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A bit of background ...

- Most diagrams of the planning process end with '**permission granted**'
- **Little in-depth analysis** of the world of post-consent
- ... and **even less on post-consent and design quality**
- **But**, there is anecdotal evidence, and some press reporting (mainly in the architectural press)
- **And**, a nod to some of these issues in the 2019 amendments to National Planning Practice Guidance, but little direction as to how to manage them:

"How can local planning authorities ensure the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion?"

Research commission

Aspiration for high quality development in the West of England but a perception of a ***drop in quality*** of schemes between the grant of planning permission and delivery on the ground

UWE commissioned to:

1. undertake a systematic review to understand patterns or processes which lead to a decline in quality
2. provide an evidence base from which to strengthen the role of UAs in ensuring quality development
3. draft a route-map for the West of England UAs to make improvements to the post-decision process and post-occupancy monitoring.

Research method

Stage 1: Documentary review of national and local policy and practice



Stage 2: In-depth interviews with local authority practitioners



Stage 3: Four housing development case studies

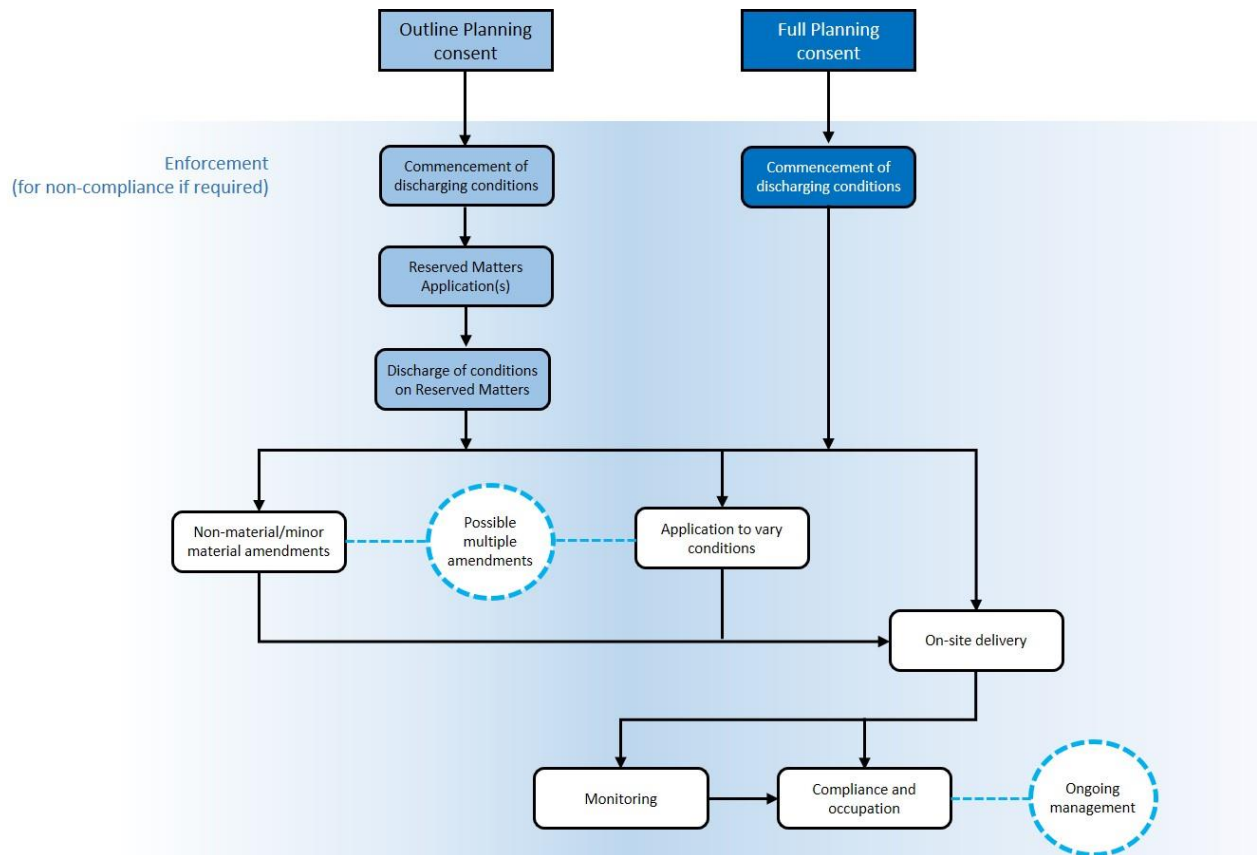


Stage 4: Analysis of output and preparation of draft recommendations for review



Stage 5: Roundtable with local authority practitioners to review recommendations

What do we mean by post-decision process



Headlines

- (1) The way in which post-decision planning processes unfold **can result in a significant decline in the overall quality of a delivered scheme.**
- (2) Important elements of schemes – **density, landscaping, layout, materials, and other design details** – are routinely **re-negotiated** post-consent.
- (3) Reasons for post-decision change are complex, but arguments around scheme **viability** often predominate. There is a **lack of trust** that change is for legitimate reasons

Outline planning permission is particularly problematic

***"Once the principle has been established the power shifts ...
there will be an iterative process of watering down"***

"I refer to outline as being sold the dream"

"We are sold a dream, that actually is a dream"

Post-decision governance challenges

“The new game is minor amendments. Developers have latched on to it. We get one, then another, then another, then another. It's difficult to keep track of where you are with a scheme, and they are very difficult to refuse. Through that process they may have changed the entire design ethos”.

Discharge of conditions
 Complexity and lack of resources

*“But once you have approved a scheme, the political impetus for quality has gone. **Signing off-of conditions requires an enormous resource - they create work we can't service”.***

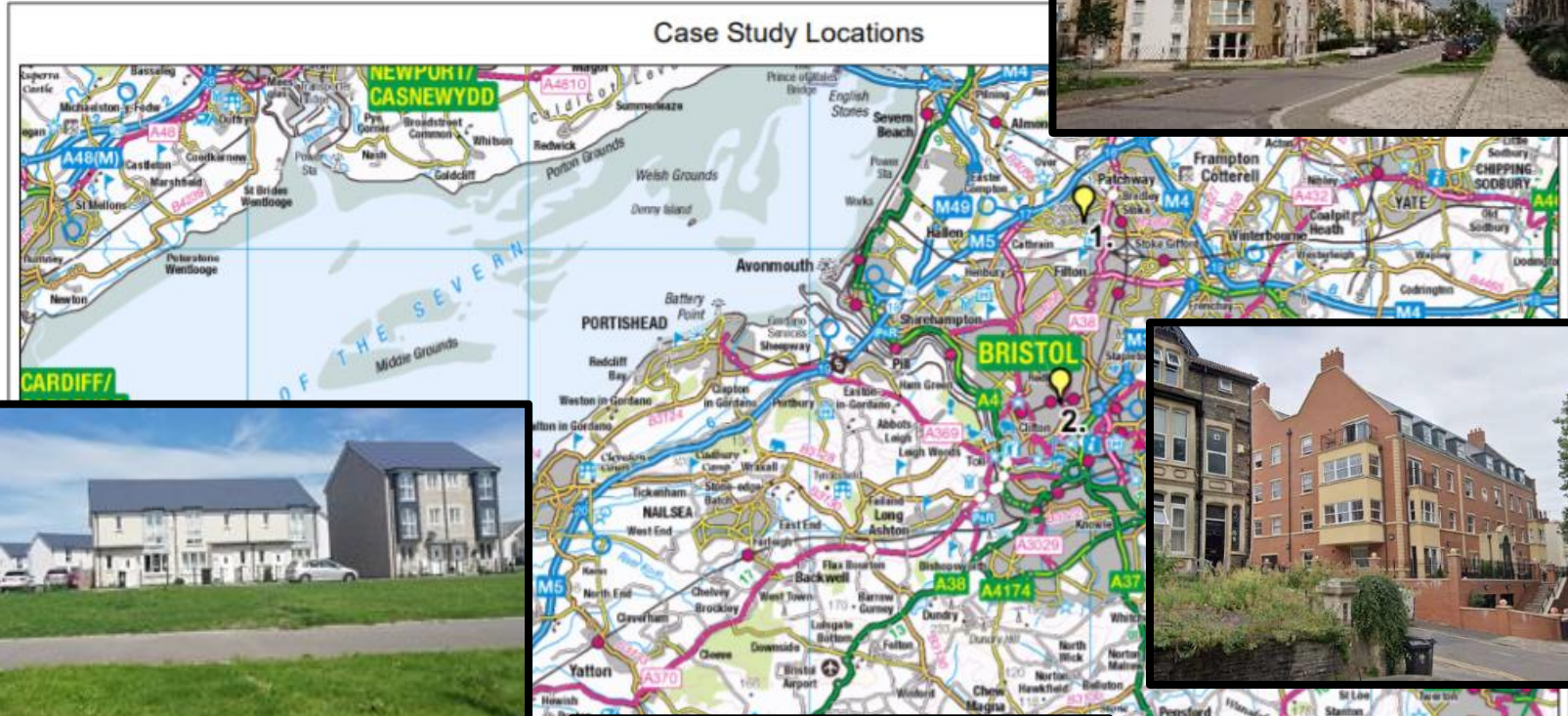
Amendments and Minor Material Amenagements
 - Cumulative impact

Monitoring
 Little resource but valuable

“There is a lack of control / over-sight on what happens on major sites to help keep the developer honest”

Enforcement
 - Framing of action different to design aspiration

Four case studies

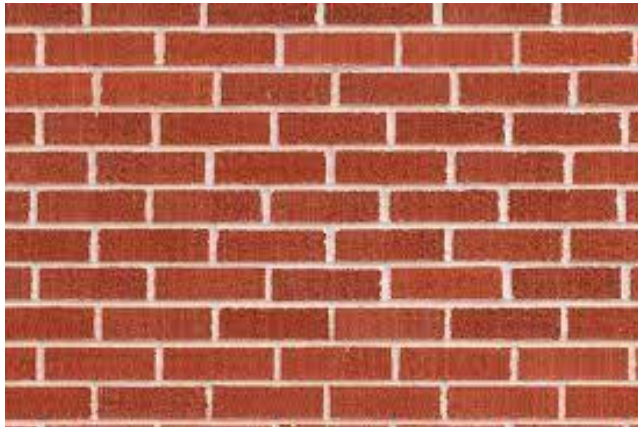


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The result?

Sometimes subtle and sometimes extensive diminutions in the quality of schemes between consent and delivery



5 INTERCONNECTED ACTIONS



What have we been doing since?

1. Ongoing discussion with WECA and the West of England local authorities
2. Discussion of implications with Central Government
3. Writing for academic journals
4. Research with Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland on outcomes and impacts under the different planning systems of the four nations



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