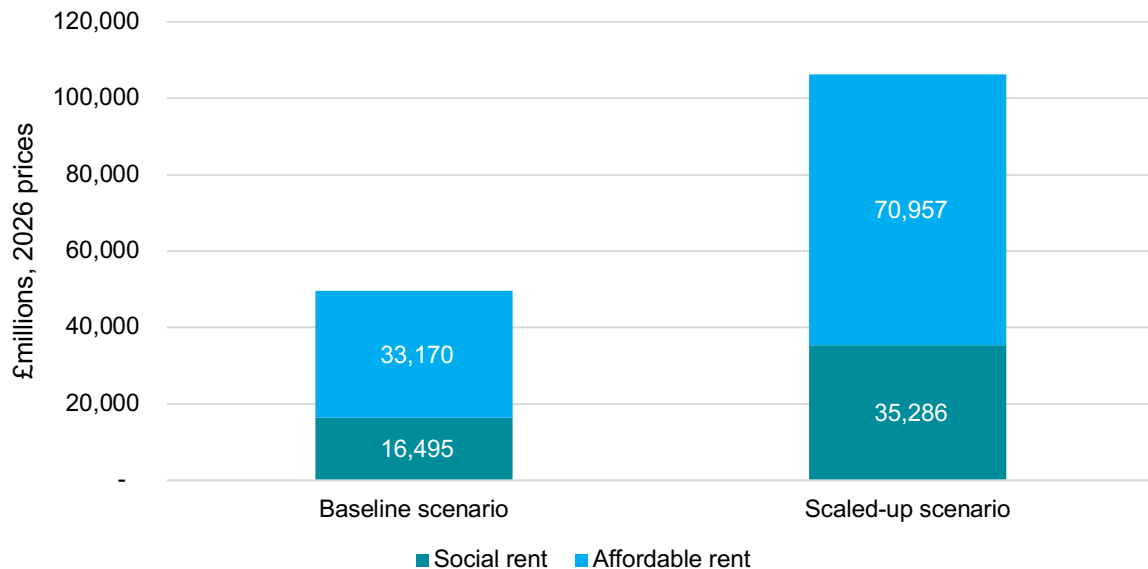
To deliver increased levels of social housing, government investment in the form of grants would be required. By triangulating across multiple sources, as described in the methodology, we estimate that the per-home grant required for the construction of a social rent home would be of £194,000, while that for an affordable rent home would be £116,000.¹⁰

For the baseline scenario, we estimate the total present value investment required to deliver 470,000 new homes would be £49.6 billion in 2026 prices. To deliver 1 million homes, on the other hand, the upfront present value investment would need to be £106.2

¹⁰ To adopt a conservative approach, we do not assume any degree of delivery through S106 or market cross-subsidisation, therefore no social homes are delivered nil-grant. This is set out further in the methodology.

billion. In both cases, most of the cost is associated with delivering affordable rent homes which, while having a lower per-home cost, are more prevalent than social rent homes. This is represented in Figure 40.

Figure 40: Government investment required to support social housebuilding in the baseline and scaled-up scenario, by type of affordable home, present values (£millions, 2026 prices).

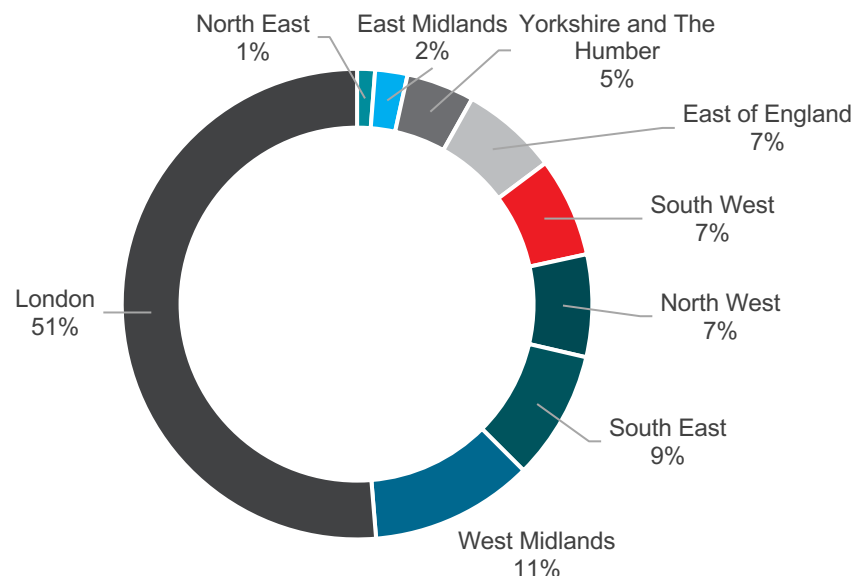


Source: Cebr analysis

The present value cost of supporting affordable rent housing through grants, therefore, is estimated to come to £33.2 billion in the baseline scenario, and £71.0 billion in the scaled-up scenario, which we expect to be spread across the ten years of construction.

The regional distribution of the required government investment is outlined in Figure 41.

Figure 41: Regional distribution of government investment required to support social housebuilding in the baseline scenario



Source: Cebr analysis

The regional distribution of the government investment required to support affordable housebuilding closely resembles the regional distribution of impacts. It follows that, for the most part, the areas where more is invested in social housing are also the areas that benefit most from the construction activity that follows, as the respective regional construction industries are boosted. We would expect this regional distribution to remain the same in the scaled-up scenario as well

The main local authorities where government grants would concentrate are therefore within London, the West Midlands, or the South East and include Barking and Dagenham (£5.5 billion in grants in the baseline scenario), Birmingham (£3.3 billion), Brent (£2.3 billion), and Lewisham (£2.1 billion). These local authorities are the ones where most social housing could be built, and therefore where most government support would be allocated.

6.4 Benefits of investment in social housebuilding

Across both the baseline and the scaled-up scenario, we estimate the Benefit-to-Cost (BCR) ratio would remain stable and, similarly, it is not affected by social discounting. The BCR summarises the benefits that the economy would enjoy from the initial government investment. A BCR larger than 1 indicates that benefits are larger than costs, and vice versa for a BCR smaller than 1.

Benefits to the economy are here defined primarily as aggregate GVA impacts from social housebuilding, since these represent contributions to UK GDP enjoyed across the construction industry directly, its supply chain, and employee spending.

We estimate a BCR for investment in social housing of 1.65. That is, for a £1 investment in social housing, the economy enjoys an additional £0.65 in benefits. In the baseline scenario, for instance, a £49.7 billion initial government investment is associated with a £82.0 billion uplift to total GVA.

In the scaled-up scenario, on the other hand, a £106.2 billion investment by the government to deliver 1 million homes is associated with an aggregate GVA impact of £175 billion, once again suggesting that the economic benefits of investment in social housing outweigh the cost of funding.

Despite the initial government investment required to fund the construction of social homes, therefore, **funding generates benefits at a more than 1:1 rate through increased activity in the construction industry, its suppliers, and its employees, generating positive impacts for UK plc.**

Appendix 1: Methodology

The core objective of this research is to evaluate the economic benefits of fulfilling the nation's brownfield housing potential, through the economic activity that would be supported by constructing these homes. The analysis proceeds in two fundamental stages. The first quantifies brownfield housing potential nationwide, measured through the number of homes that could be built on brownfield sites. The second models the economic activity generated by delivering this entire construction programme, including jobs, output and contribution to GDP.

This is a hypothetical, scenario-based study. It demonstrates the impact on the economy if available brownfield residential sites were developed nationwide. The research is not intended to serve as a forecast or prediction of the housing market. Actual brownfield delivery would also be driven by supply-side capacity, policy decisions, broader market trends and developer behaviour, all of which were not within the scope of this modelling. Given that a portion of brownfield homes would be developed under the current, status quo baseline, economic impact figures in the counterfactual scenario should therefore not be interpreted as an absolute uplift to the national economy, but rather a demonstration of the total economic activity supported by this construction.

A.1 Establishing brownfield housebuilding potential

Establishing the total number of potential brownfield homes nationwide represents the foundation and basis for this research. Under the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2017, all local planning authorities are required to prepare, publish and maintain a Brownfield Land Register. Each register records all identified brownfield residential sites that have not yet been developed, providing details such as site area, the number of dwellings that could be accommodated, and planning permission status.

To establish nationwide potential, the brownfield registers of all local planning authorities throughout England were collected, cleaned and processed. The majority were sourced from the central government brownfield register which compiles authority registers together. Approximately one in six local authorities had missing or incomplete data so these gaps were filled by manually collecting registers from individual authority websites.

This process generated a full dataset of potential homes on identified brownfield sites, by local authority and planning permission status. Where the residential capacity of brownfield sites was expressed as a minimum or maximum figure, we utilised the maximum (although in a lot of cases these were identical, or only one perspective was available).

A.2 Distributing brownfield housebuilding

With the full dataset of potential brownfield housing by local authority, housing was then distributed across both time and tenure, to develop a tangible, realistic scenario of housebuilding.

Temporally, brownfield housing delivery was phased over a ten-year period running from 2026-27 to 2035-36. This phasing drew on previous Cebr research and wider evidence, but planning permission status was the most significant driver. Homes on sites that had already secured permission could in principle be developed imminently and were modelled as being delivered across the entire ten years. For homes without permission, in line with research in this space a three-year delivery lag was applied to reflect the planning approval process,¹¹ therefore these homes were delivered from year four onwards.

The temporal profile of completions followed, with slight adjustment, a delivery profile developed by Savills for previous NHF research on building safety funding.¹² This profile assumes a ramping-up of completions across the period, with the majority of homes delivered in the final three to four years. Back-loading delivery in this way provides a more realistic lead-in for supply-side capacity to expand, but as above, this represents a hypothetical delivery scenario based on existing research, not a prescriptive forecast of sector capacity.

After being distributed temporally brownfield housebuilding was then also distributed by tenure. Tenure distributions were constructed at local-authority level, under the assumption that future brownfield housebuilding follows the tenure composition of actual completions over the past five years. This drew on official MHCLG statistics of total and affordable housing supply, disaggregated by local authority, covering completions from 2020-21 to 2024-25.

A.3 Estimating construction costs for housebuilding

With the full scope of potential homes set out, the first stage of economic modelling is quantifying the expenditure required to deliver them. This begins with deriving an average construction cost per home. This figure captures construction and on-costs only; it excludes land costs, which represent a transfer of existing assets rather than generation of new economic activity within the scope of our modelling.

The primary source for per-home construction costs was the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS), a comprehensive database covering an extensive range of construction projects, including total costs, project size and building type. We collected substantial

¹¹ [Lichfields \(2024\) Start to Finish: How quickly do large-scale housing sites deliver?](#)

¹² [National Housing Federation, Savills \(2025\) The impact of funding building safety](#)

samples from the database, rebased to 2026 prices and adjusted for regional cost variation using regional tender price indices. This produced average cost-per-square-metre estimates specific to residential flats and houses, by region.

To ensure the assessment was comprehensive and captured different tenure cost profiles, we triangulated the BCIS estimates against per-square-metre costs published by Homes England in its Affordable Homes Programme summary report¹³. The final cost-per-square-metre inputs therefore represented a weighted, blended average of the BCIS and Homes England figures.

Cost-per-square-metre figures were then applied to average development sizes to derive a cost-per-home figure. Development sizes were drawn from the official government EPC dataset, which records property numbers and total floor area by local authority, property type and tenure. This produced average per-home construction costs by local authority, property type and tenure. These granular figures were then applied to the corresponding distribution of potential brownfield homes to model total construction expenditure nationwide.

A.4 Deriving direct housebuilding impacts

Having established total construction expenditure, direct economic impacts were modelled in terms of output, gross value added, employment and employee compensation:

- **Output:** Total value of the goods and services generated by the development of brownfield homes, measure of gross production that incorporates both the value of intermediate inputs and the value added to them;
- **Gross Value Added (GVA):** Contribution of the development of brownfield homes to the overall economy (GDP), representing the value added through the production process, removing the value of intermediate inputs;
- **Employment:** Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs supported by the development of brownfield homes. Measured in job-years, i.e. two job years represents one job sustained for two years, or two jobs sustained for one year; and
- **Employee compensation (COE):** Total remuneration paid to workers involved in brownfield home development, includes wages and salaries, social security and pension contributions and other employment benefits.

Deriving the sectoral composition of total expenditure is the critical element of direct impact modelling as this process again drew on the BCIS database. The elemental cost categories were mapped to specific sectors under the Standard Industrial Classification

¹³ [Homes England \(2025\) 2021 to 2026 Affordable Homes Programme Summary to end of March 2025](#)

(SIC) framework, to align this with the structure of modelling and official economic data. Applying this distribution to total expenditure yielded a detailed, SIC-based distribution.

Using sector-specific ratios capturing the empirical relationships between these indicators across the UK economy, output, gross value added, employment and employee compensation were derived from total expenditure. This process drew from official ONS datasets including Supply and Use Tables (SUTs), the Annual Business Survey (ABS) and Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).

A.5 Modelling wider economic impacts

Direct economic impacts of brownfield housebuilding were then integrated into Cebr's economic input-output (IO) framework for the national economy. The composition of direct impacts across different sectors is leveraged to generate bespoke economic multipliers across the four direct impact measures. Multipliers are applied to direct impacts to derive indirect, induced and subsequently aggregate impacts of brownfield housebuilding nationwide.

Cebr's regional input-output models enable the analysis of relationships within and between industries by considering supply chain connections and the interactions between industries, government bodies, capital investors, and international trade. The models yield three distinct types of impact layers across the four indicators, which are combined to convey the aggregate impacts of brownfield housebuilding. The three impact layers are as follows:

1. **Direct impact:** The value generated, and jobs supported, directly by the economic activities involved in the construction and development of brownfield homes.
2. **Indirect impact:** The value and jobs supported in industries that supply inputs to the brownfield housebuilding process, i.e. through the construction supply chain.
3. **Induced impact:** The value and jobs supported in the wider economy when the workers who are directly and indirectly employed in this process, e.g. through its supply chain, spend their wages and salaries on final goods and services.

A.6 Social housing and cost-benefit modelling

This component of the analysis assesses both the costs and benefits of delivering the social housing portion of the brownfield scenario, referred to as brownfield social housing. Here we define social housing as both the social rent and affordable rent tenures. Two scenarios were modelled following the scope of work agreed with the Green Britain Foundation:

- **Central, baseline scenario** reflects the brownfield social and affordable rent homes delivered under the core tenure profile, based on completions over the past five years.

- **Uplifted scenario** is a hypothetical case of one million total social homes, reached by scaling up the baseline uniformly, while preserving the same distribution between social and affordable rent.

Modelling comprises three phases: estimating benefits, estimating costs, and comparing the two to derive a cost-benefit ratio. The benefits were modelled by restricting the overall economic impact analysis to purely the social and affordable rent portion of housebuilding. Excluding private market and affordable ownership homes, we derived the direct and total economic impacts under an identical approach to the core analysis.

On the cost side, total required government investment was modelled from per-home estimates of grant funding for each social or affordable rent home. These per-home grants were derived by tenure and region, drawing from a range of existing sources¹⁴ with adjustments to uprate prices and reflect regional composition.

Applying per-home grant requirements to the total social housing delivered in each scenario produced total required government investment. In practice, a proportion of social and affordable rent homes are delivered nil-grant through Section 106 or market cross-subsidisation. However, given recent volatility, the hypothetical nature of the scenario and a desire to adopt a conservative perspective, modelling applies grants to all social housing. Benefits, measured as total GVA impact, were then compared with total cost, measured as required government investment, to derive a cost-benefit ratio for brownfield social housing.

¹⁴ [National Housing Federation \(2019\) Capital grant required to meet social housing need in England 2021 – 2031](#); [Thinkhouse \(2025\) Making Social Rent Homes Viable](#); and [Homes England \(2025\) 2021 to 2026 Affordable Homes Programme Summary to end of March 2025](#)