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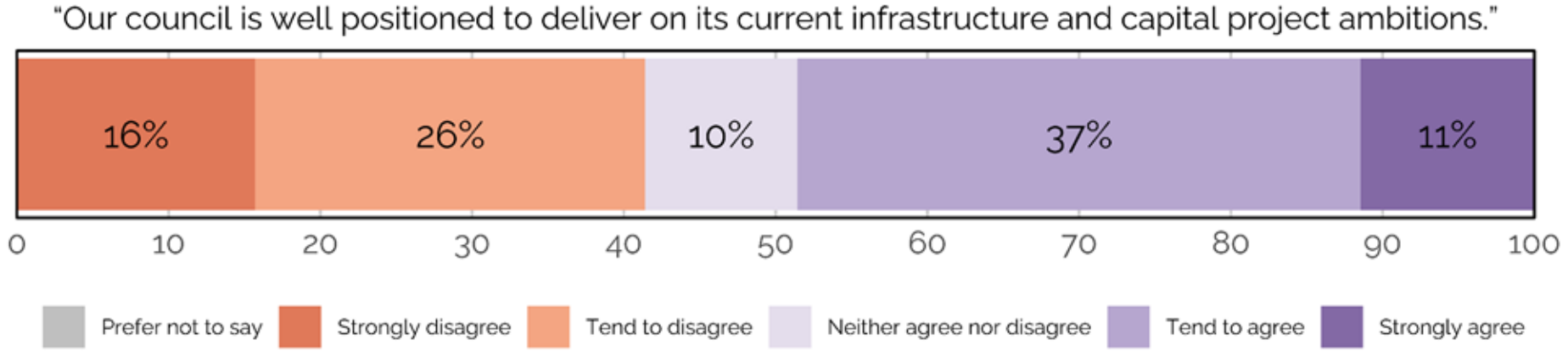
Big ideas for local government

# Delivering Through Change

- This research, conducted in partnership with Scape, examines the forces shaping local infrastructure projects.
- We surveyed **70 senior local government officers across 63 councils** in England from October to December 2025, asking them to outline their views on:
  - The strain on delivery systems
  - The risks facing major ambitions
  - How councils are navigating pressures
  - What councils need to maintain momentum
- These insights have shaped a written report – Delivering Through Change, published earlier this year.

# Delivering through change




The local government sector is split. But what accounts for this difference?

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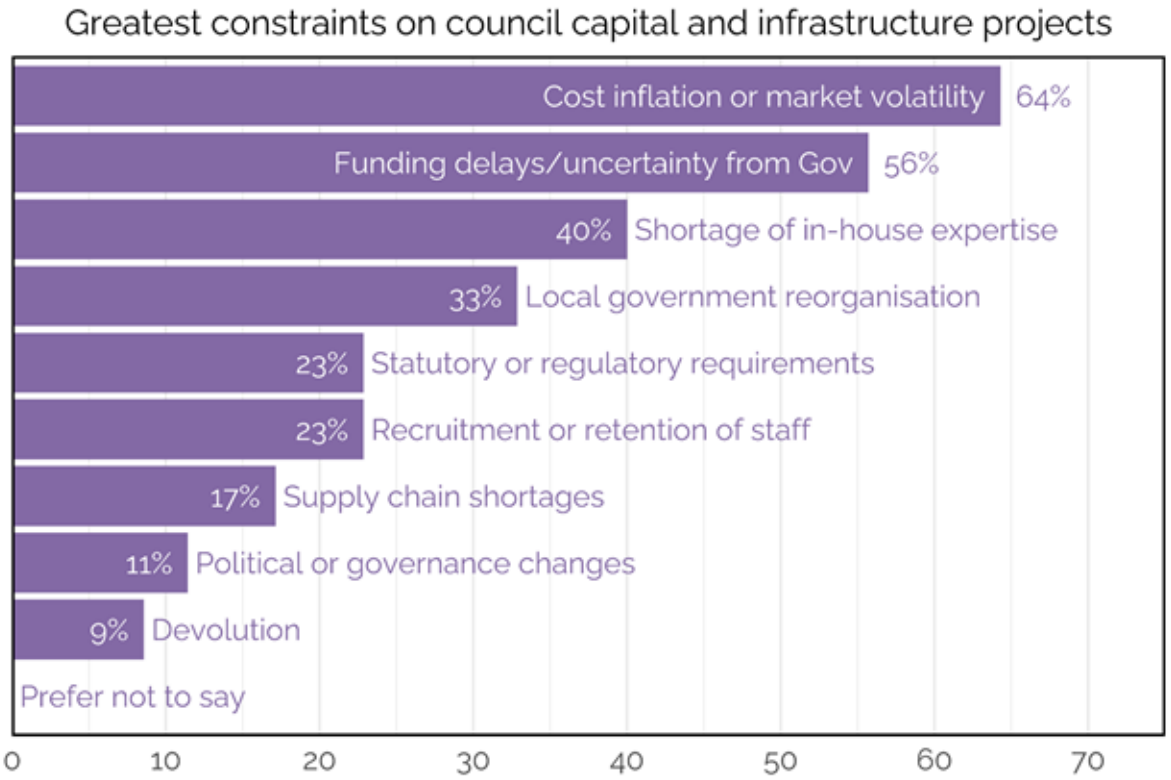
# What is constraining projects?

- Greatest constraints are national.
- In-house issues are also significant.
- LGR a constraint for 1 in 3.
- Devolution and political change only a constraint for a minority.

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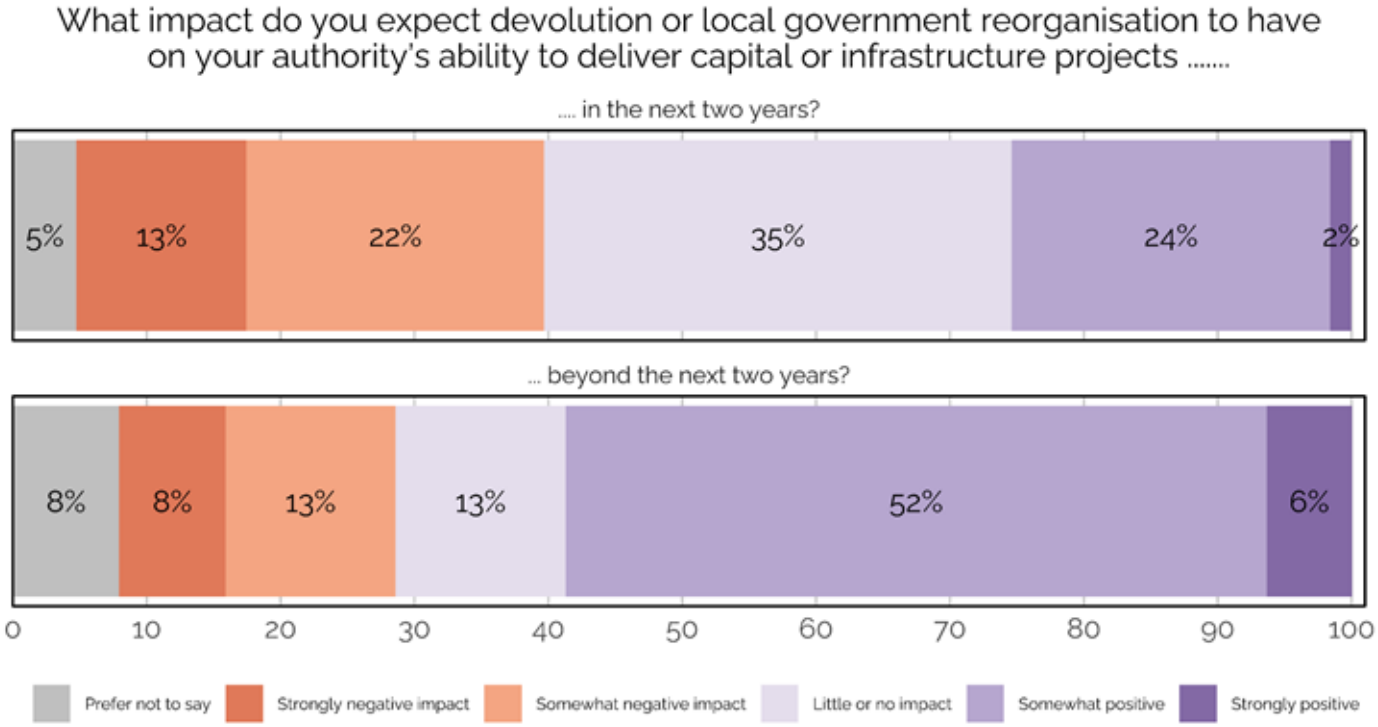
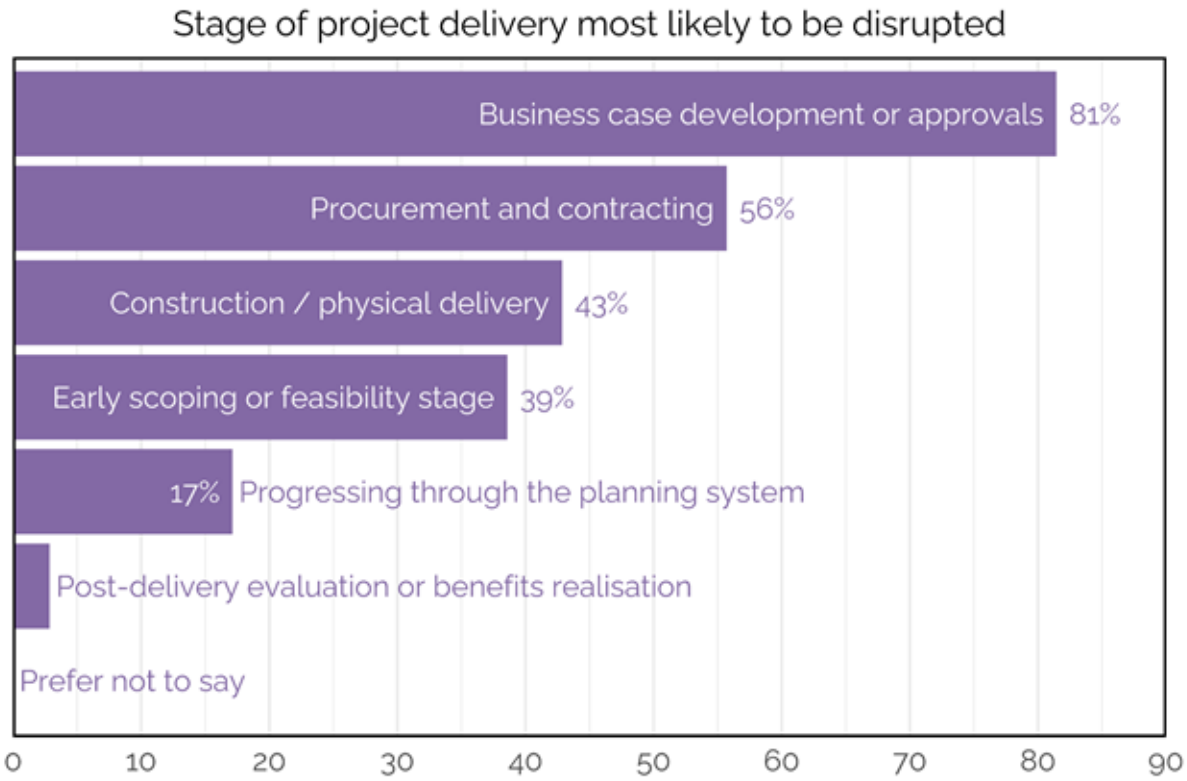
# What about LGR/Devo?

- LGR/Devo more disruptive than beneficial in the short term
- But most expect positive impacts beyond the next two years
- Though some still see long-term downsides



# What stage of projects are most disrupted?

- **Projects stumble at the starting line**
- Early stages are most disrupted
- Physical delivery significantly disrupted.
- Post-delivery stages minimally (<5%)

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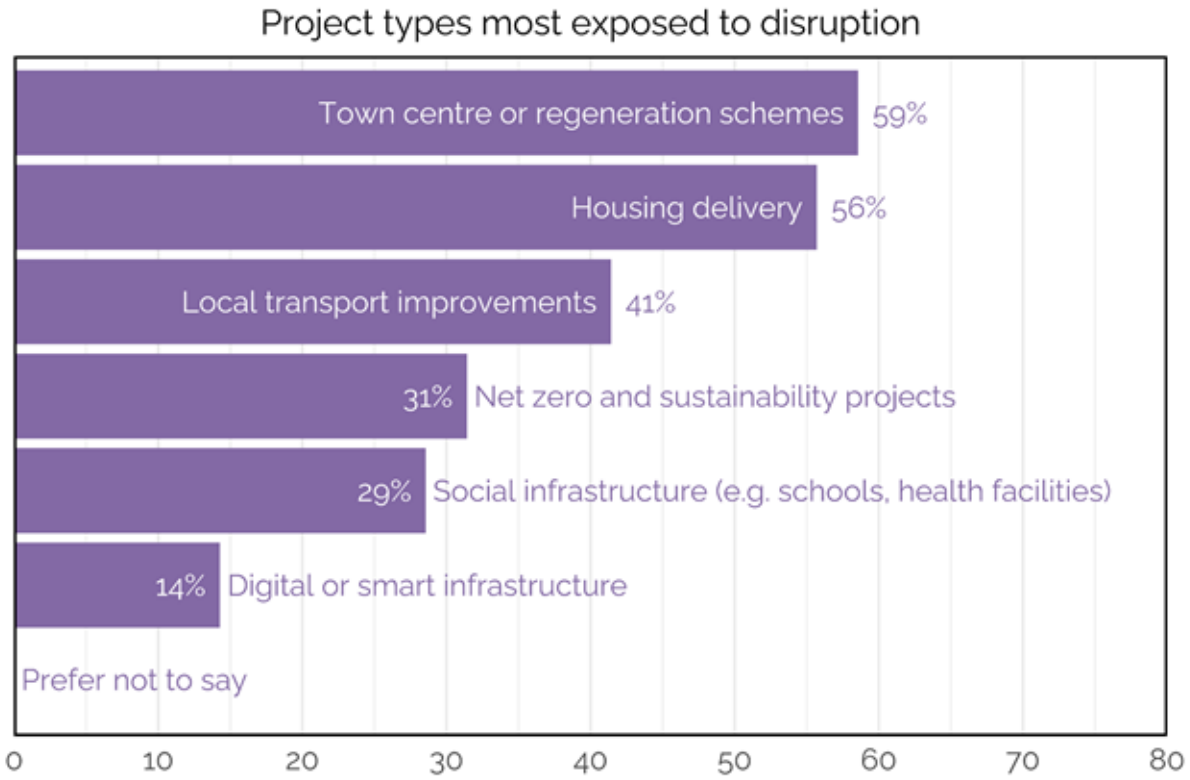
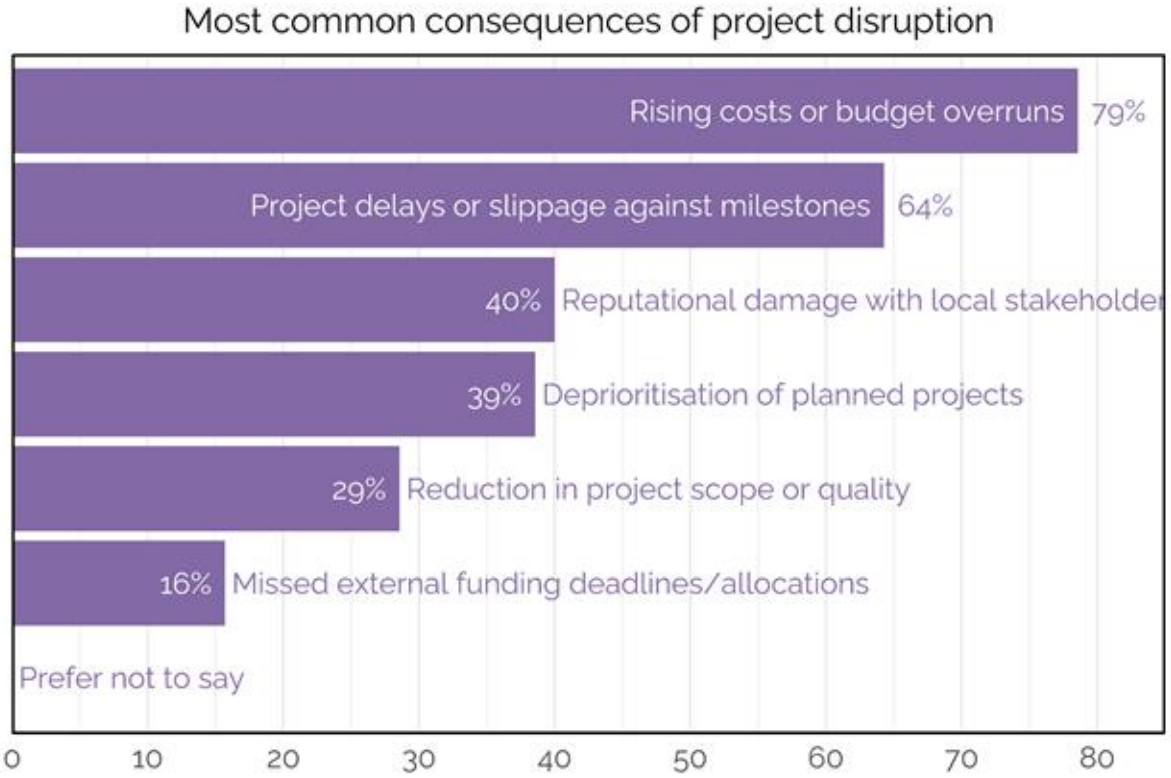
# What type of projects are most disrupted?

- Regeneration, housing and transport projects are most exposed to disruption.
    - **The biggest, place-shaping projects.**
- Social, digital/smart and energy infrastructure projects are less exposed to disruption.



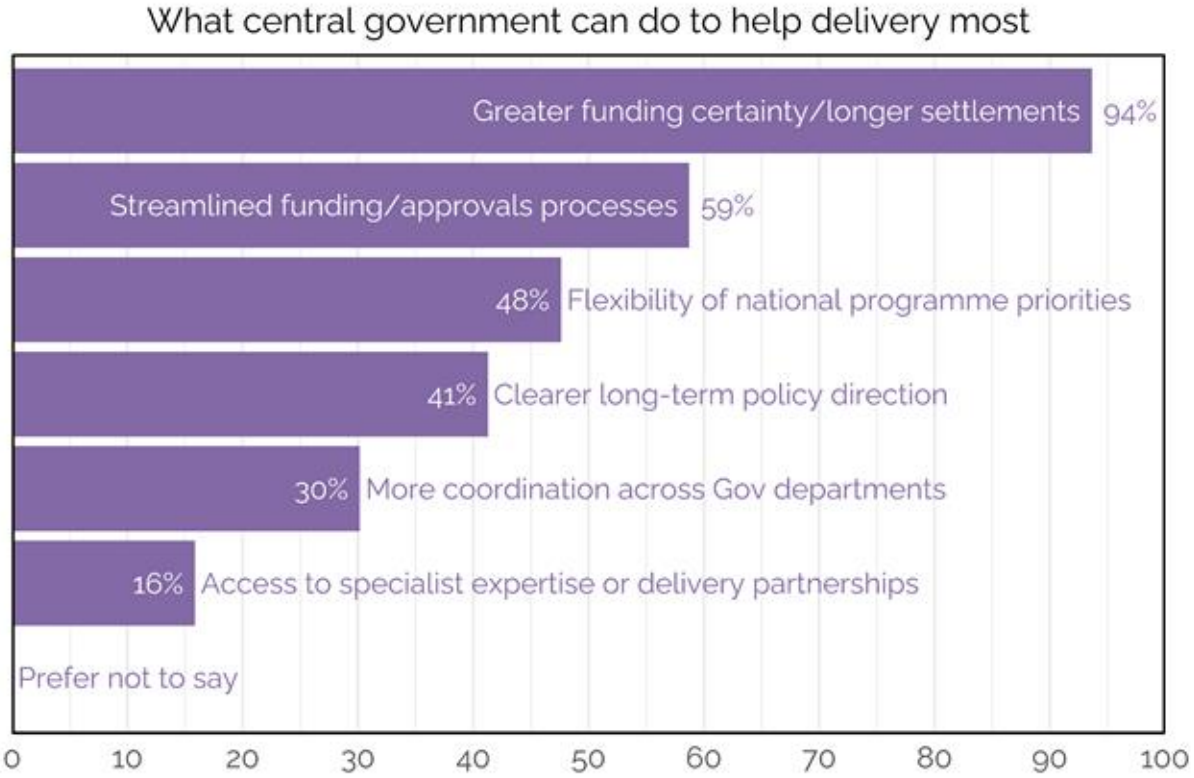
# What is the impact of this disruption?

- Consequences of project disruption are largely **financial and reputational,** with knock-on impacts
- Actions taken to mitigate these consequences include deprioritising other projects, or reducing scope/quality of projects.



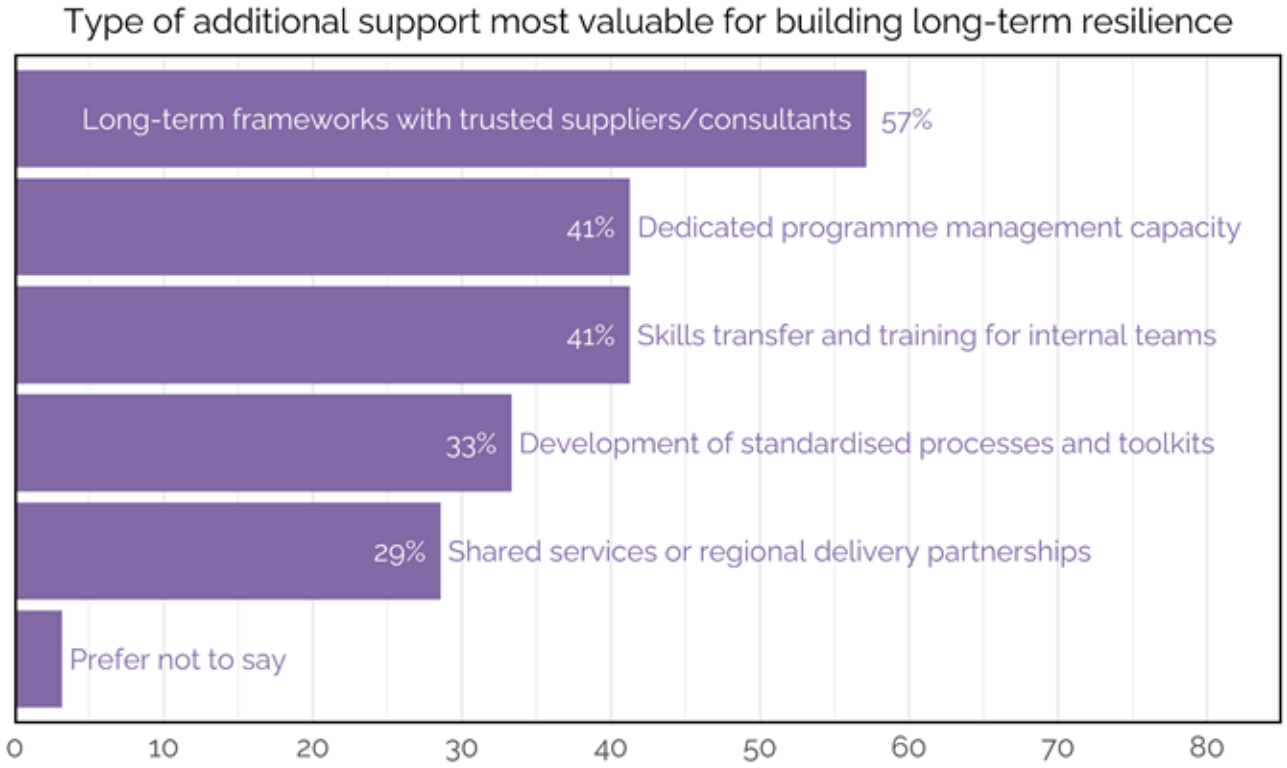
# What can central government do?

1. More streamlined, certain and flexible funding.
2. Government commitment to clearer long-term policies surrounding the built environment
3. Greater coordination across government departments.
4. Greater support for councils to gain access to specialist expertise.



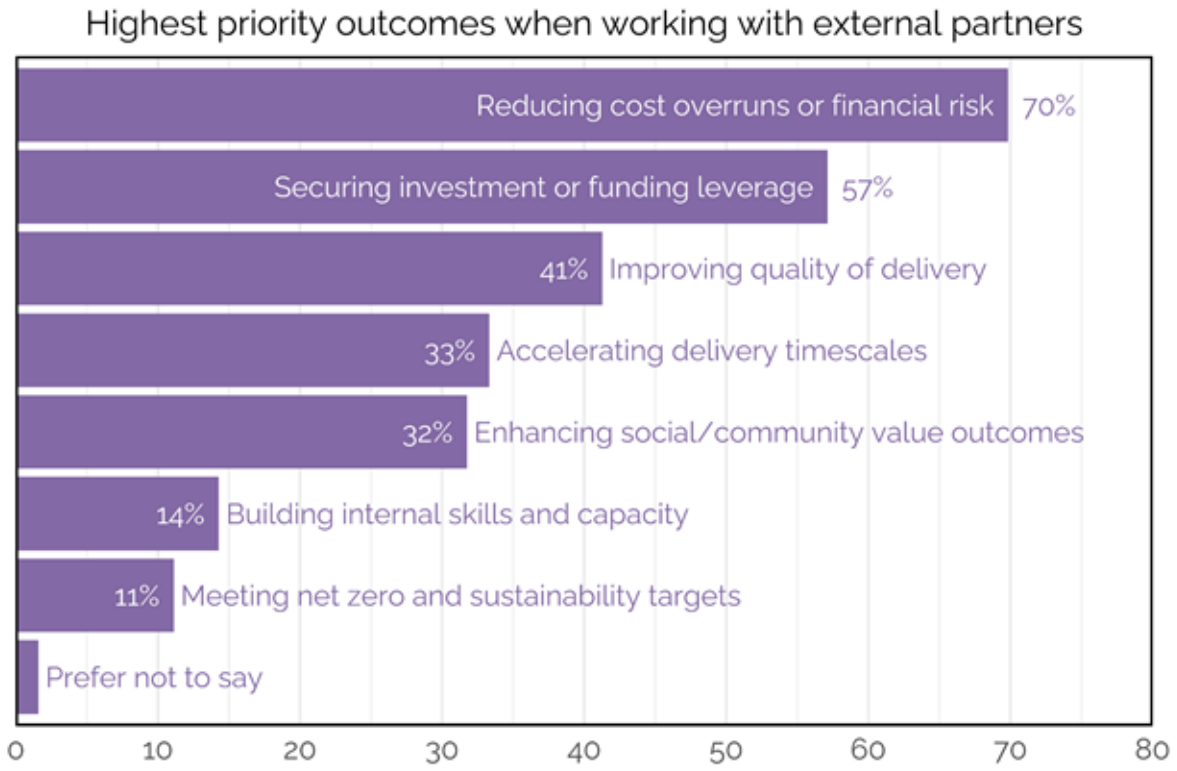
# What does this additional support look like?

- Councils see a range of additional support measures as valuable for build resilience.



# What are priority outcomes in partnerships?

- Financial, resource and quality considerations are foremost for councils when it comes to working with partners.
- Indicative of the financial pressures facing councils.

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# Looking ahead

Challenges:

- "Lack of funding, high interest rates and increased costs" – Top Level Director
- "LGR will consume a lot of bandwidth" – Head of Service
- "Funding availability – both grant and lending" – Head of Service

Opportunities:

- "[LGR] is an opportunity to re-evaluate… with increased potential to leverage funding and private investment" – Head of Service, South East
- "New approaches and explore new delivery models" – Head of Service, South West
- "Housing and regeneration" – Head of Service, South East

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# Delivering Through Change

Key conclusions:

1. Delivery of capital and infrastructure projects is being shaped more by national volatility than local ambition.
2. Projects stumble at the starting line.
3. The biggest place shaping projects are the most vulnerable.
4. Councils want system fixes, while external support is sought by many.

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