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Stakeholder barriers and enablers to delivering biodiverse developments

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Introduction

- Context: increasing importance and salience of biodiversity within planning
- Urban biodiversity has a role to play here for both ecological and social reasons – delivery of the mitigation hierarchy and facilitating access to nature
- The English context is interesting to explore due to the scale of the problem (State of Nature, 2023), significant push towards increased housing development (Wilson & Barton, 2021), and the recent introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as a planning requirement (came into force February 2024)
- Aim: Identify the perceived barriers and enablers of delivering biodiversity in urban development and redevelopment
 - What do these stakeholders feel is preventing effective delivery and what could potentially enable greater biodiversity delivery in these schemes?

Methods

Literature review → Statements for Delphi → Two rounds of Delphi → Analysis

- Systematic search and umbrella review to identify the barriers and enablers, supplemented with a workshop. Reviewed: 44 academic articles, 15 grey literature reports.
- Series of statements, in two rounds of the survey, rated using the Likert scale: ‘not important at all’ to ‘very important’, also added explanatory comments and suggestions
- Findings based on ratings from the second round of the Delphi, measured on importance rating (median ≥ 5 indicates an important rating) and consensus (inter-quartile range ≤ 1.75 indicates consensus)

Key findings: policy, skills, collaboration

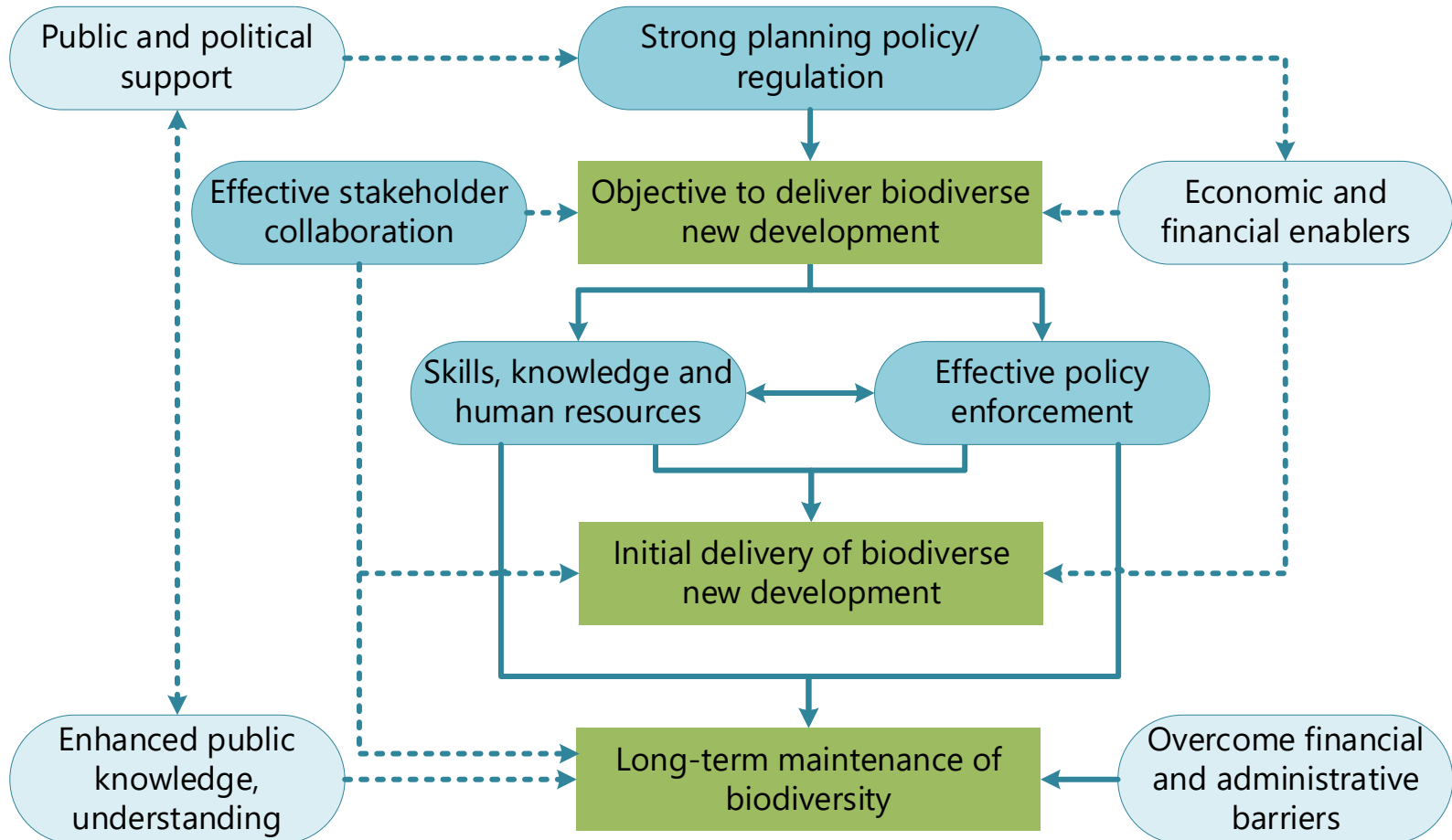
- Legislation emerged as most important enabler. Stakeholders were optimistic about the outcomes of BNG legislation but cautious as 1) BNG 10% uplift might actually limit ambition on urban sites, 2) concern for game-playing and circumnavigating from developers, 3) concerns about a delivery gap.
- (Lack of) Knowledge and skills emerged as the most important barrier. There is real concern within the sector about the lack of expertise available across the process, from assessment of ecological factors on site and design of schemes, to planning enforcement, to the delivery on the ground by construction and maintenance workers.
- Collaboration and political support are essential, but stakeholders are concerned that these are not yet where they should be and there is geographic variation.
- Public engagement might promote support for biodiversity, and greater understanding and experience of nature might promote public support – though the impact of daily life (look and feel, access to spaces) have not been fully understood yet. Currently stakeholders feel public mood is positive.

Key findings: economic and financial

- There are important economic and financial enablers, but these are unlikely to be sufficient without stronger policy, enforcement and investment in skills and knowledge.
- Economic enablers were second most important. The role of subsidies and other support (perhaps linked to co-benefits delivery) could provide motivation to raise ambition beyond baseline.
- There was disagreement among stakeholders as to the cost implications for developers, and the extent to which these are barriers. Ultimately, the role of policy and legislation is to place any costs within the development plan, but experience with other public priorities (e.g. affordable housing) demonstrates there may be challenges in enforcing this.

Conditions needed to achieve biodiverse developments

Current key barriers





Thank you!

More information: <https://www.biurbs.org>

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