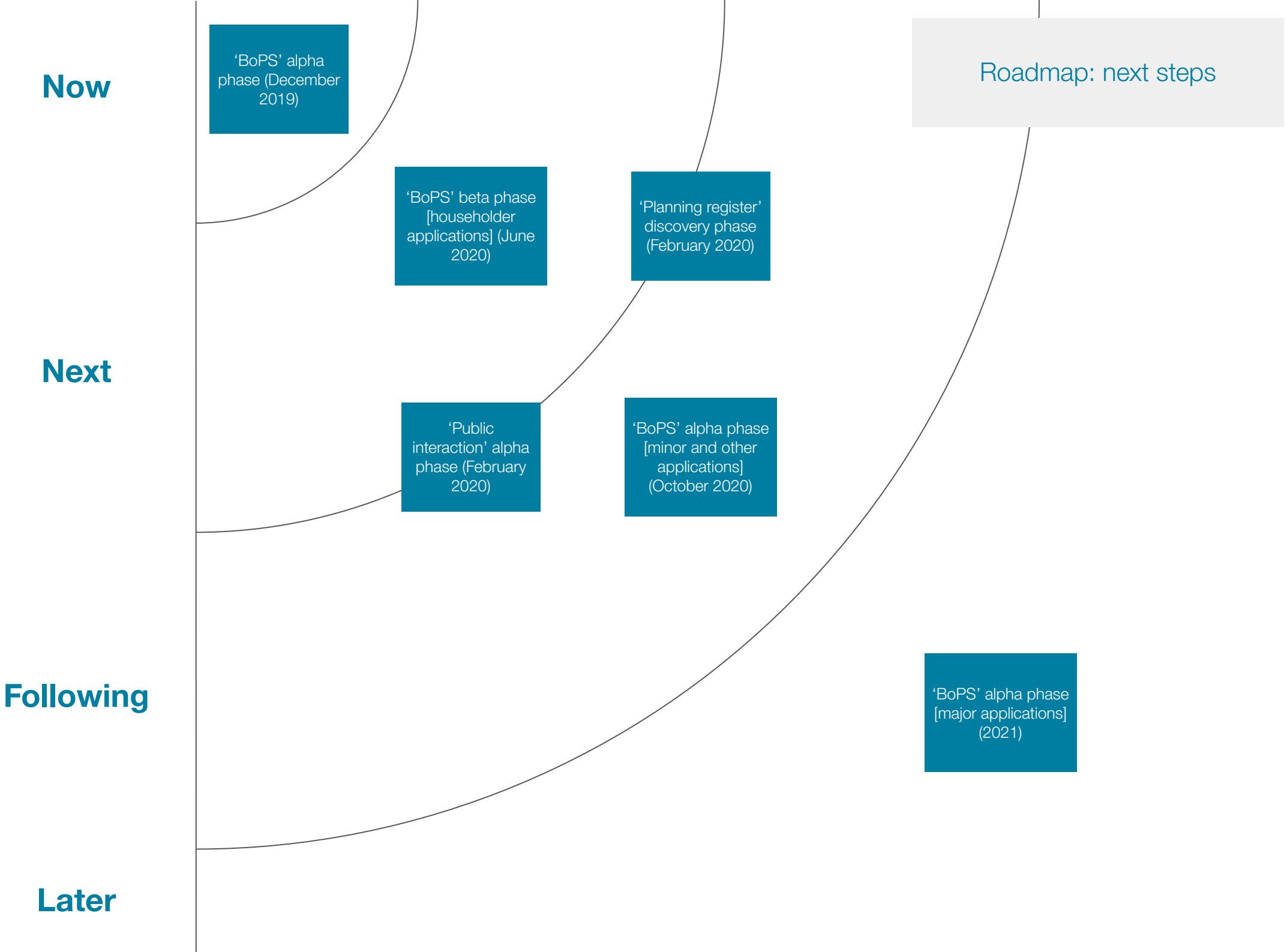
Recommended next steps

Roadmap: next steps



Next steps

1. ‘BoPS’ beta phase (householder applications)

Building on the BoPS alpha to develop a user-friendly MVP service that makes it quicker and easier for Planning Officers to assess and make recommendations on householder applications for full planning permission and/or certificates of lawfulness, and for Planning Managers to review officer assessments and make their final recommendations.

2. ‘Planning register and consultation’ discovery phase

A discovery phase for exploring the future user need of a planning register for members of the public to find, understand and comment on local planning applications that might impact them and explore how BoPS can feed the latest planning application data onto this public-facing register.

Next steps

3. ‘Public interaction’ alpha phase

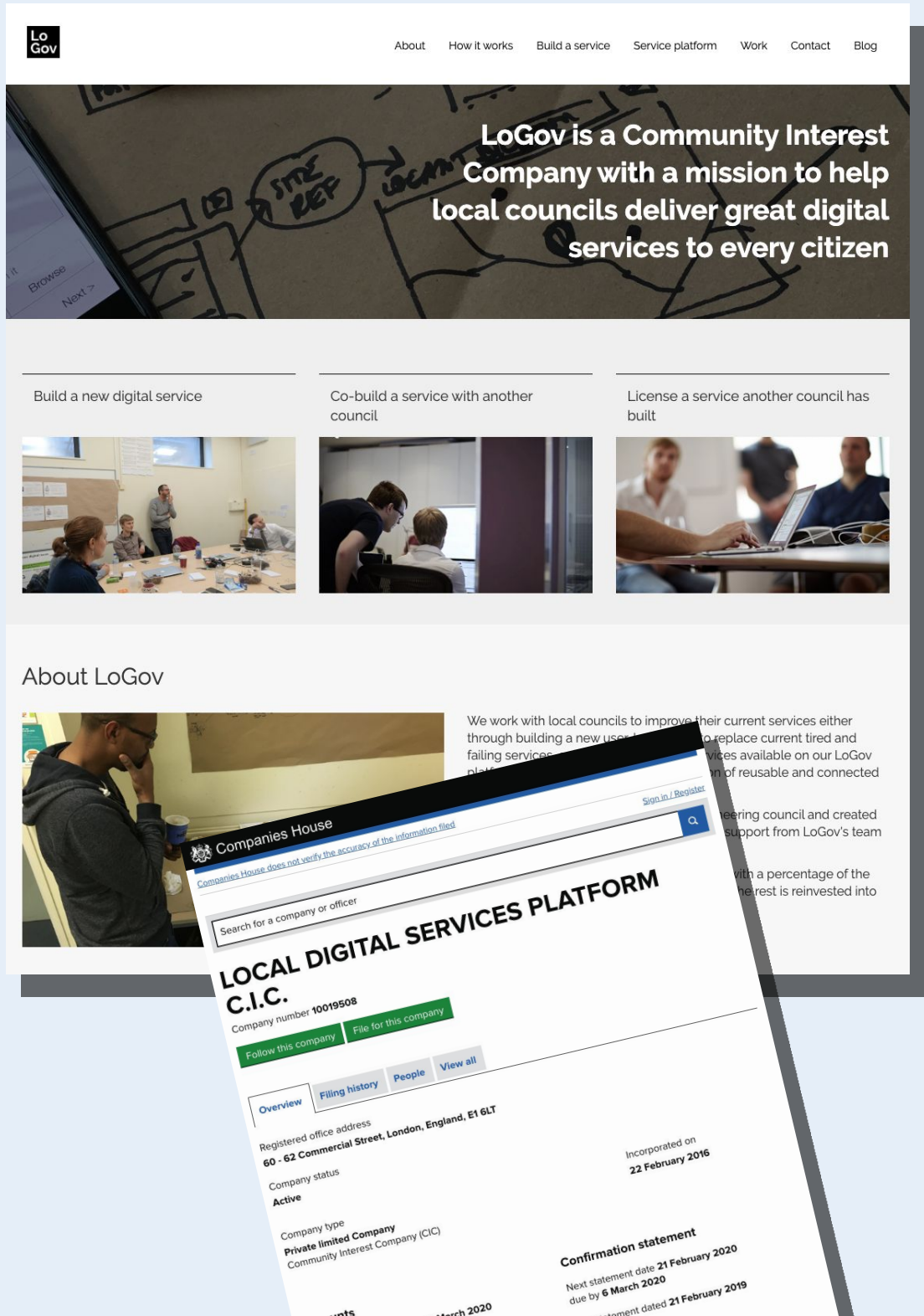
An alpha phase to prototype concepts that will enable planning officers to quickly and more easily identify and contact all of the right people that need to be consulted about a planning application, and collect and share consultation feedback without having to manually redact personal information.

4. ‘BoPS’ alpha phase (minor and other applications)

Building on previous BoPS research and projects of assessing householder applications to prototype the additional steps that would be required for planning officers to be able to assess minor and other non-householder applications.

Operation of BoPS platform

- By 2030, the BoPS platform aims to be in use within 100 councils
- Local government may not currently have people with the required skills to deliver this platform but capability is growing and “ownership” should remain within the public sector with the support of digital specialists from the private sector
- Significant ongoing investment (OPEX rather than CAPEX) will be required to establish and maintain the BoPS platform if it is to evolve to meet the changing demands of the sector
- An existing or newly formed Community Interest Company may be an appropriate vehicle around which to coalesce this team and deliver the BoPS platform going forward
- The Local Digital Services Platform C.I.C. (LoGov Platform) was established in 2016 to meet the need for better digital services in local government and may be an appropriate vehicle
- Either LoGov Platform or a newly formed C.I.C. should appoint a board from across local government and adopt the principles declared by the Local Digital Declaration



Technical recommendations

Development

Aligned with the GDS Service Standard, the technical development of BoPS will be through open source technologies (Ruby on Rails, Python), ensuring open sharing and application reusability across local authorities.

Hosting

To operate a reliable service, BoPS will be hosted using cloud-based hosting and infrastructure (Amazon Web Services, Heroku), ensuring scalable, cost-effective and secure hosting.

Assisted digital and accessibility

Assisted digital channels

Access to non-digital channels will be dependent on the individual authorities adopting the BoPS system. Recommended assisted digital channels include email, phone number and postal address of the local authority planning department responsible for processing applications.

Future accessibility testing

Future accessibility testing recommendations in the beta phase include ongoing user testing with a wide range of accessibility users (including users with motor, visual and learning impairments).

During the private beta phase, a formal accessibility audit should be carried out before entering into the public beta phase.