Southwark Council, Hackney Council, Greater London Authority, Connected Places Catapult & Unboxed

A user-centred back-office planning system
Discovery phase report

April 2019

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UNBOXED

Southwark Council southwark.gov.uk

Hackney

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

CATAPULT Future Cities

Context

Problem statement

Local authorities lack a user-centred solution providing back-office case management, transactional functions and database necessary to efficiently manage a planning service.

Planning services are currently dependent on proprietary solutions that are developing slowly and resistant to interoperability. The market is dominated by just two providers and commercial incentives to support innovation are low.

The practical problems associated with poor quality software create challenges for the effective administration of the national planning system.

The cost of the problem

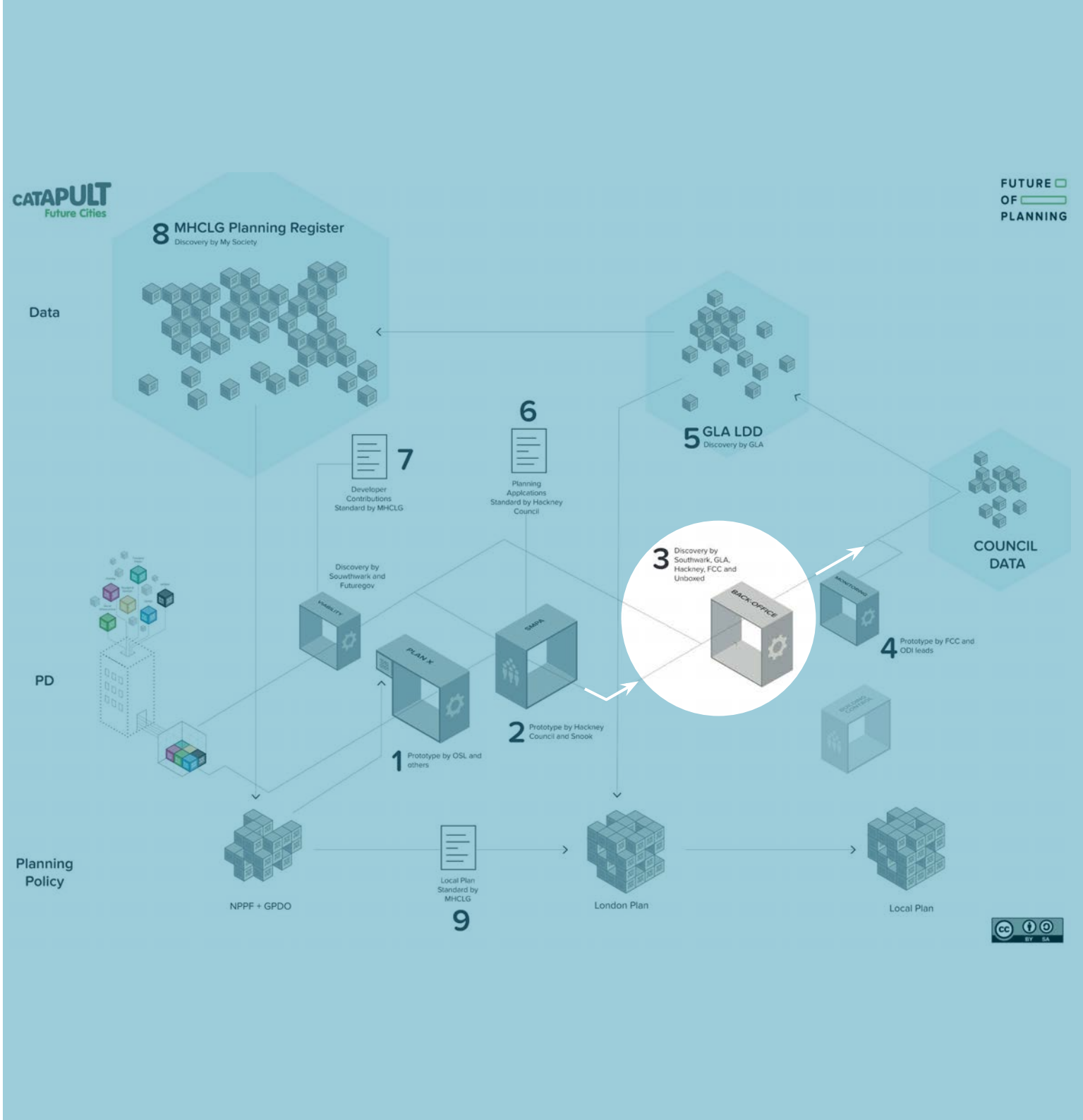
- **High cost of change** – projects cost **>£1m** to transition from one provider to another and are lengthy and resource intensive
- Hackney estimates it spends **>£250,000** in **administration time**
- Future Cities Catapult found that planning authorities in England receive ca. 450,000 planning applications a year. A typical household application takes 4-7 hours to process, yet ca. 50% of these are returned as invalid because they lack the right information. Assuming an average salary of £50,000, ca. **£500M is wasted annually** across the UK.

Source: https://localdigital.gov.uk/funding/london-borough-of-southwark-3/

Part of a bigger system

Efficient back-office planning software is a critical component of a future digital planning ecosystem.

In order to support this wider system and evolve with it, the new back-office software will need to be able to change rapidly, be based on common and open application and data standards, and remove supplier lock-in.



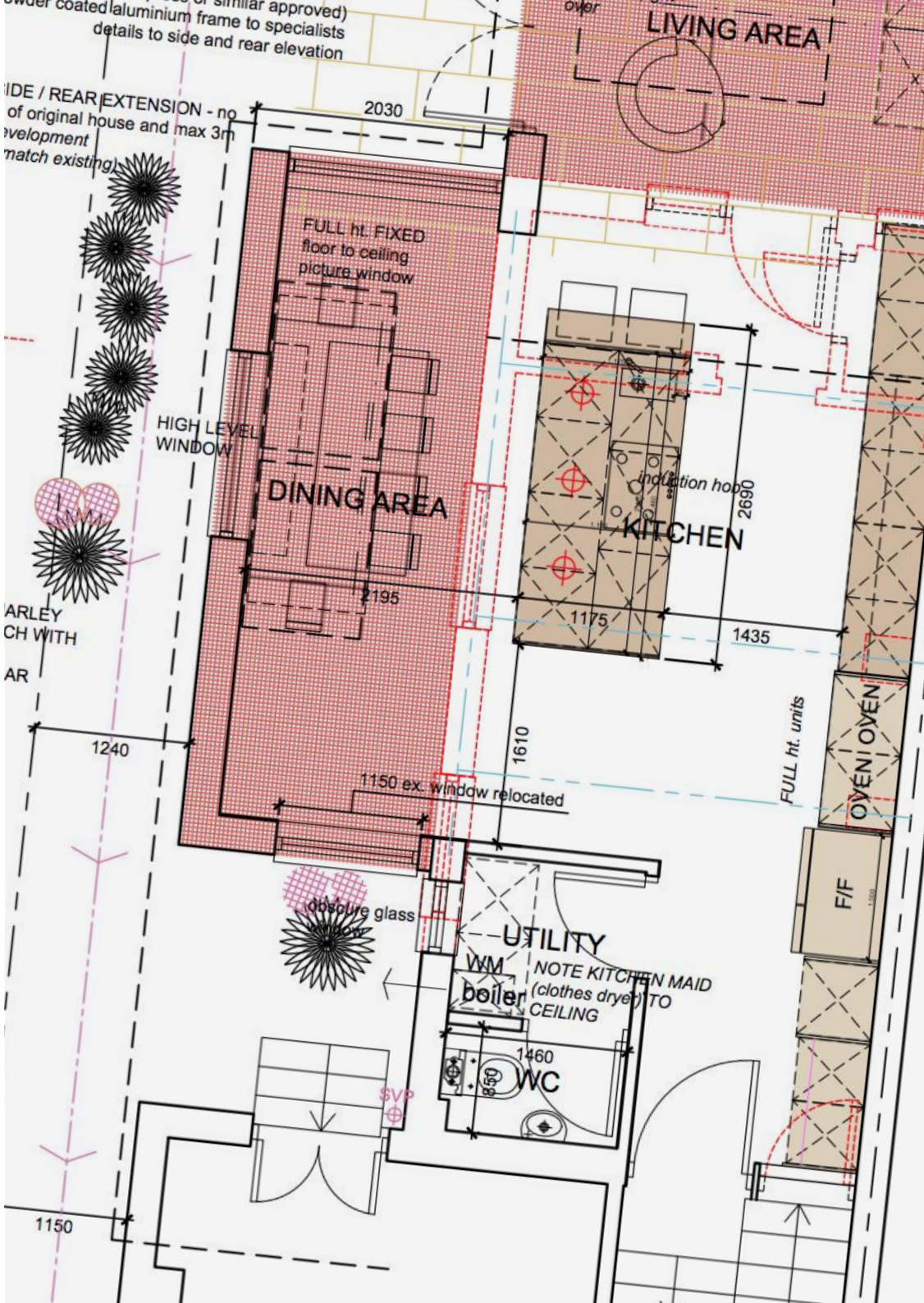
Long-term project vision

To create a user-centered back-office planning system that makes planning data and records easily accessible, increases efficiency across the planning application process, and fits the needs of its users (Planning Officers).

Discovery phase goals

This *Discovery* phase aims to provide a better understanding of:

- The **user needs** of planning officers and other stakeholders
- The **potential scope of a new system** to meet these user needs
- How a new system might bring together **other projects** in the PlanTech space
- Potential benefits of a new system and how to **measure success**
- The **team** required to deliver the next phase (alpha)
- The **design principles** that should inform the new system
- The **data standards** and **technical architecture** needed to support the new service
- What should be considered **out of scope** for the new service



Discovery phase team

The core team structure for this discovery team:

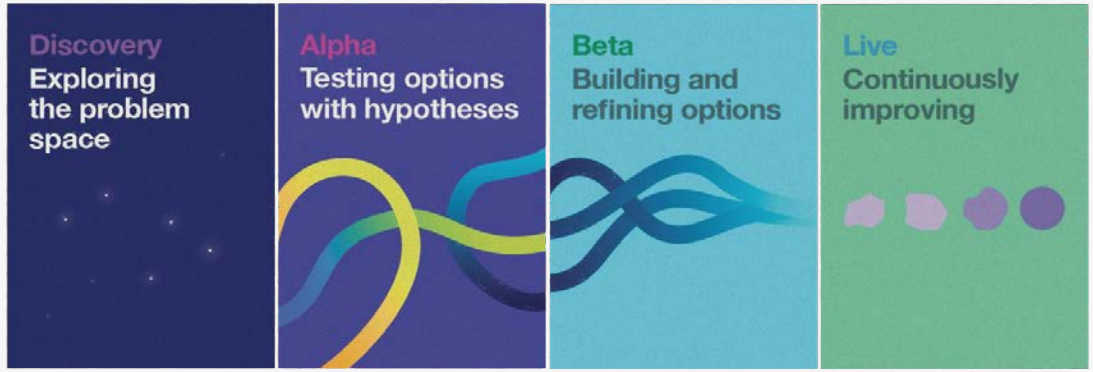
- **Product Owner** (Southwark Council)
- **Senior Service Designer** (Unboxed)
- **Technical Lead** (Unboxed)
- **User Researcher** (Unboxed)
- **User Researcher** (Hackney Council)
- **Developer** (Unboxed)
- **Delivery Manager** (Unboxed)

Our approach

Aligned with GDS Service Standard

Our approach is aligned with the GDS Service Standard, Local Government Digital Service Standard, as well as the Local Digital Declaration, of which Southwark were co-publishers.

Discovery is the first phase of this approach, designed to explore the problem space by better understanding user needs, business needs, policies, and technical constraints through primary and secondary research.

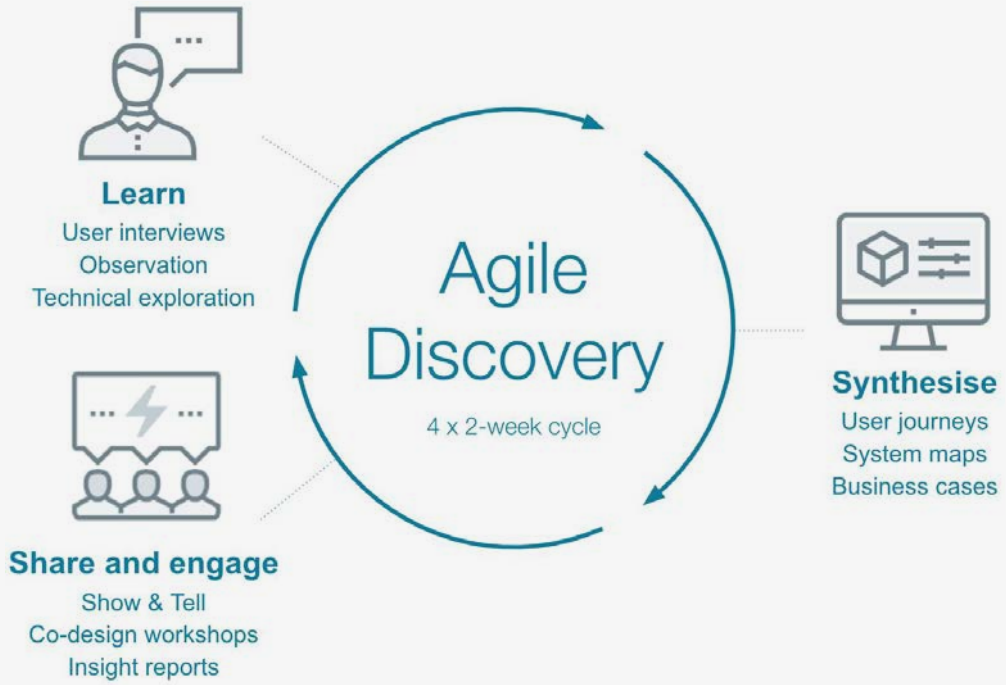


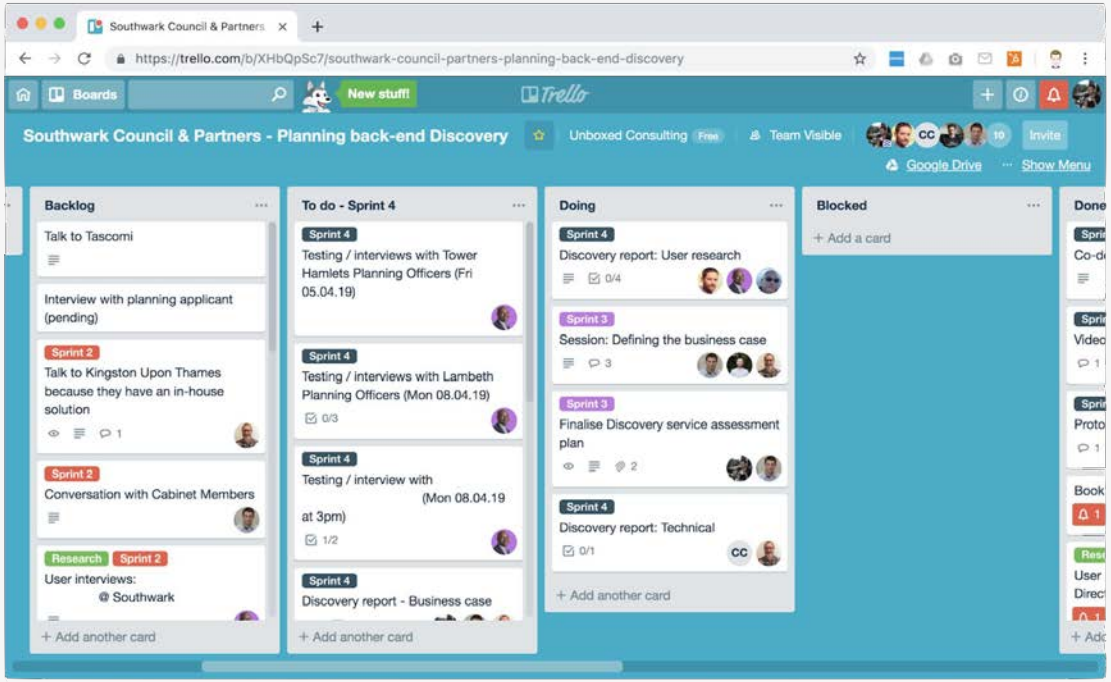
An iterative, Agile discovery

Our multidisciplinary project team worked within the framework of Agile sprints – short, two-week learning cycles.

Each sprint included activities to learn, synthesise, and share new knowledge, ensuring:

- User needs have been prioritised at the forefront of project direction and any key decisions
- Continuous learning and adapting to change has been central to our approach
- Short sprint learning cycles have been implemented — making, testing, and learning in order to respond to user needs





Discovery phase roadmap

The team has worked across **8-weeks** (**4 sprints**), visiting three different sprint themes and setting four individual sprint goals to form our discovery phase roadmap:

8-week discovery phase

Sprint 1	Sprint 2	Sprint 3	Sprint 4
Sprint commencing 14/02	*Sprint commencing 28/02*	*Sprint commencing 14/03*	*Sprint commencing 28/03*
Sprint theme: The pain of Planning Officers and understanding of the wider technical system		**Sprint theme:** Identifying opportunities for future concepts	**Sprint theme:** Concept creation and informed recommendations
Sprint goal: To gain a cross-council understanding of the pain points of the current system(s) and identify opportunities	**Sprint goal:** To gain a clear understanding of the main end-to-end back office planning process opportunities	**Sprint goal:** To gain an understanding of the “jobs to be done” across the application process	**Sprint goal:** To get concepts into the hands of Planning Officers and tested for feedback, alongside further user research

Activity themes

The team have been exploring four individual activity themes, consisting of:

User research

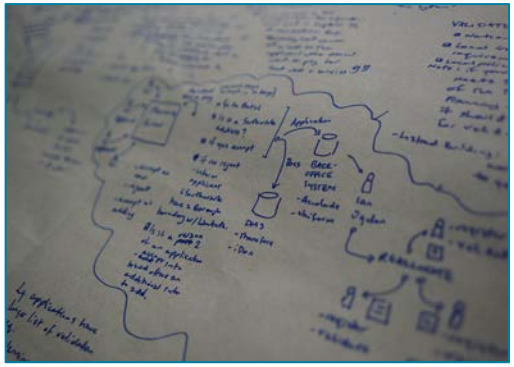
Contextual face-to-face interviews

Shadowing Planning Officers using existing back-office systems

User journey mapping

User story formation

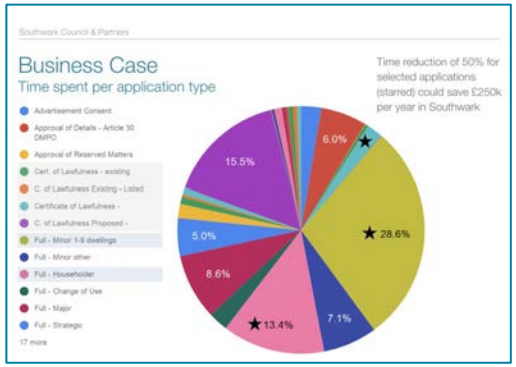
Emerging design principles



Technical exploration

Tracking data through the current planning application systems and processes

Investigating emerging data standards across other related systems and projects



Business case definition

Exploring cost per application type across different councils

Identifying opportunities based on time spent per application per team

Concept creation

Co-design workshops with Planning Officers

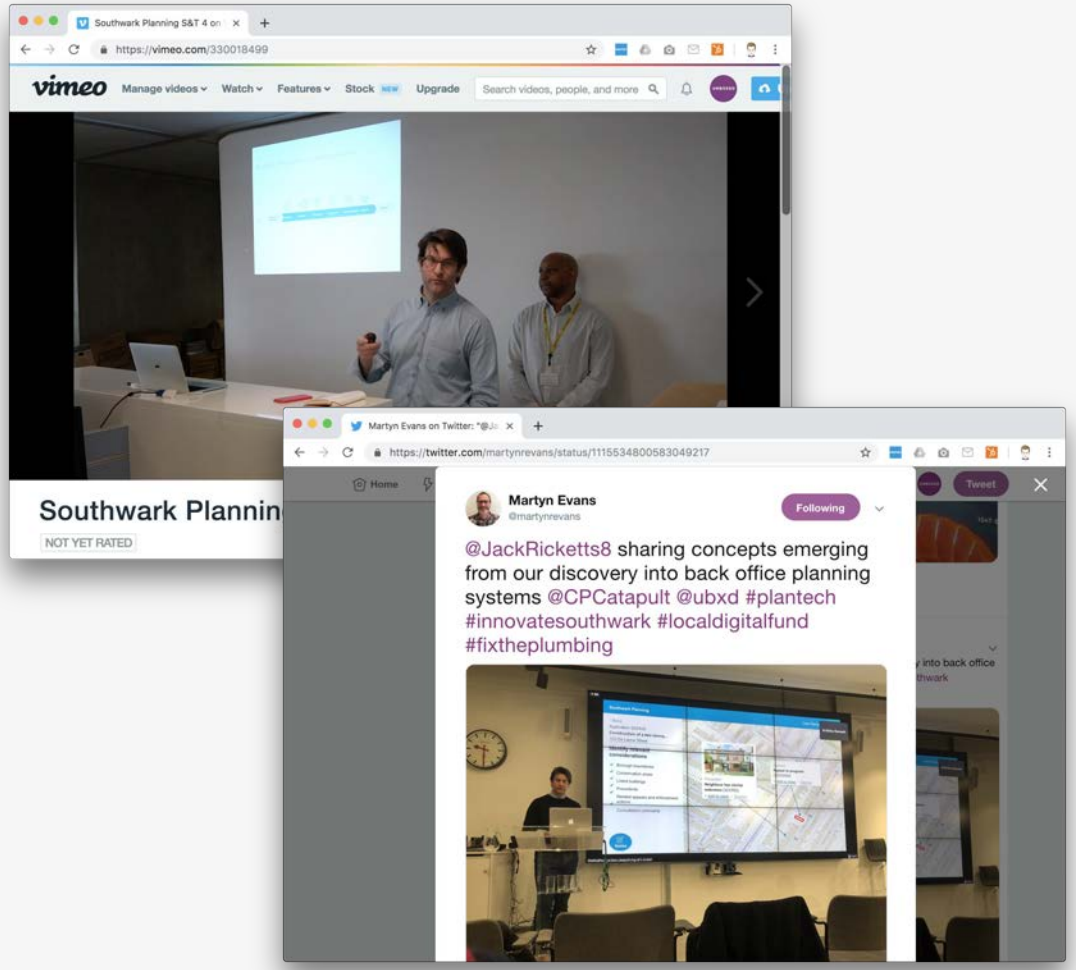
Creating a series of concept prototypes, based on emerging user research

Testing concepts across London and non-London council teams

Collaborating and openly sharing

Throughout this phase, the team has been openly sharing progress with key stakeholders within the planning ecosystem, along with wider audiences, through:

- Weeknotes and project blog — sharing weekly team progress via the Innovate Southwark public platform
- Show & Tells each sprint — both internally at Southwark Council, and externally at ALBPO-TS and Connected Places Catapult
- Video recordings of key activities, including Show & Tells and co-design sessions
- Close collaboration with PlanX, Hackney's Submit my Planning Application, GLA, and others around data standards through open communication channels, regular meetings and event attendance



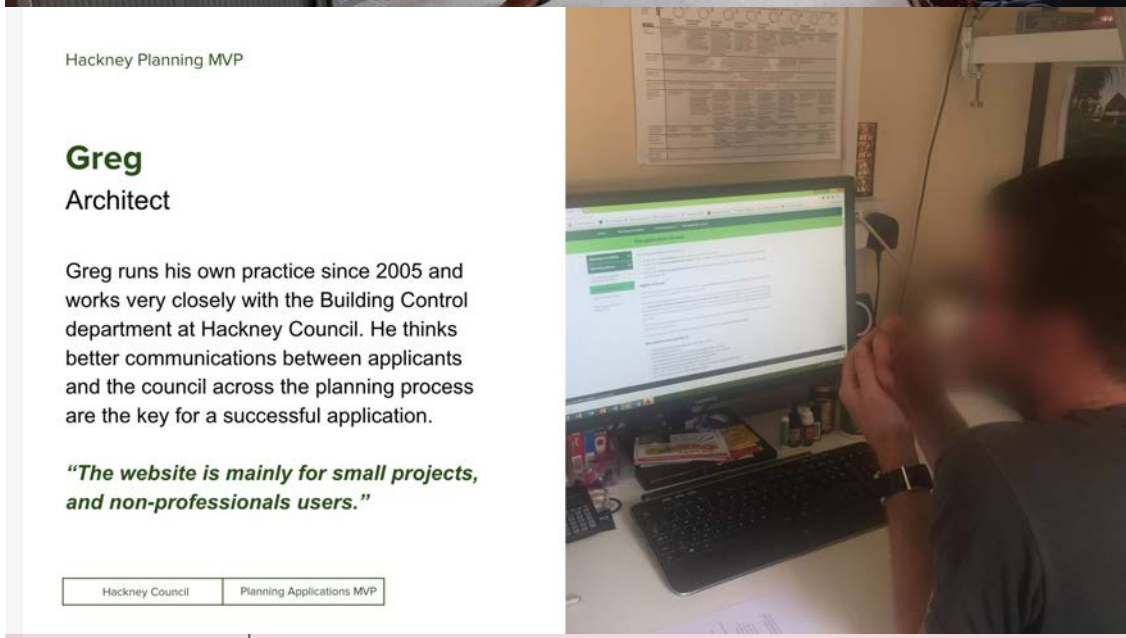
User research findings

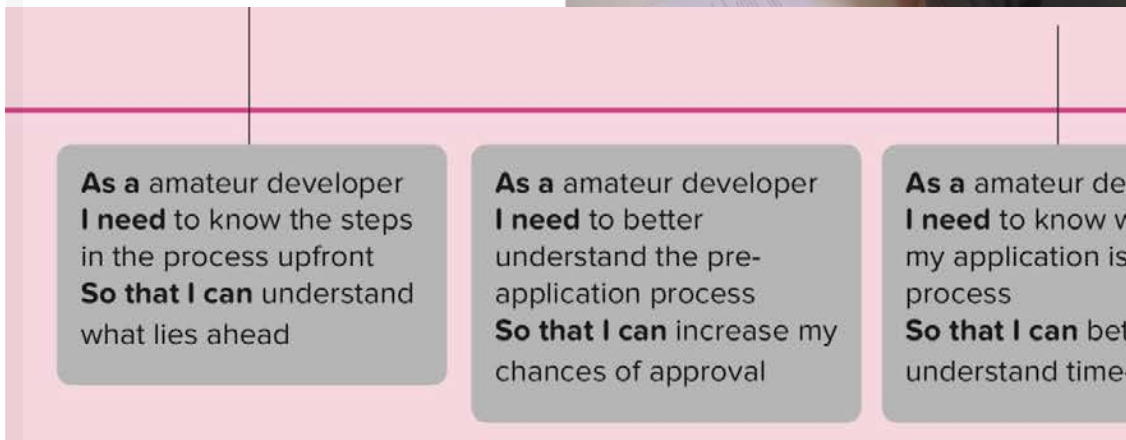
Scope and collaborating with other projects

At an early stage we decided that we would focus on the **planning officer as the main user**. Whilst **applicants and the public are beneficiaries of the service, they are indirect users**.

However, we **collaborated with Snook, Future Cities Catapult, and others, and were able to use their research to inform our thinking**. Wing, who was a user researcher on our project, also had previous experience with planning applicants in Hackney.

When working on the end-to-end system in future phases of the project, **we plan on engaging and testing with members of the public**. As a statutory function, this is of particular relevance when it comes to the planning register – the public facing element of any back office system.



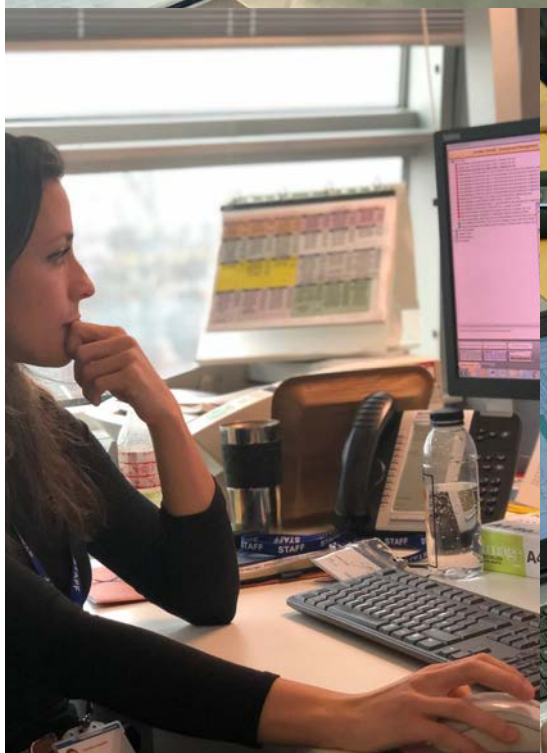


As part of user research, the team carried out:

- **17** x user interviews with planning teams
- **2** x existing system demonstrations
- **3** x insight and co-design workshops
- **4** x planning application process shadowing sessions
- **12** x back-office concept prototype testing sessions

Engaging with:

- **7** x London borough councils (Southwark, Hackney, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Haringey, Lambeth & Islington)
- **1** x Metropolitan district council (Leeds)
- **2** x other councils (Canterbury & Huntingdonshire)



Key insights and opportunities

Poor quality of submissions means more work downstream

Opportunity for standardisation

"There's always something missing, i.e. existing plan, location plan, incorrect fee."

Certain manual tasks seem unrewarding and unnecessary

Opportunity for automation

"Indexing is a pain in the butt."

Key insights and opportunities

Need to focus planners' effort where it's needed

Opportunity to make planner's job more rewarding

"A case officer should be making assessments … not doing administrative work that can be solved by the right system."

Managing public perception is a strong driver influencing planners' work

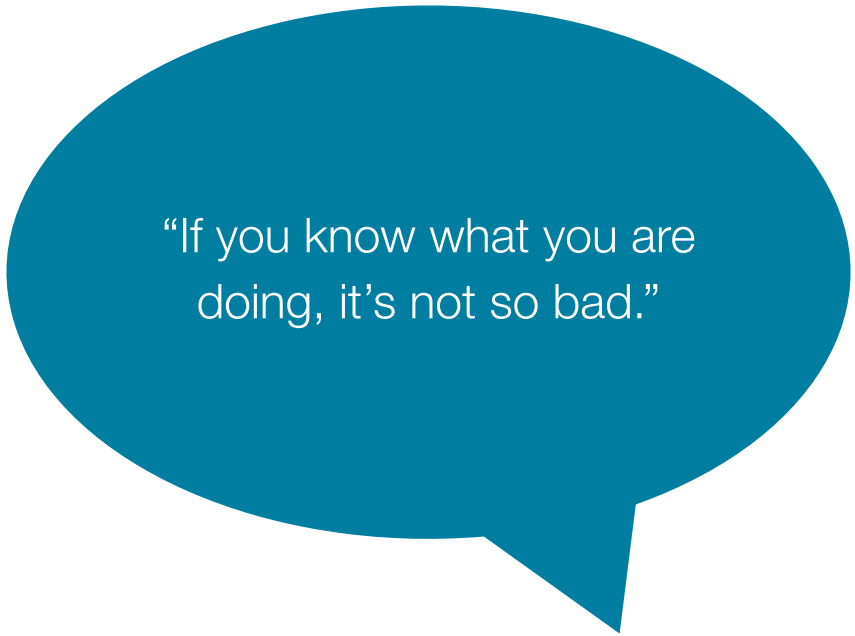
Opportunity for more open communication

"We want to adopt what they did in Westminster … look online and you know what stage it's at."

Key insights and opportunities

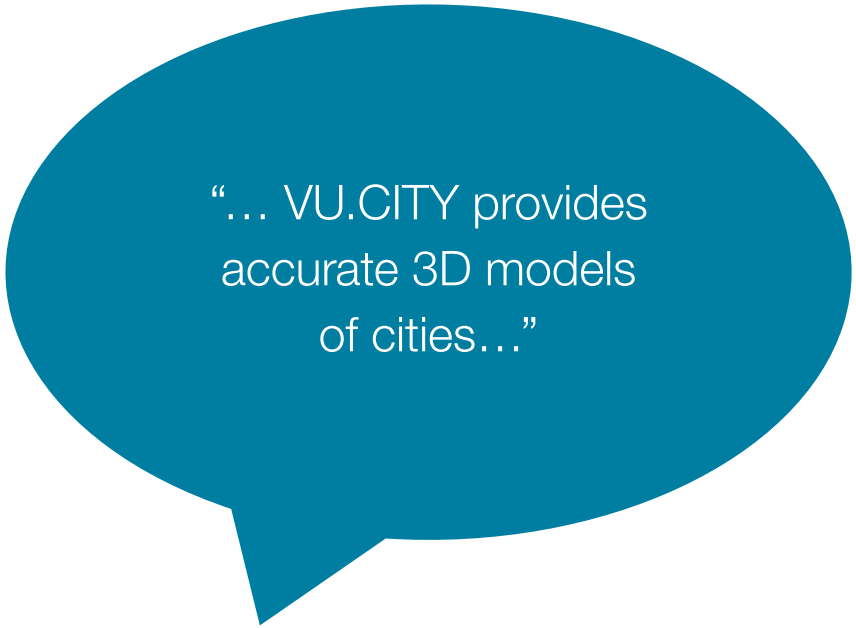
Usability of back-office system could be improved, especially for more junior staff

Opportunity to reduce learning curve & improve task management



Planners unable to take advantage of existing and future technologies

Opportunity to revamp how planning application are processed



Stakeholders

We identified a number of stakeholders of a back-office system, from both inside and outside a typical Planning Authority.

The highlighted stakeholders are those whose needs and pain points formed the focus for the discovery.

Personas and user groups

We identified four main types of users that could directly benefit from an improved back-office planning system.

We created personas to represent each group and help us clearly communicate user needs.

Technical Support Officer

Graduate Planning Officer

Planning Manager

Strategic planner

Technical Support Officer

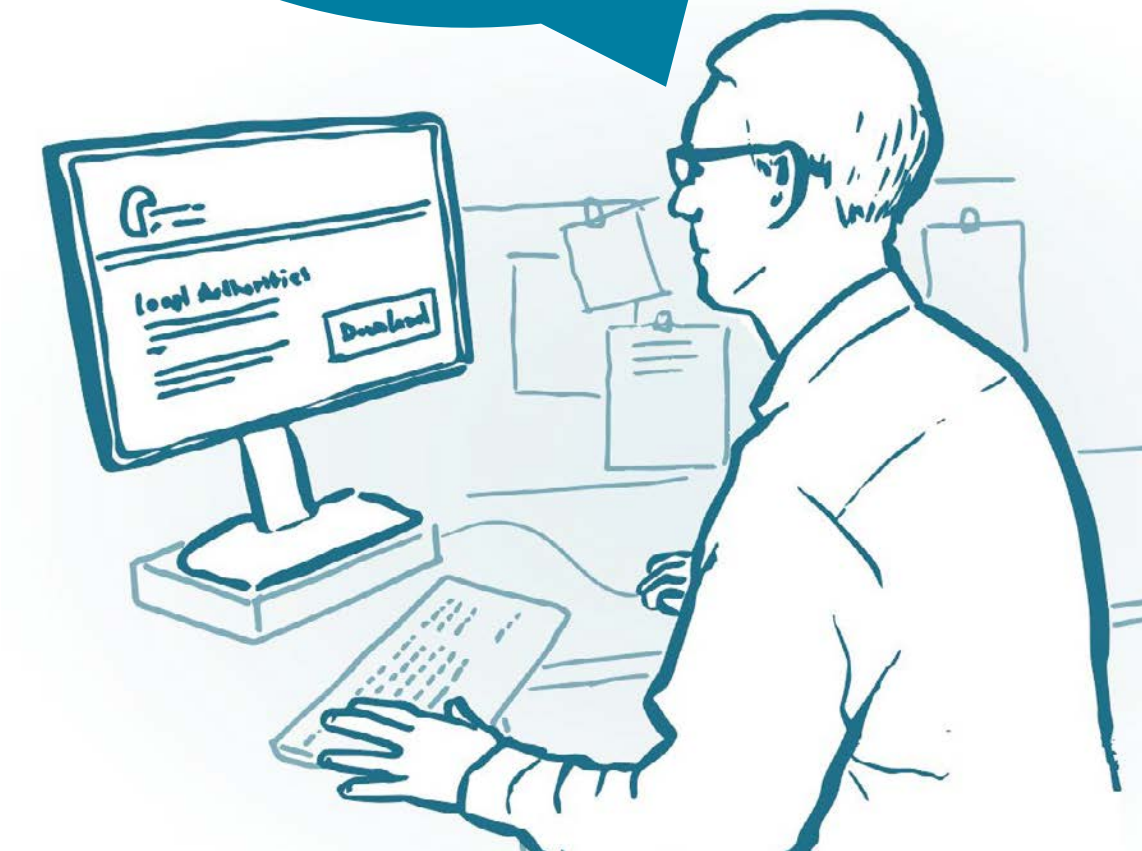
Roger is a planning technical support officer with 3 years experience. He processes planning applications coming through the Planning Portal and makes sure they are stored correctly on the system.

Roger's key responsibilities are:

- Validation – checking that applications comply with requirements
- Indexing – naming and classifying submitted documents
- Reviewing consultation responses

Roger's user need: Manual processing involved in every application could be simplified, as it's repetitive and labour intensive.

"We shouldn't be doing all this data entry. It's the same information that applicants have already loaded into the Planning Portal."



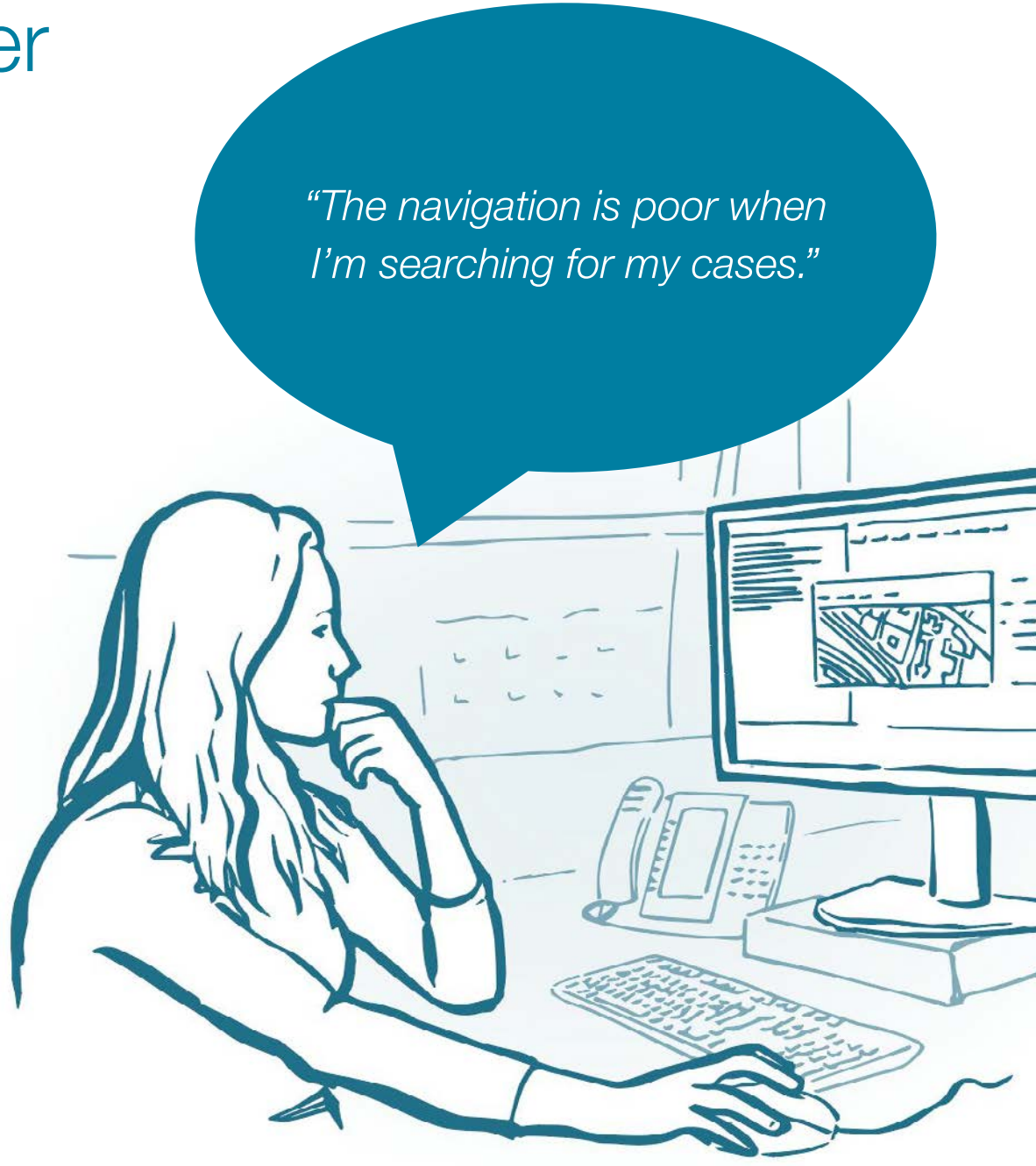
Graduate Planning Officer

Ciara is a recently graduated planning officer. She has been in post for 6 weeks and is slowly finding her feet, but her development is hampered by working with a back office system that's not very intuitive.

Ciara's key responsibilities include:

- Consultation - identifying and contacting the relevant consultees
- Assessing the application - make a site visits, reviewing relevant policies and requesti alterations if needed
- Making a recommendation and sharing the report for review

Ciara's user need: Guidance related to type of applications she is working on so she knows which factors to consider.



Planning Manager

Laura is a Team Leader overseeing a team of five Planning Officers.

She regularly sits down with Officers to review the recommendations they have made, in relation to planning applications that have assessed.

She's aware of the lengths her officers have to go through to ensure the application is in shape for review.

"If you can guarantee the accuracy of the data entry then this becomes a formality."

Laura's user need: That her team can spend more of their time working creatively with applicants & agents on producing a satisfactory outcome and less on making sure the data within the application is correct.

Strategic Planner

Ken is a strategic planner working as part of a three person team overseeing the regeneration of an inner city brownfield site.

The decisions Ken makes are informed in part from data received from applications for large scale developments, being processed by the Planning department.

Ken sometimes feels, however, that applicants try to hide things by sending impenetrable reports with barely written qualitative summaries. Ken then needs to evaluate this data and recalculate the figures, to understand the true nature of the situation.

Ken's user need: Accessing the same raw data as the applicant so that he can tabulate for his report.

User group characteristics

User group	Size	Avg. age
Technical support officers	10	48
Graduate planning officers	15	25
Senior & principal planners	23	36
Planning managers	7	46
Strategic planners	5	41
Total planning team (excl. transport planning)	**60**	**37**

Digital literacy

On average we found digital literacy to be high across all key user groups. It is common for officers to find their own workarounds for elements of their work that are not well supported by planning software.

Graduate planning officers were particularly well versed in supporting their workflow with non-legacy software, such as **google maps**, **3D apps**, etc. They were also the group with highest expectations in terms of how planning software should work and often got frustrated by unintuitive interfaces or lack of support on mobile devices.

As-is back-office journey and user stories (for simple 8-week applications)






Stages	Allocation of daily tasks	Reception	Validation	Consultation	Assessment and Alterations	Recommendation	Decision	Reporting
Actions technical support, planning officers, and managers	Track backlog and due dates Allocate cases to officers	Transfer and store files Scan and upload Send acknowledgement / receipt to applicant Index received documents Plot GIS coordinates Categorise application	Understand validation criteria Check and validate (national and local requirements) Request additional details if needed Send validation notice to applicant Publish on planning register	Identify and contact consultees Site notice Ads in local press Receive and redact consultation responses	Site visit, upload photos Review consultation responses Review relevant policies Review related cases Assess amenity factors and other considerations Request alterations if needed Extension-of-time if needed	Define application 'conditions' Write report Share report with superiors	Arrange delegation panel (single person or committee) Review proposal and recommendations Approve or reject Send decision notice	PS1 and PS2 reports for MHCLG LDD data feed

User stories

As a tech support officer
I need a way to streamline repetitive administrative tasks
so that I can work more efficiently

As a tech support officer
I need a way to consistently extract application data
so that it can be available for reporting and analysis

As an applicant / agent
I need to know where my application is in the process
so that I can better understand time-scales

As a graduate officer
I need guidance related to the type of application I am working on
so that I know which factors to consider for assessment

As a planning officer
I need easy access to relevant policies, amenity info, and related cases
so that I can produce better recommendations faster

As a planning officer
I need a way to reuse wording for recommendations from similar cases
so that I can work more efficiently

As a planning manager
I need to be confident that planning officer have made good recommendations
so that I can quickly issue a decision

As a strategic planner
I need open data about planning applications
so that I can create plans that better serve public needs

Existing back-office systems

The majority of local authorities get submissions through the **Planning Portal** and then use either **iDox Uniform** or **Northgate M3** to process the applications. Each planning authority, however, has adopted a slightly different process and configured their systems accordingly. Problems that we might encounter in one planning department might be solved by a different setup in another, despite using the same provider.

Existing IT systems currently in use by our research participants

Application submission systems

Planning Portal
iApply
Post & emailed
Hackney SMPA (future)
PlanX (future)

Back-office systems

iDox Acolaid
iDox Uniform
Northgate M3
Northgate iLAP
Agile APAS
Tascomi
Arcus
DEF Mastergov

Supporting systems

File storage
(Therefore, Info@Work, …)
Planning registers
(usually connected to back-office)
GIS (local spatial layer info)
VU.CITY

Comparison across local authorities

Differences

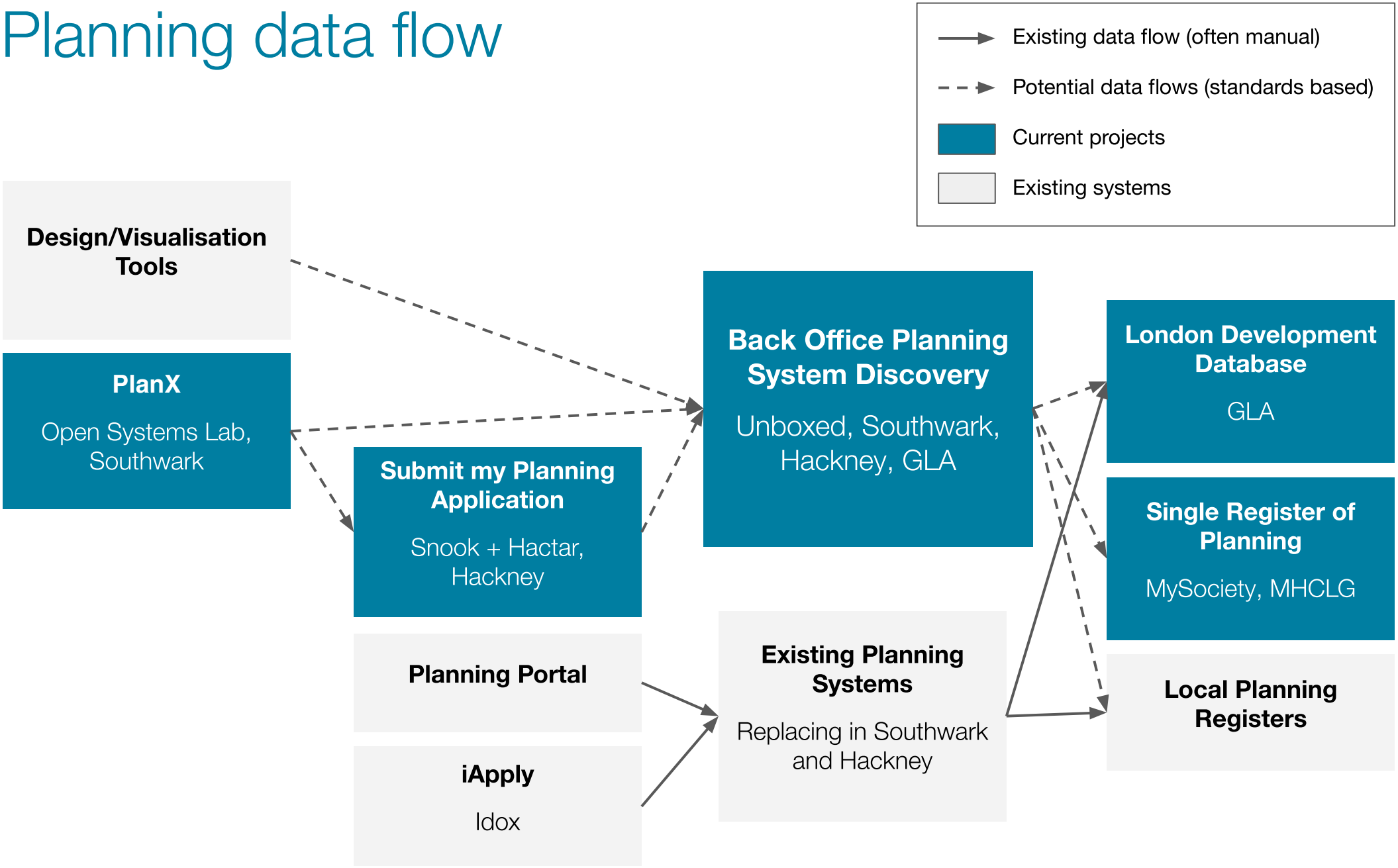
- Differences in common application types (e.g. more householder applications outside London)
- Differences in approach to enforcement
- Local communities in some boroughs are more organised, leading to participation in consultations
- Differences in team responsibilities (e.g. validation sometimes part of tech support, sometimes planning officer)
- Differences in internal IT support
- Differences in GIS data and licensing

Common patterns

- Mandated application forms and Planning Portal used for majority of application submissions
- National policy and requirements
- Classification of development types (PS1/PS2)
- High-level process stages are broadly the same
- Need for integration with other systems (e.g. payment)

Technical findings

Planning data flow



Planning data “cloud” concept

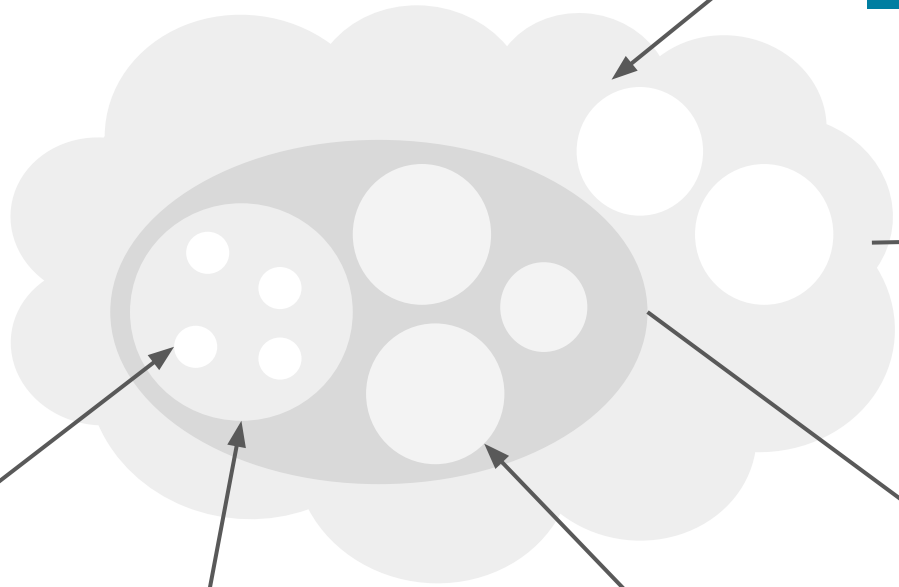
Data currently moves backwards and forwards through a series of data silos.

Data standards are being developed to improve this data flow.

We are proposing a conceptual model whereby planning data sits in a “cloud” with multiple contributors.

Data flows via APIs with varying degrees of access permission.

Communication between different parties may be integrated into data flow via email/sms/Notify.



Public
View information
Receive consultation notifications
Comment on applications
View history

MHCLG
Extract national data

GLA
Extract London data

Applicants
Submit info
View progress
Receive requests
Update info

Direct, PlanX, Planning Portal, Hackney SmPA, Other 3rd Parties

Council Planning Team
Validate submission
Request info
Submit comments
Update progress
Post decision
Manage conditions

Statutory consultees
Receive notifications
Comment on applications

Data standards

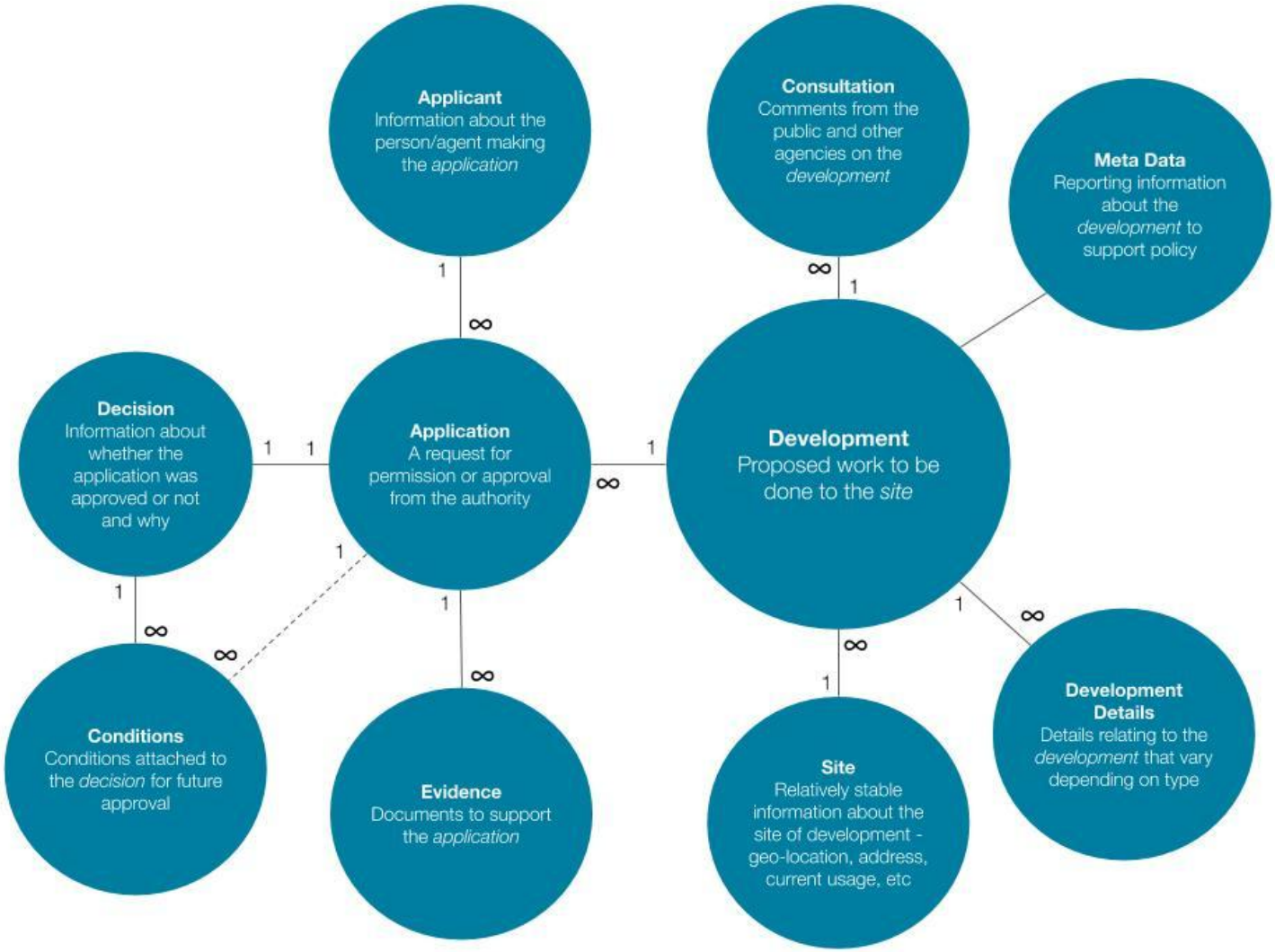
There is currently lots of activity around planning data standards with a great deal of overlap between the various projects.

There is a healthy dialogue amongst the different teams working on these projects and a strong drive towards alignment.

Back office systems are an essential factor in the flow of data from pre-application to national reporting.

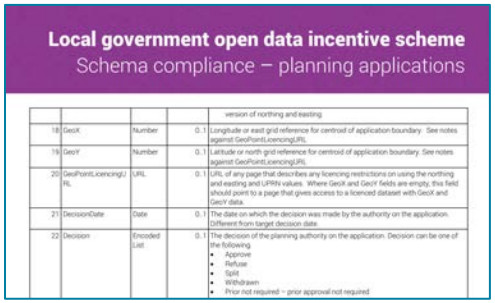
We have identified the high level data entities required.

As this project develops, we will continue to participate in this dialogue and ensure that our system supports the emerging standards.



Standardising data

List of projects currently concerned with the standardisation of planning data in the UK

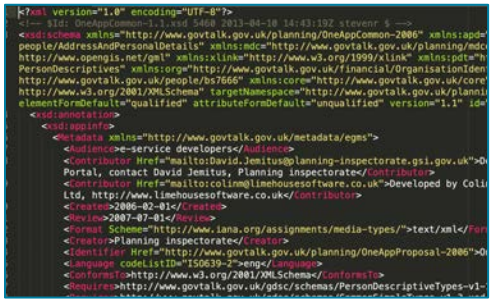


Open data incentive scheme

An attempt to standardise planning data from 2013-2015

Not widely adopted

Local government, Hampshire council

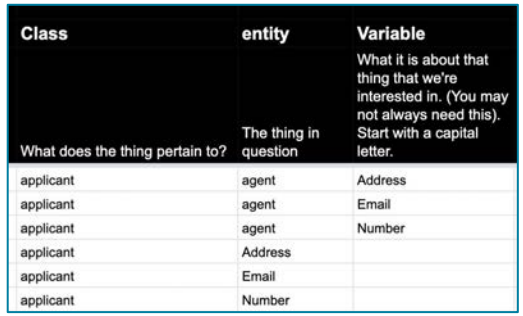


1App

Planning portal's schema

Imported into the various back office systems used by LAs

Planning portal



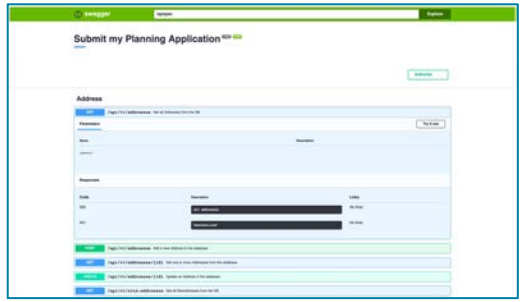
Class What does the thing pertain to?	entity The thing in question	Variable What it is about that thing that we're interested in. (You may not always need this). Start with a capital letter.
applicant	agent	Address
applicant	agent	Email
applicant	agent	Number
applicant	Address	
applicant	Email	
applicant	Number	

PlanX

"Passport" schema mapping planning policy to data variables

Open Systems Labs, Southwark

https://beta.planx.uk/_default



Submit my Planning Application

Schema based on the householder application process

Snook & Hactar, Hackney

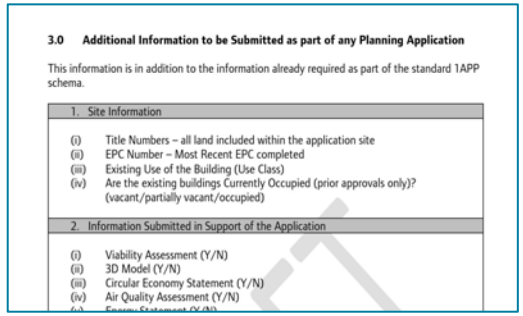
http://smpa.hactar.is/#show

Single Register of Planning

"Design pattern" for LAs to report to the National Planning Register

MySociety, MHCLG

https://digital-land.github.io/project/single-register-of-planning/



GLA Planning Data Standard

Data needed to inform and monitor London policy

GLA

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/updated_non_technical_planning_data_standard.pdf

Design principles

Design principles for a new back-office planning system

1 Ensure a sustainable agile team to support implementation

Create a service using the agile, iterative and user-centred methods set out in the Government Service Design Manual.

2 Use open standards and data

Use open standards, and where possible make service data open and reusable under appropriate licenses.

3 Adopt a connected systems approach

A back-office planning system is only valuable as part of the larger planning ecosystem and it should be designed to benefit from it and to support it.

4 Design for better public information and community involvement

Plans are designed to create better living spaces for everyone so we should enabling the public to participate in this process.

5 Make it visual

Planners rely on visual information, such as plans, 3D models, and GIS layers. Use these visual tools whenever possible to aid assessment of applications.

6 Show relevant information informed by data and context of use

We can assist users of planning systems by showing only information relevant to the specific case that an officer is currently assessing.

7 Empower teams by streamlining repetitive tasks

Repetitive tasks could be automated or supported by reusable content (e.g. templates).

8 Design for flexibility and variation across local authorities

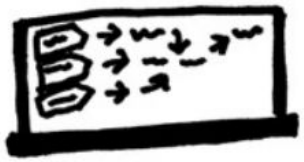
Different teams do things differently. Where possible, allow individuals and teams to adapt the system to their preferred way of working.

Proposed service concepts

Concept development – the Design Sprint method

We adopted a condensed version of the Google Venture Design Sprint method for concept development. This normally consists of an intense 5-day collaboration of a multi-disciplinary team. As our dicsovery work already covered some of the high level strategic questions, we were able to trim this down while still ensuring we followed all the necesary steps.

1 → 2 → 3 → 4 → 5



Define

Explore problem area and define opportunities through ‘How Might We’ questions

Sketch

Strucutred ideation by exploring ideas from other services and sketching new concepts

Decide

Work as a group to decide which concepts should form part of the prototype

Prototype

Build a prototype as a team. The aim is to make something that looks like and feels like almost real

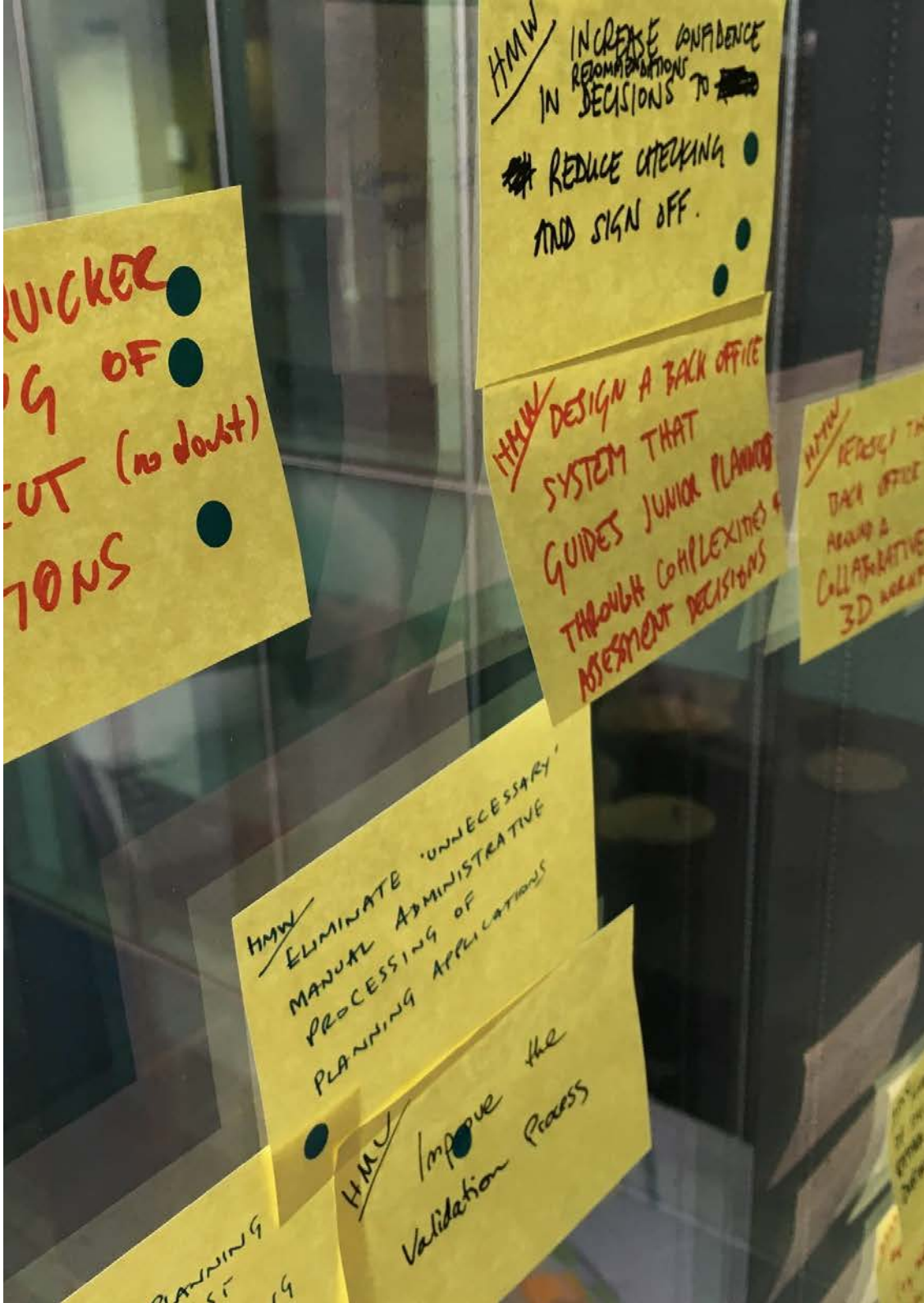
Test

Test with a number of users and collect feedback to inform further decisions

Five opportunity areas identified

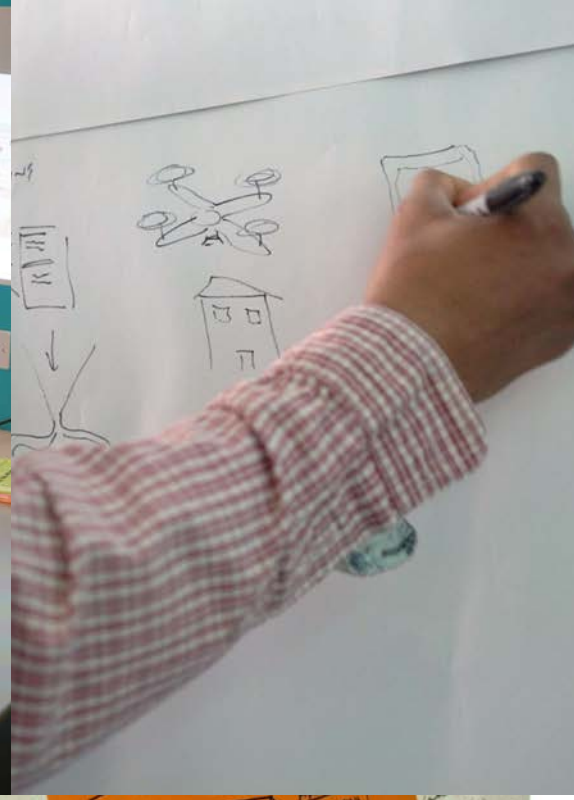
Following insight synthesis, the team has identified five key opportunity areas. “How might we…”:

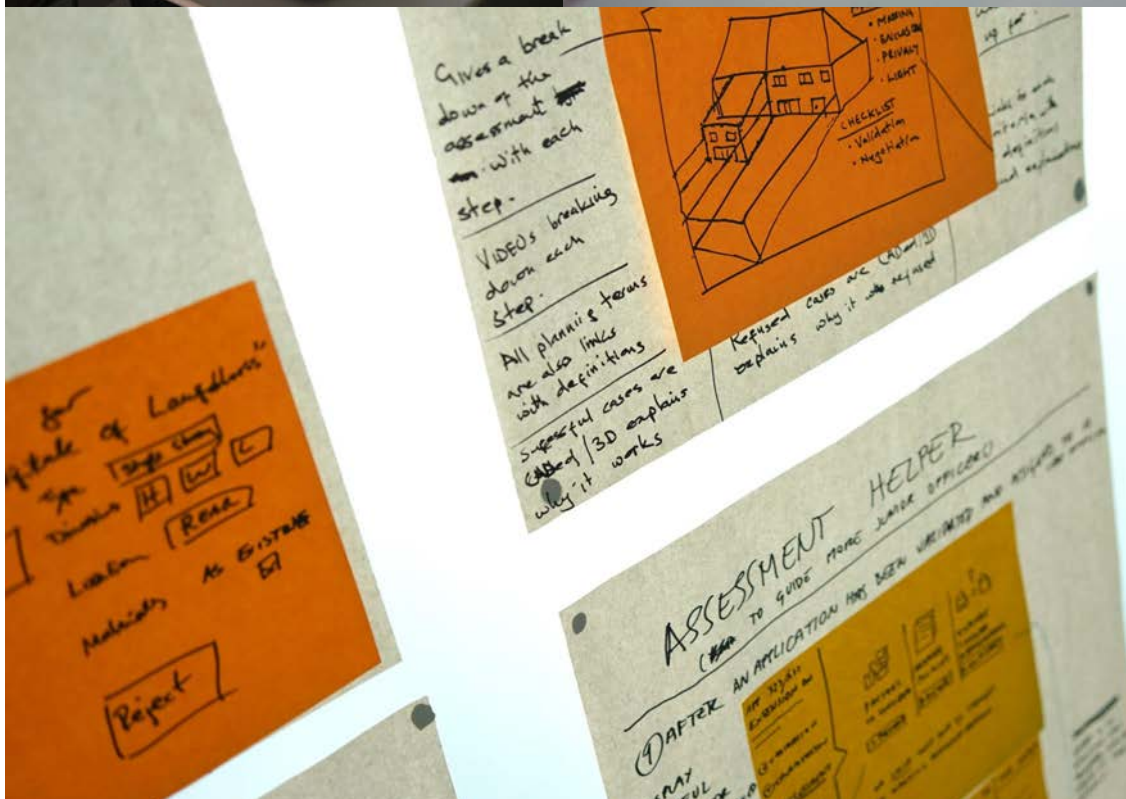
- Enable quicker processing of clear-cut applications?
- Reduce "unnecessary" manual administrative processing (e.g. validation)?
- Increase confidence in recommendations to reduce checking and sign off (e.g. system with better guidance for junior officers)?
- Redesign the back officer around a collaborative 3D workflow?
- Make the status of applications more visible to applicants and increased dialogue?



Co-designing with users

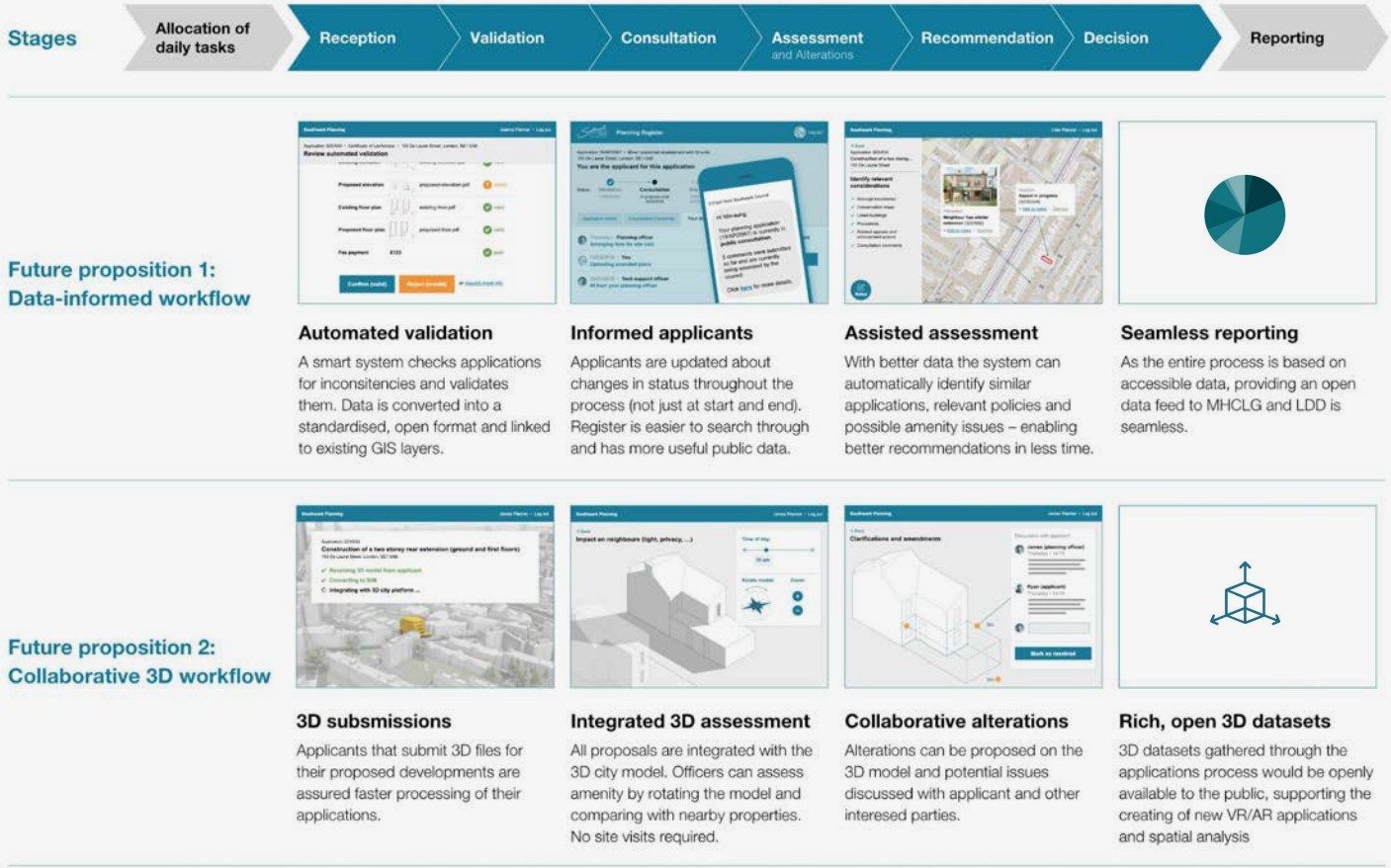
The team arranged for Planning Officers within the Southwark Council team to participate in a co-design sketching workshop, where a number of different concepts were created in response to the “How might we?” opportunities.





Prototyping propositions

We packaged the concepts from the sketching workshop as two separate propositions and created high-level prototypes for testing.



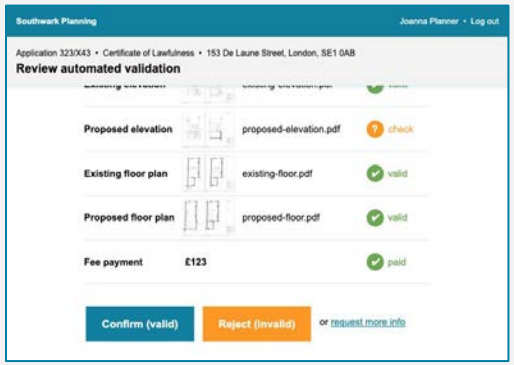
Proposition 1 Data-informed workflow

Structured data from new submission systems is seamlessly integrated into the new back-office system, enabling a data-driven workflow that benefits applicants, case officers, and strategic planners alike.

Benefits:

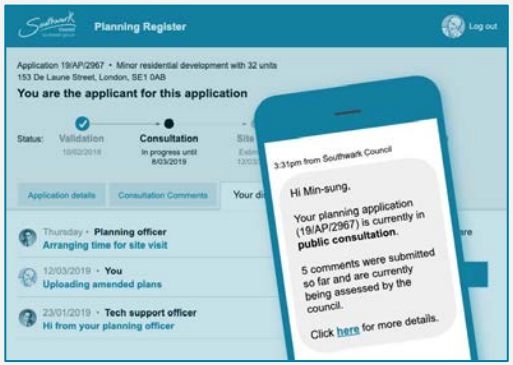
- Reduced time spent on repetitive tasks
- More-consistent recommendations, requiring fewer checks by senior officers
- Better data for strategic planners and policy makers

Imagined future scenario



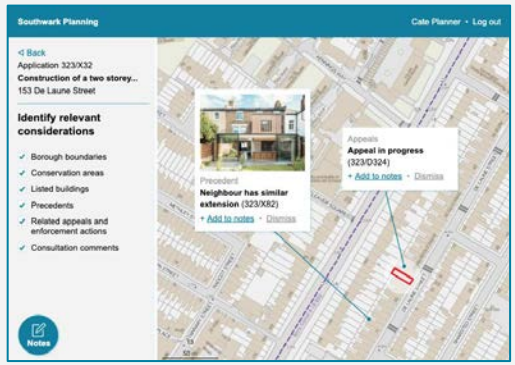
Automated validation

A smart system checks applications for inconsistencies and validates them. Data is converted into a standardised, open format and linked to existing GIS layers.



Informed applicants

Applicants are updated about changes in status throughout the process (not just at start and end). Register is easier to search through and has more useful public data.



Assisted assessment

With better data the system can automatically identify similar applications, relevant policies and possible amenity issues – enabling better recommendations in less time.

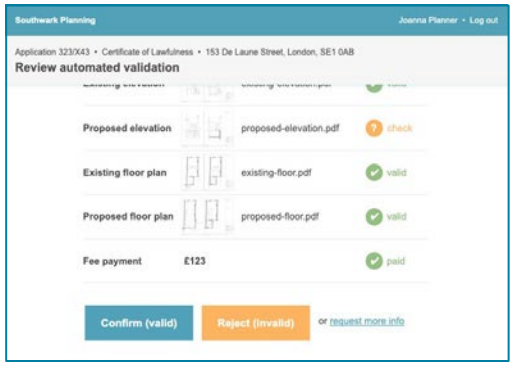
Seamless reporting

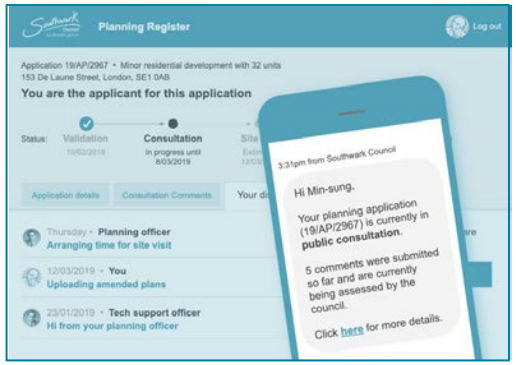
As the entire process is based on accessible data, providing an open data feed to MHCLG and LDD is seamless.

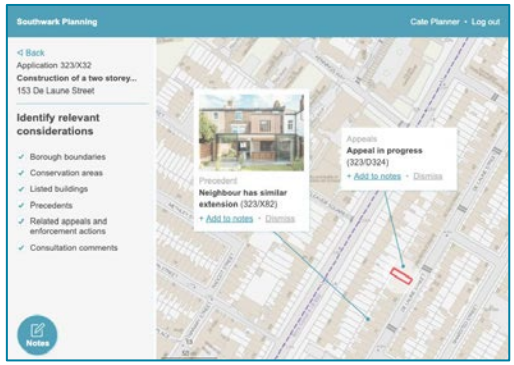
Proposition 1 Data-informed workflow: user feedback

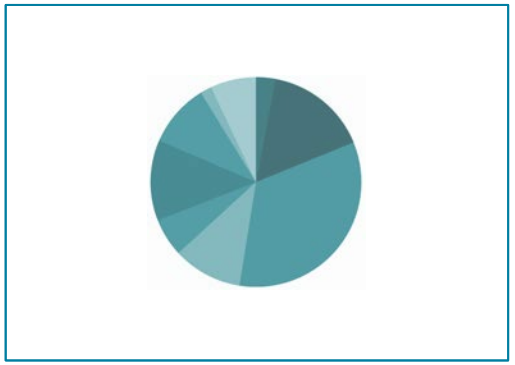
"This will streamline so many applications."

"This would be very helpful for a junior planner... particularly comparing with similar applications is quite useful."









"It would probably reduce the number of unnecessary resident enquiries."

"Currently data has to be entered manually into the Government portal"

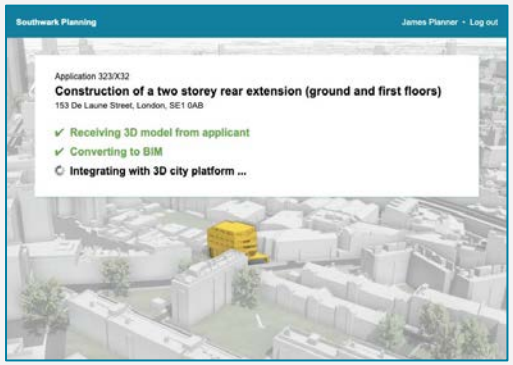
Proposition 2 Collaborative 3D workflow

A future-oriented workflow where an openly available 3D city plan is co-created through new planning applications that include submissions of 3D models.

Benefits:

- Reduced need for site visits
- Better tracking of changes and alterations
- Co-created, open 3D city dataset

Imagined future scenario

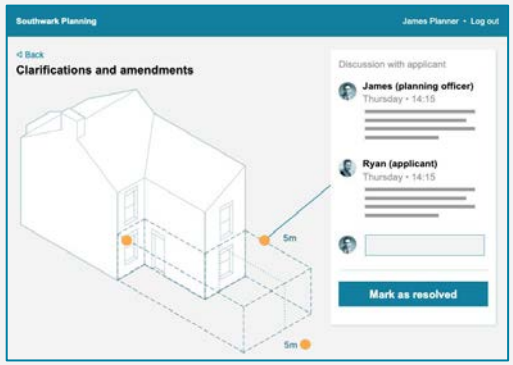


3D submissions

Applicants that submit 3D files for their proposed developments are assured faster processing of their applications.

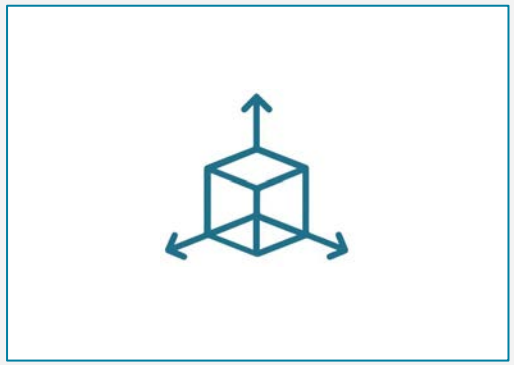
Integrated 3D assessment

All proposals are integrated with the 3D city model. Officers can assess amenity by rotating the model and comparing with nearby properties. No site visits required.



Collaborative alterations

Alterations can be proposed on the 3D model and potential issues discussed with applicant and other interested parties.



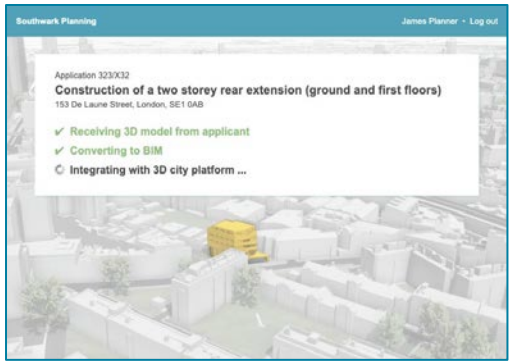
Rich, open 3D datasets

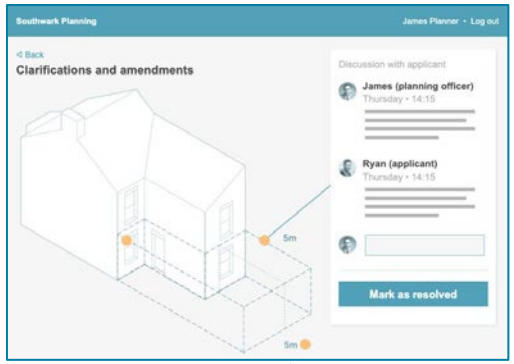
3D datasets gathered through the applications process would be openly available to the public, supporting the creation of new VR/AR applications and spatial analysis.

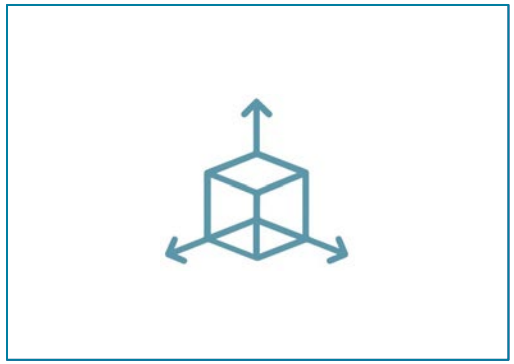
Proposition 2 Collaborative 3D workflow: user feedback

"It's difficult getting planner to name 2D files correctly. Trying to get them to submit 3D stuff would take time."

"That's brilliant, requesting amendments and indicating where the requested amendment is."







"This would save us a lot of time and hassle."

"...It gives a more streamlined interaction with the applicant."

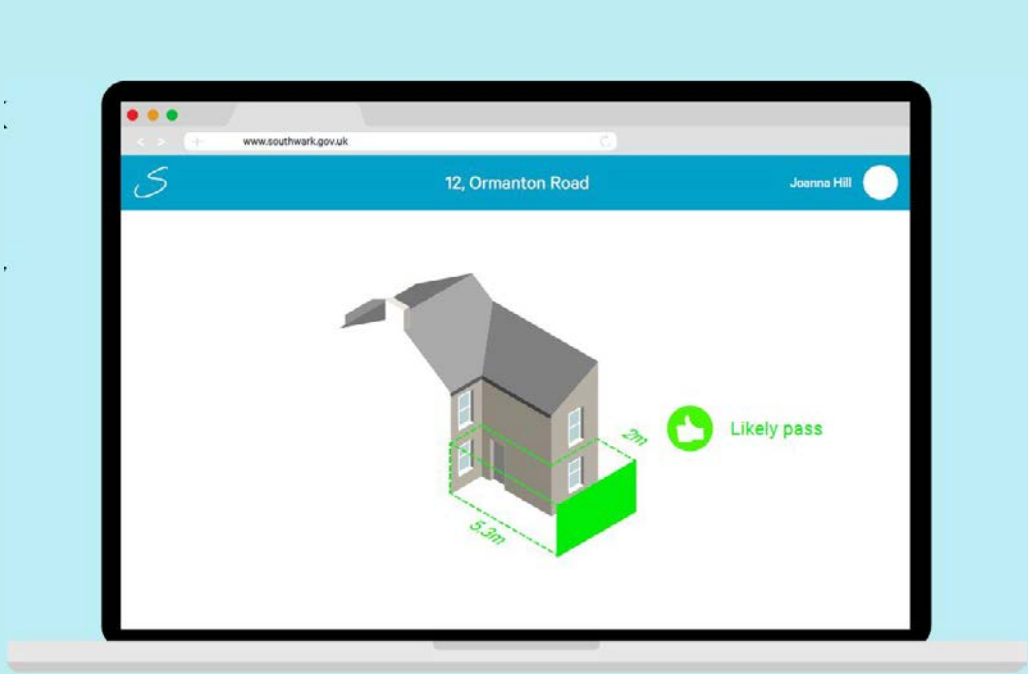
Proposition 2 Collaborative 3D workflow: feasibility

A 3D workflow is not as far off as it might sound.

For the last few years Southwark have been working with OSL on the Plan^X service and Wagstaffs on the VU.CITY 3D platform.

In Plan^X it will be easily possible for an applicant to create a stand alone model of their proposal. By working in combination with VU.CITY, this can be inserted into a contextual model of London.

This will allow case officers and residents to view the proposal from any position and any time of day. It will allow better assessment of the visual impact, including daylight and shadowning.

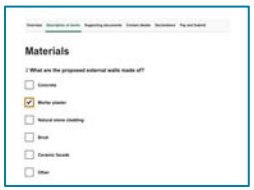


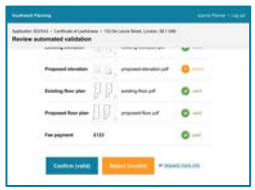
Recommendations

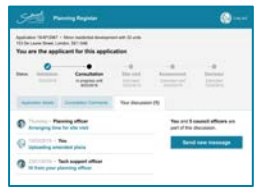
Proposed alpha phase

Exploring an end-to-end MVP service for “simple” 8-week applications, starting with householder applications/certificates, and then minor applications.

Submission	Reception	Validation	Consultation	Assessment	Recommendation	Decision	Reporting
Hackney SMPA integration	Automated document indexing	Validation checklist	Visible on register	Application specific checklists	Structured comments	Clear audit trail	Auto-generated metadata
PlanX integration	Document display/preview	Relevant policy information	Gather consultee feedback	Clear timelines	Automated report generation	One click approval	Reporting APIs
Application API	Automated data extraction	Smart suggestions	Progress indicator/timeline	Relevant policy information	Smart recommendations		
		Automated validation	Applicant notifications	Related applications (historical data)			
				Guidance documents and videos			



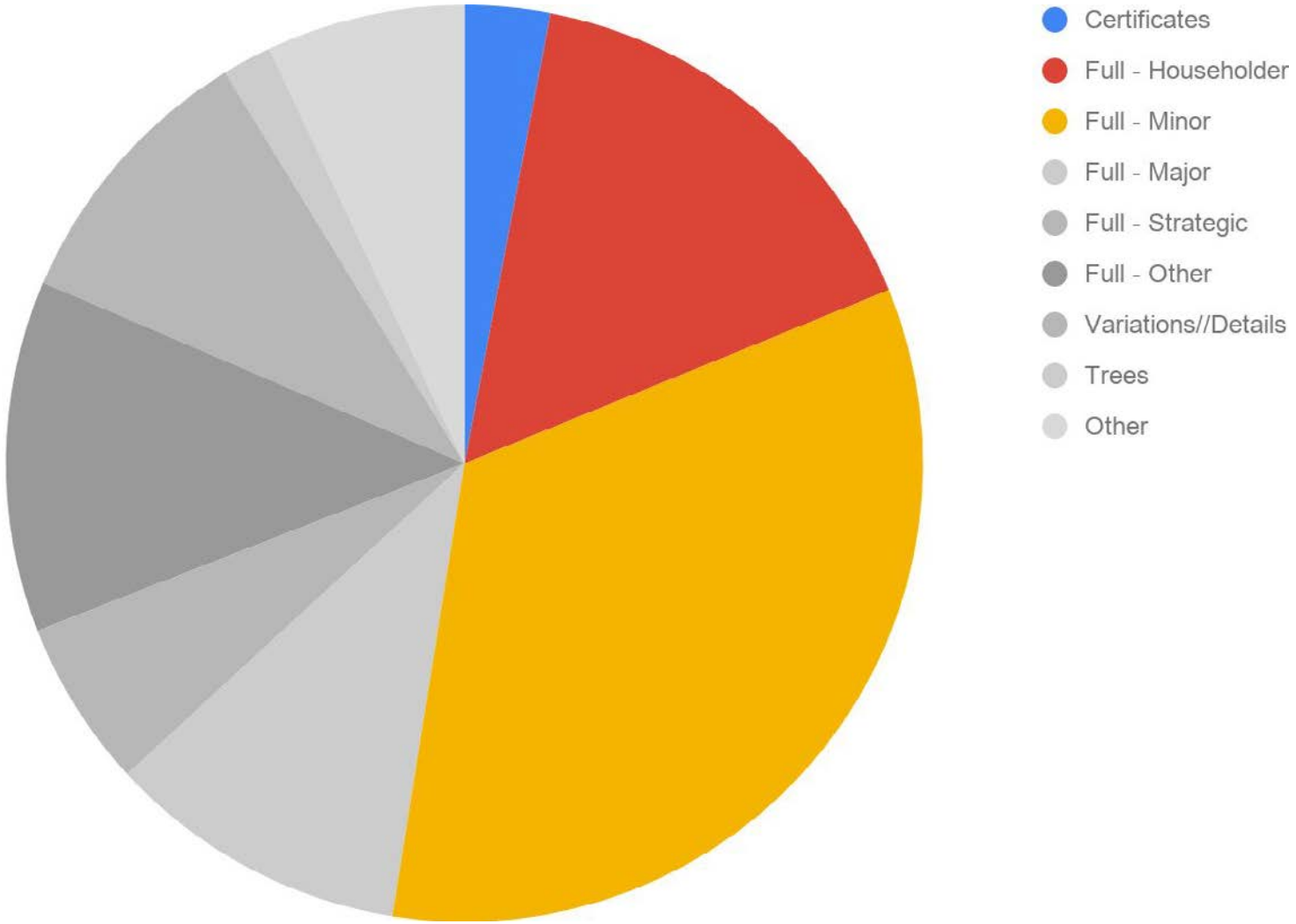


Focus for MVP

- “Simple (8-week)” applications account for over 50% of Planning Officer time

- Creating an MVP back-office system to improve the processing of these applications could significantly reduce that time



Out of current scope

User facing application interfaces - will be left to other teams and projects but monitored and integrated

Large scale strategic and major developments - more complex but will naturally follow MVP

Building control - an essential part of the journey and ripe for integration but currently out of scope

Proposed roadmap

Possible plan to develop system and integrate with other projects.

	19/20	20/21	21/22	Beyond
Number of Councils	3	3	10	50+
MVP Alpha and Beta Establish end-to-end MVP service for “simple” applications • Improved workflow for Planning Office • Integrate with **Hackney SMPA** • Provide reporting API for **GLA** and **MHCLG** • Simple public register using **Open Data Standard**				
Full Service Build Discovery, Alpha and Beta to establish full service • Process all application types • Integrate with **PlanX** and others • **Open API** for other third party applications				
Live Service Ongoing enhancements to the service and rollout to other councils • Business development • Product management • Customer support				

Team makeup for alpha phase

For the alpha phase, Unboxed recommends the following core team structure:

- **Product Owner**
- **Senior Service Designer**
- **Technical Lead**
- **User Researcher**
- **User Experience / User Interface Designer**
- **Developer**
- **Developer**
- **Delivery Manager**

How do we measure success?

Processing time

We have limited data on the time spent processing applications but we believe it could be significantly reduced. Slide 49 gives some estimates, but this is difficult to measure without careful activity tracking. Not a unique problem, Arup have recently been commissioned to look at the subject of processing times, across the UK. These results will help inform our measure of success.

Valid applications

Applications frequently pass through the validation process but are found to be invalid at the assessment stage. Baseline data is limited and can't be quantified, but this should be reduced.

Lapsed time

Whilst the acceptable time between valid application and decision is mandated at 8 or 13 weeks, we believe this could be reduced if internal processes allow. Time extension requests should be reduced.

Recommendation approval rates

Better baseline data is needed but qualitative research suggests Officer's decisions are often challenged by management. Better supporting information could reduce this.

User satisfaction

Planning Officers find existing systems unreliable, inconsistent and inflexible and software providers unresponsive. This should be monitored continuously by the product team.

Participation of other councils

The business case for the system is dependent on the participation of many councils both in the development of the system and its implementation. Whilst we engaged with ten councils as part of the discovery, many others have contacted the team via Twitter and Slack.

Customer satisfaction

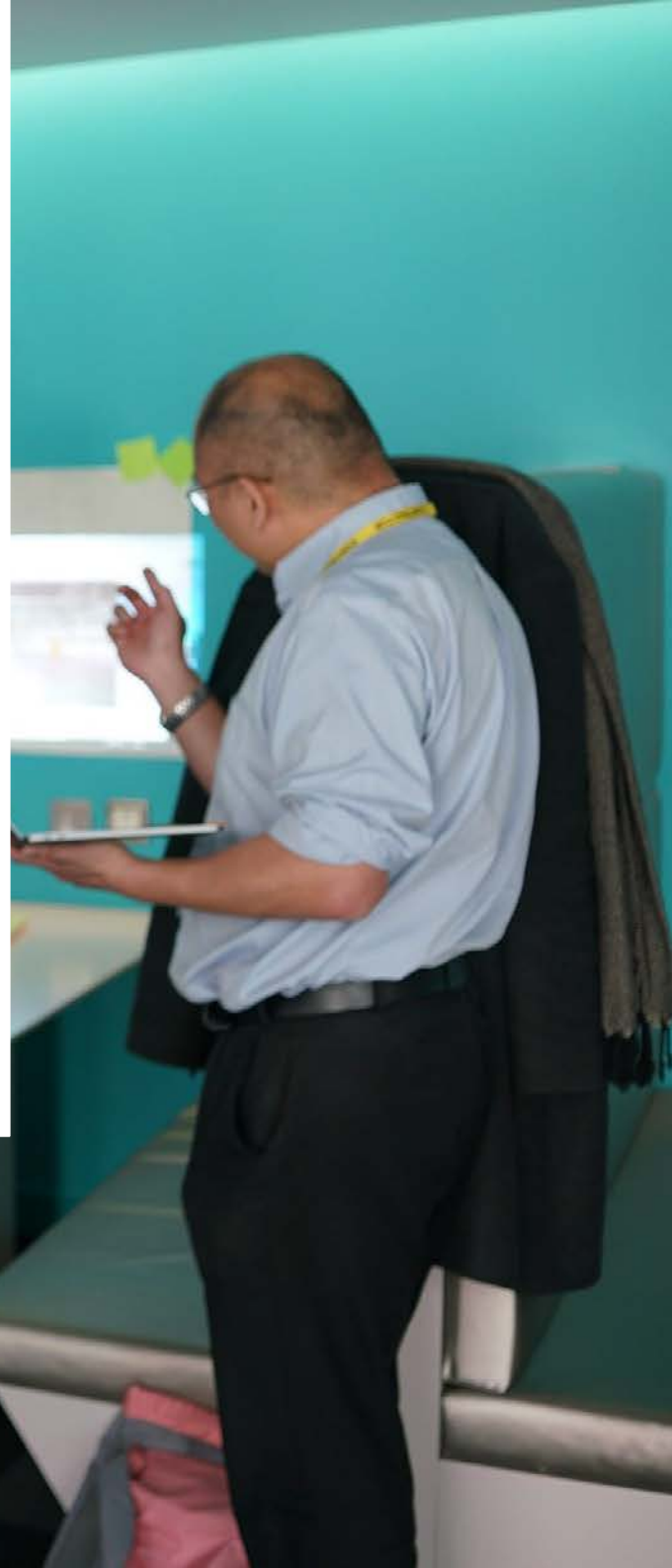
Although public interaction with the system will be limited, the improvements in efficiency and transparency should improve the experience of the applicant, resulting in fewer application queries and complaints. public experience will be monitored by feedback tools on the council's website.

Service assessment

On Thursday 25th April 2019, this discovery phase was assessed against the Local Government Digital Service Standard, by a panel of three assessors from Greater London Authority and Government Digital Service.

Following the assessment, the phase has **met** each applicable point of the service standard, passing the assessment. The report will be made available on the LocalGovDigital website, week beginning 29th April 2019.

The discovery phase research documents have also been published on the User Research Library.



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