



# Housing and Planning: what does the future hold for councils?

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# Bystanders or innovators?



What is the role of local authorities in place-making and driving the green recovery?

Report:

- Explores what local authorities see as the key barriers to effective place making; and
- Makes recommendations on how councils can use 'alternative' approaches to local development to drive the green recovery

In the context of the challenge of under-resourcing



## **'Traditional' approaches to local development and place-making:**

“Models of development that are based on private sector-led investment, steered by the formal town and country planning system...”

## **'Alternative' approaches:**

- Can focus on direct delivery by councils, other public sector bodies, and public;
- Do not rely on the formal town and country planning system to ensure that developments are high-quality; use the range of levers that councils have at their disposal to influence place making; and
- Are 'entrepreneurial'.

# Data to inform the report

## - Survey

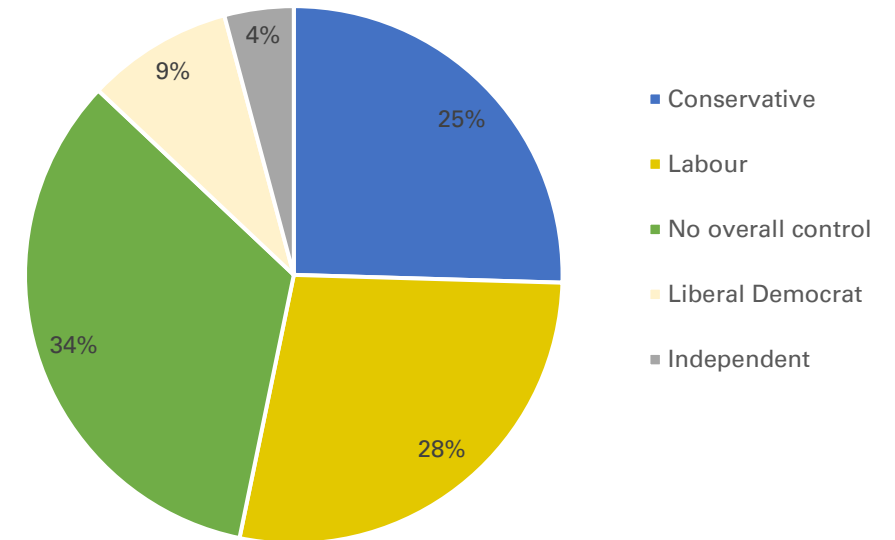
- 216 councillors and officers (a similar number to last year)
- Quantitative data – England only
- Qualitative data – All of UK
- Mixture of longitudinal questions relating to barriers

- Desk based research and policy analysis – especially looking at **green recovery strategies/policies**

- Roundtable discussion

- Four **case studies**

Political control of respondents' local authorities



# Barriers to effective place-making in England:

## Under-resourcing



	1	2	3	4	5
Urban design and aesthetics	7.55%	7.55%	25.47%	30.19%	29.25%
Health and wellbeing	7.55%	10.38%	31.13%	36.79%	13.21%
Climate change adaptation	0.94%	14.15%	18.87%	36.79%	29.25%
Climate change mitigation	2.83%	13.21%	21.70%	34.91%	27.36%
Green space/ infrastructure	5.66%	14.15%	28.30%	32.08%	19.81%
Housing delivery (market)	12.26%	22.64%	26.42%	17.92%	19.81%
Affordable and social housing delivery	4.72%	17.92%	13.21%	33.96%	28.30%
Reducing inequality and injustice	4.72%	10.38%	36.79%	26.42%	19.81%
Local sustainable transport	1.89%	5.66%	18.87%	35.85%	33.02%
Housing stock retrofit	2.83%	8.49%	25.47%	23.58%	33.02%
New communities	3.77%	16.98%	27.36%	27.36%	18.87%
Alternative approaches to local development (e	4.72%	6.60%	31.13%	27.36%	24.53%

1 = Not a barrier at all, 5 = Extreme barrier



# Barriers to effective place-making in England: National-level policy



	1	2	3	4	5
Urban design and aesthetics	12.26%	15.09%	26.42%	24.53%	17.92%
Health and wellbeing	7.55%	10.38%	31.13%	27.36%	20.75%
Climate change adaptation	4.72%	9.43%	24.53%	33.96%	25.47%
Climate change mitigation	4.72%	5.66%	27.36%	34.91%	25.47%
Green space/ infrastructure	8.49%	8.49%	32.08%	27.36%	21.70%
Housing delivery (market)	4.72%	5.66%	27.36%	34.91%	25.47%
Affordable and social housing delivery	17.92%	16.04%	16.04%	22.64%	23.58%
Reducing inequality and injustice	2.83%	6.60%	16.98%	27.36%	42.45%
Local sustainable transport	4.72%	2.83%	28.30%	33.02%	27.36%
Housing stock retrofit	2.83%	8.49%	21.70%	32.08%	29.25%
New communities	9.43%	4.72%	26.42%	24.53%	25.47%
Alternative approaches to local development (e	6.60%	13.21%	28.30%	25.47%	16.98%

1 = Not a barrier at all, 5 = Extreme barrier



# Barriers to effective place-making in England:

## Lack of local skills

	1	2	3	4	5
Score					
Urban design and aesthetics	9.43%	21.70%	20.75%	25.47%	18.87%
Health and wellbeing	9.43%	31.13%	27.36%	21.70%	7.55%
Climate change adaptation	9.43%	17.92%	26.42%	24.53%	17.92%
Climate change mitigation	10.38%	20.75%	23.58%	23.58%	17.92%
Green space/ infrastructure	16.98%	30.19%	32.08%	13.21%	3.77%
Housing delivery (market)	23.58%	28.30%	29.25%	8.49%	5.66%
Affordable and social housing delivery	19.81%	30.19%	28.30%	12.26%	5.66%
Reducing inequality and injustice	8.49%	25.47%	32.08%	19.81%	10.38%
Local sustainable transport	11.32%	26.42%	29.25%	16.98%	9.43%
Housing stock retrofit	8.49%	17.92%	31.13%	25.47%	9.43%
New communities	9.43%	16.98%	32.08%	19.81%	12.26%
Alternative approaches to local development (e	6.60%	11.32%	31.13%	22.64%	21.70%

1 = Not a barrier at all, 5 = Extreme barrier



## North Ayrshire Council - kindness

- Council-funded project delivered in partnership with the Carnegie Trust
- Council worked to reframe its relationship with communities and how it could do things differently to improve outcomes, around the concept of 'kindness'
- Influenced Local Development Plan policy, housing delivery and relationship with communities

## Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust - the benefits of direct delivery

- Part of Birmingham City Council, established in 2009
- One of the biggest housebuilders in the city
- Demonstrates the benefits of direct delivery
- Buy-in from political and finance team leaders crucial to success
- Challenges:
  - Diminishing stock of increasingly challenging sites
  - Viability tight and relies on cross-subsidy



## Cornwall – responding to the climate emergency

- An example of how councils can link research, wide-ranging visions, corporate strategy and local policy to shape new developments
- Demonstrates benefits of knowledge partnerships early in policy development
- Considered their multiple roles – so where they have direct control, their role as enablers whether through policy and/or funding, and where they need to influence (whether locally or nationally)
- Drew on Doughnut economics model to develop policy decision making wheel.

## Wales - the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

- Shows how national government can encourage holistic thinking and innovation in local planning through ambitious national legislation
- Welsh local authorities are under duty at all levels of the planning process to maximise their contribution to the wellbeing of communities, with a specific focus on taking a 'place making' approach to planning and design of development
- Underlines the importance of properly funding and providing capacity for new initiatives

# Key components of Councils being agents for change



## **Vision**

- Corporate ambition and strategic vision

## **Pathways**

- Defining priority actions in a delivery plan
- Defining delivery mechanisms and delivery partnerships
- Measuring success and evolving the approach

## **First steps**

- Creating knowledge and skills partnerships
- Community dialogue



# Policy recommendations for national governments



- 1. An enabling national strategy:** A clear national strategy and vision on the objectives of post-pandemic recovery and the role to be played by local government is a vital foundation for local action.
- 2. Support for innovation:** National governments have an extremely important role to play in supporting information sharing and technical support amongst local authorities.
- 3. Support for skills:** National governments must see funding skills and capacity building as equal to 'hard' infrastructure investment.
- 4. A moratorium on centralising local powers in England:** Government should restore the powers it has removed or at least signal a moratorium on further power being removed.
- 5. Encouraging the corporate social responsibility of anchor institutions**

