



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

## PropTech Engagement Fund Round 1

### Final Report

April 2022



# STOCKPORT

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Local Planning Authority</b>	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
<b>Date</b>	28/04/2022
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Theme 2:</b> Plan-making Process: Regulation 19

# Story Maps – Final Report

## Introduction

This report sets out to detail the approach that Stockport Council took in using funding from the PropTech Engagement Fund to develop a digital engagement tool. It summarises the projects aim, community engagement, development/implementation, procurement and the conclusions that we have come to as a result of these activities, as well as the lessons that we have learned as a consequence of the digital engagement pilot.

## PROJECT AIM

### Ambition and Desired Outcomes

From our bid, Stockport Council (SMBC) set out to develop and test an enhanced mapping tool that would bring our Local Plan to life. We wanted to develop new learning to build on our open source web mapping stack, Leaflet. We wanted to develop a consultation portal within the map itself, allowing people to more easily explore and comment on specific aspects of the local plan during consultation.

Our ambition came as a result from feedback from residents that inaccessible information has been a barrier to engagement; from young people that interactive formats are more understandable; and from our Borough Plan process that visually engaging information increases levels of engagement.

The funding was used to build capacity, leverage existing tools and embed learning within our development team.

The learning we acquired will be shared with other councils and the code placed on GitHub as a resource readily available to other LA development teams to customise to their own needs.

### Focus of Consultation

In the initial bid SMBC noted that we would be going out to consultation on a draft local plan in February 2022. Public consultation on the draft preferred plan will now take place in autumn 2022. We took this opportunity to continue the conversation with our Stakeholders about the Local Plan and the upcoming consultation on the draft local plan.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

### Summary

Story maps is an interactive mapping tool that the council has developed with the aim of complementing the formal consultation process and to increase engagement.

We want people to access the map via the Local Plan webpage and have the Story Maps guide them through aspects of the draft local plan. Through a combined approach of text which we have called the narrative and visual mapping data using our open source web mapping stack, Leaflet. They will then be able to provide an informed comment through the 'Make a comment' section in the map. This information will then be collected in a data list and be captured as feedback.

The aim is to capture the voice of more people who are deterred by traditional consultation efforts but whose voice is important in shaping the future of the borough.

The link to Story maps can be found in the following link - [Welcome to Story maps - Stockport Council](#)

## Opportunities

Story Maps has allowed us to test a new interactive map with residents and continue our conversation with our Stakeholders regarding the Local Plan. Engagement has already been taking place through our initial key principles stage<sup>1</sup> of the overall plan, but this pilot has given us further opportunities to speak with our communities, keeping the conversation going and enabling us to speak with new faces and focus our attentions on the harder to reach areas of the community, all whilst reinforcing our strong relationships built from our previous endeavours.

Story Maps has created an opportunity for us to build a broad project team and work with colleagues from across the council; in different directorates; further building on our collaborative capabilities.

## Funding review

In comparison with other local authorities, SMBC decided that we would enhance internal capability and understanding, but utilise funding to appoint short term contractor staff to expand on our expertise in developing the Story maps product. We recognised that we had a skills gap in relation to UX design, so utilised some of the funding to appoint an external specialist contractor to lead on this area.

Based on previous projects, SMBC anticipated the total £90,000 of funding in the bid, and whilst there has been re-profiling of spends between the different elements of development identified in the bid, we have been able to achieve our objectives within the identified funding envelope.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

### Outreach Methods

Over the month of March 2022, we conducted a total of 9 ‘test and learn’ sessions all with the aim of showcasing what we had built with Story maps and using that opportunity to have attendees test the product and provide feedback

The sessions were completed via both MS Teams and, where possible and suitable, face to face in the community. Sessions usually lasted between 45 minutes to an hour. Regardless of the means of communication, sessions followed a similar format. They started with general introductions followed by an explanation of why we were there; this led to an open discussion about local planning and a quick measure on their understanding on the subject matter. Following that there was a presentation/walkthrough of the Story Maps tool, explaining the different elements which made up the tool. We then invited attendees to test out the product and have them provide comments on their experiences of using it.

As part of a wider engagement piece to the residents of Stockport, we published 2 press releases at the beginning and at the end of the project to raise awareness with the public of what we were planning on doing and what we had done as part of this project. They can be found in Appendix 2 – Press release 1 published on 29th October 2021 and Appendix 3 – Press release published on 29th March 2022

## Lessons Learned

### Challenges you had to overcome

The engagement plan had to run alongside the development of the Story Maps and we wanted to have the most robust product possible in order to get the best feedback, coupled with the short timescales of the project, this led to several date changes for the engagement phase to start.

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<sup>1</sup> [A Plan For Stockport, By Stockport - Stockport Metropolitan Borough Citizen Space - Citizen Space](#)

When designing the engagement plan, there was an assumption that the council had several log in profiles for an engagement tool to gather quantitative feedback, this turned out to be the case and the log ins were being used in other engagement activity elsewhere in the council. This led to further development of future features of the Story Maps, and it developed our approach to the test and learn sessions opting to take a more qualitative focus on feedback by having open discussion and using Google Jamboards for general comment to use as talking points in the sessions.

### Additional guidance and support that would have helped

Approaching the user testing phase of the project, we would have liked some guidance and support on user testing. We asked at one of the show and tell sessions if there was any contacts or anyone from one of the other local authorities taking part in the project that had completed their user testing. This would have been beneficial as we could have learnt how they had undertaken that part of the project and if there were any lessons for us to learn as we designed our user testing session.

### Anything else?

A theme that was constant across the user engagement sessions was our residents' differing levels of IT skills and their enthusiasm or reluctance for using digital tools. It may be said that this should be a well-known threat when undertaking such projects but has acted as a reminder when developing our communications and consultation plans for the upcoming consultation on the draft local plan. It is vitally important that we are not excluding certain members of the public with our choice of engagement tool. Consequently, this information will inform how we use the story maps as part of the formal consultation and has raised the need for the tool to have a clear and accessible 'How to' guide be developed to be incorporated into the introduction stage of the Story maps.

## PILOT OUTCOMES

### Comparison of Baseline data

Early on in the engagement planning, it was established that we were going to aim to capture qualitative feedback on our engagement endeavours; we realised that using more quantitative measures didn't fit with our approach. The questions that we wanted to retrieve feedback on were better suited to an open discussion and the way in which we structured the sessions made it easier to highlight themes and learnings and expand on them through discussion compared with having attendees provide feedback through surveys for example.

We structured the sessions around retrieving feedback for 2 different purposes, the first being feedback on the users' understanding of local planning and the second being user feedback with the Story maps with the aim of pulling out the learning to inform a roadmap on how we further develop the product for use with the local plan consultation.

Broadly speaking, the feedback indicated that the majority of people were not aware of our work to develop a Local Plan and through this work they now know that they can get involved through Story maps and through other formal consultation methods.

### Summary of community feedback

The stakeholders who we spoke to during our engagement phase can be found in Appendix 1 – PropTech Engagement Plan and Report.

## Feedback on local planning

In the first session with internal colleagues from across the council we had developed a Polly survey to be completed at the end of the session. We aimed to get an idea of peoples' understanding of local planning at the start of the session and then re-asked the question at the end of the session to see if this had helped their understanding. From this exercise it is clear that it did. In the following sessions it was decided to have a general discussion about local planning at the start of the session and then have users work through the story maps where there was an introductory page with media explaining 'what is a local plan?' Based on the feedback after this it was clear that users found the video and information helpful in understanding why we were there; what the tool aimed to do in terms of the Local Plan and what a Local plan was and how it impacted them.

## Feedback on the Story Maps and features to help bring it forward

The following themes were raised during the testing sessions:

- Accessibility – concerns across the engagement sessions on what we are planning to do to manage accessibility needs
- GDPR – users were concerned how their information was being used
- Content – several users highlighted that the content needed to be clear to understand
- Future features – highlighted to make the Story maps easier to use
- User guide – is a must in taking this tool forward
- Overall user satisfaction with the story maps was quite high, with many users suggesting this would be welcomed as a way to get involved with the local plan.

A screengrab from the team's Miro board highlighting the future features captured from the feedback can be found in Appendix 4 – Key themes highlighted to inform future functionality.

## What changes have come about as a result of engagement and opportunities to deliver

We showcased a basic version of the Story Maps in order for our testing sessions to shape future development. From the user journey comments lots of common themes and 'would be nice to have' features were brought to our attention.

Accessibility of the story maps was a clear stand out theme that we need to consider moving forward to make sure that we optimise the reach of this and leave nobody feeling frustrated or left behind in terms of being unable to use and navigate the system. The content was important to use a tone of voice that was universally understandable to people from all backgrounds and abilities after all this was being designed to speak to everyone

A design that worked on small screens was asked for from all age groups along with older age groups who also only use tablets. It is a challenge that will not be easily achieved given the subject matter of the mapping element. But needed all the same, a progressive responsive design with a tested module-based design system that is tested and built for a small screen.

A user guide was a clear must have, with people wanting to know how to get the best out of the system and look for direction. 'Your comments' are a function in which users can comment on a policy and come back and amend at any point to form a feedback loop in which the admin user could manage. The information and a guide to "what makes a good comment" was also common feedback from both the users and the backend planning team who gave good insights into what they look for and how they process such information in a

productive way. We will adopt this theme for the wider engagement of the Local plan and we are currently working with the RTPi Planning Aid England North West volunteers about potentially working together to create a video to help demonstrate what makes a good comment in a Local Plan Consultation.

The information coming from a range of perspectives has been great in giving us some great insights to make something that is potentially better than a one size fits all, off the peg solution that has an ongoing yearly cost with little evolution or bespoke improvement.

Considering the range of so many voices also gave us insights into the admin user experience and what they wanted to see and how we could save them time and valuable resources in designing a back-office environment that would fix some long-standing pain points and let the combination of this and the informative engaging front end system.

## DEVELOPMENT/IMPLEMENTATION

### How we developed/implemented/mobilised the product with our suppliers

The project team was made up of a cross council colleagues and was made up of:

- Project managers
- Web developers
- Engagement officers
- Business Intelligence colleagues
- Planning policy colleagues
- Colleagues from digital
- UX designer

A more detailed makeup of the project team can be found in Appendix 5 – Project Team

The structure of the team's communication was made up initially of bi-weekly project meetings and workshops for the development of ideas. In the development of the tool, the project meetings increased to weekly, and between February and March short daily stand-ups were implemented to review the day's development tasks and engagement sessions.

The ideation and development phase was completed in-house whereas this may have been facilitated by a supplier had we chosen to go with the other route. Due to the team being fully remote and having to work from home, the team chose to use Miro as the collaborative tool to use for the project. Please find the link to the Miro board below. Miro allowed us to work remotely and centralise all the ideation and information gathering in one place.

The project was split up into 2 distinct parts with several work streams taking up the focus of those phases:

- Development of ideas – Internal workshops, mapping of ideas, scoping, consequence scanning, prototyping, formation of product vision, start recruitment process for UX designer.
- Development of the mapping tool – Development of Story maps, engagement plan development, finish recruitment process for UX designer, delivery of engagement/testing, iterative development informed by engagement.

A comprehensive breakdown of the project can be found in Appendix 7 –Key events

## Development of ideas

In this stage, the project team completed several internal workshops and market research in order to understand the problem and map out their solution. The internal workshops consisted of:

- Introduction to the project – Post it, information gathering session to highlight shared learning desires, key dates, key stakeholders, audience, gap analysis, recruitment needs, usability visions
- Consequences scanning – A workshop to review the scenario and draw out consequences of a new idea and give people a say in what actions are used to mitigate or address them.
  - List consequence; clarify consequence as either intended, unintended, good or bad; Group consequences into categories; prioritise consequences from low to high.
- How might we? Questions workshop – continuation of the consequence scanning session but taking the top 5 consequences to ideate around what actions can be taken in order to minimise any negative consequences. As part of this workshop, the team revisited the scenario to form the overall vision and think about ways in which to align to the overall goals of the project.

Following on from these sessions, prototyping and the development of the proof of concept gave the project team concrete scope for what was to be delivered and a roadmap of how to do that. Some expertise was needed regarding certain questions that arose from the ‘How might we’ sessions, the team started the recruitment process for a UX designer to address these areas of the project.

## Development of Story maps

With the shared vision agreed and with a plan of completion within the short timescales mapped out, work got underway on the development of the tool and the recruitment of the UX designer was completed.

Story Maps uses our existing mapping solution, which is written in React(<https://reactjs.org/>) and based on Leaflet (<https://leafletjs.com/>). Our proof of concept solution wraps this in a C#/MVC application which enables the display a plans narrative/story and links it to geospatial data displayed on a map. It enables users to comment on specific parts of a plan in relation to specific geographical areas and points.

The comments from the public made on the system are, currently, stored within a SharePoint DataList (using a PowerAutomate/flow). Although this could be easily changed if a more appropriate data storage is identified.

The system makes use of the Stockport version of GDS/.Gov.UK design system styling to help ensure the usability and accessibility of the system.

Following on from the initial development, a short engagement phase of testing was identified in March and the further development was informed by these sessions.

## Lessons learned

### Challenges you had to overcome eg people/skill shortages/ knowledge gaps

In the development phase of the product, the team decided to use the ‘Our environment’ content for the Story Maps as it had been signed off by members and fit well with timescales of the plan. On reflection that chapter was too large and complex for the purpose of testing. There were concerns over the level of engagement we would get from it in testing so the team decided to move forward with policies from the ‘Our Town Centre’ chapter to develop with the Story Maps as a better option for the engagement sessions. It was highlighted that having the content ready in advance of the project would have helped but as we are working alongside the development of the draft local plan it was unavoidable. In practice, we commenced testing using the ‘Our Town

Centre’ chapter whilst simultaneously reviewing and amending the draft wording to make it more accessible and user friendly with support from the Council’s Content Team.

### Additional guidance and support that would have helped

Following on from the retrospective meeting, it was highlighted that with increased timescales to complete the project we would have developed a more robust product and had been able retrieve stronger feedback with more content in the Story maps to take the project forward.

The project team emphasised the need for a clearer timeline and a more structured plan of meetings with the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities, with that information being mapped out from the start.

### Any surprises you faced, or other reflections

From a project retrospective meeting, staffing resource was an issue in terms of key people leaving mid project, also there was a suggestion that the project would have benefitted from a Business Analyst, certainly going forward. Having greater expertise in communication of internal and external stakeholders to understand the needs of the organisation/stakeholder and identify the processes required for further development of the Story Maps.

### Ongoing engagement requirements/ambitions for this project

It is vitally important that the engagement doesn’t stop here. The voice of residents and communities has to be embedded in everything we do so that we are co-designing and working together in the future.

## PROCUREMENT

### Procurement approach and outcomes

In scoping the project SMBC decided not to go out to a single supplier to deliver a solution for us. Instead we wanted to try and use existing skills and capabilities within the project team and focus on bringing in contractor skills where they were lacking. The benefit of this is the longevity of our approach and the longer term impact, building skills within the organisation and no end date of supplier’s contracts.

### Lessons learned

#### Challenges you had to overcome

Although the longer term benefits are considered as the advantage of our approach the short term risk needs to be considered. In bringing in suppliers, the responsibility of development and launching of the engagement tool shifts to the supplier. SMBC had to consider the pressure of delivering this pilot without any third party support but we have a track record of doing similar product development using in-house resources.

### Additional guidance and support that would have helped

As SMBC were testing this themselves and with seemingly no other local authorities taking the same approach, it would have been difficult to get any support on our approach from outside.

### Any suggestions to improve procurement in the future, surprises you faced, or other reflections

SMBC’s approach to this project by using in house skills and capabilities, whilst bringing in contractors to fill in a skills requirement meant that we were able to mobilise quicker and helped us integrate Story Maps with



everything else, meaning that we were not in a situation where a supplier had built something for us and then we had to get on board and run with it.

### Working with suppliers

Bringing in specialist contractors worked well, with short timescales and all the information being located on the Miro Board, the UX designer was able to progress his understanding of the project and contribute his ideas to the development of the Story maps quickly.

With more time, the UX designer would have benefitted from further developing user personas which would have benefitted both the understanding of the ‘why’ and helped better measure the progress of the user testing and answer some of those assumptions.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Potential policy and/or process improvements

The outcomes of this pilot have led to a process improvement, as a result of developing the Story maps and having completed some initial user testing, the feedback has suggested that this will be valuable as a part of our consultation efforts and we are in the process of creating a roadmap for delivery between now and the formal consultation of the draft local plan in Autumn 2022.

Through the work completed as part of the PropTech Engagement fund, we have had to reword Local Plan policies to get the ready for Story maps. This process of rewording policies and looking at the content is being completed in the wider document in an effort to make policies more user friendly and easier to understand, our involvement in the PropTech pilot has reiterated how important this work stream is.

Following on from the conclusion of the project, we will be looking at giving a presentation to the wider planning community through the North West Royal Town Planners Institute webinar in May. We will also be feeding back our positive cross team working outcomes which has occurred as a result of the pilot to internal officers at the council through internal employee briefings.

### What longer-term changes do you expect to make as a result of the outcomes of this pilot

As previously mentioned, Story Maps will now form part of our approach to formal consultation of the draft local plan. Whilst we will be looking to focus purely on the Local Plan with the Story maps web tool initially, we will be reviewing the tool after the consultation and looking at mapping its capabilities to be used beyond the local plan initially for the wider planning process and then elsewhere in the local authority.

It is imperative that engagement doesn’t cease here and we continue to speak to as many stakeholders as possible as part of our endeavours. Some of the groups and stakeholders that we spoke to as part of the user testing will be used more broadly as part of the consultation.

## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1 – PropTech Engagement Plan and Report

Group to be tested	Date	What kind of testing –face to face or online	Notes/Comments
SMBC colleagues	08/03/2022	Online via MS Teams	<p><b>This will be our first testing session/showcase. Some softer engagement with colleagues. Identified as an ideal starting point with some early stage feedback.</b></p>
<p>There was a testing session held on MS Team for a selection of colleagues at SMBC, with 7 attendees from different areas of the council. This was set up as a warm up session to test the engagement approach and also test the latest iteration of the ‘Story Map’ with a selection of the Town Centre policies. The session lasted a total of 30 minutes. Participants were thanked for their attendance, after which, they were reminded of the rules of engagement in terms of providing feedback, details of which can be found on the ‘Google Jam board’ that was used for this session. There was a brief discussion around the depth of their knowledge regarding Planning policy and the ‘Stockport Local Plan’. This led to the link being shared in the chat. The walk through example began by watching a video to explain the ‘Local Plan’ for some context. They were then walked through the Story map and different aspects and functions were explained; after which participants were invited to test the ‘Story Maps’ for around 10 minutes and use the make a comment section or click and leave a comment through the map. At the end of the session participants were asked to complete a questionnaire on MS Teams. The questionnaire was made up of 8 questions.</p> <p><u>Polly Questionnaire</u></p> <p><i>Q1 Before story maps - How much do you know about planning policy and the Stockport Local Plan?</i></p> <p>Most people understood what they were or had heard about them. Only one person knew very little about planning policy or the Local Plan.</p> <p><i>Q2 Did you find the story maps helpful? Please answer yes or no and give a reason for your answer?</i></p> <p>All participants agreed that the story maps were helpful. Some key themes that arose from the feedback suggested that it was informative, user friendly and gave the user a more visual experience of the plan. Some comments suggested that the area names of the Town Centre policies didn’t mean much to them. Also one user suggested that maps should be more detailed with pins showing different sections of the plans.</p> <p><i>Q3 Would you want to find out about the Local Plan in this way?</i></p> <p>All attendees either agreed or strongly agreed that they would want to find out about the Local Plan in this way.</p> <p><i>Q4 Tell us anything else you think might help us improve this tool</i></p> <p>The comments suggested that maps need to be clearer, using different coloured lines with more engaging features such as pop ups and features, showcasing previously submitted comments. Validation data – such as name and email requirements could be collected and language could be made simpler in parts.</p>			

*Q5 What device would you use to view this kind of content?*

The answers were evenly split across Desktop Computer, Laptop Computer, Tablet and Smartphone.

*Q6 Revisit, now you have been shown the map and had the chance to test it yourself then please answer this again- How much do you know about planning policy and the Stockport Local Plan?*

All participants answered either ‘I understand what they are’ or ‘very familiar’

Further comments left on the questionnaire detailed the need for headings for ease of use, instead of having to look through all the data.

Jam Board Comments

- In terms of digital inclusion – mobile phones are more accessible and popular
- Leaving a comment - Once you've left a comment, can it show on the map? Didn't show up for me, so presumption from a user could be that it hasn't registered
- Suggestion - Look at how people are using the map in terms of Data - 4g or Wi-Fi
- Comment - That was a dry subject and it is important that we keep making it engaging
- Comment on Hardware - Will it be used mainly on desktop or mobiles? Think the majority of Stockport will use phone.
- User comment - Do you have to leave an email and full name? It could put some people off commenting
- User suggestion - It would be useful to have a pinpoint to show where each thing will be on the map on the Key areas of change to help show where things will be - **Dev Note: What this suggests is that we would need to map not just the policy areas, but also have layers that relate to any geographic area that is mentioned in the Local Plan text**
- Will it be used mainly on desktop or mobiles? Think the majority of Stockport will use phone.

A strong theme coming through suggested that more people would use this on a mobile phone than on a desktop or laptop.

Participants were invited to leave a comment based on the content Comments left through the Make a comment section were captured in

<p><b>Planning Policy Team</b></p>	<p><b>W/C 17/03/2022</b></p>	<p><b>Online via MS Teams</b></p>	<p><b>A testing session to take place during the Planning Policy learning discussion session. Identified due to their expertise in Planning policy and the project enhancing the local plan and previous experience with using mapping systems.</b></p>
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A showcase was arranged for the members of the planning policy team, the team was identified as an early test subject as they have all contributed to the writing of the draft local plan and as the ‘Story Maps’ were using the content of the Local plan it was a courtesy for the PropTech team to show them what had been built with that content.

The session was held via teams and the feedback channels used were via a Google Jamboard and through open discussion.

Key themes

Several key themes came out of the session. The Planning Policy team had a high level understanding of the subject matter and a proportion of the feedback focussed on the content element of it as well as conveying the correct information with the relevant supporting policy documents. The following key themes arose:

- User experience – the navigation was confusing after submitting a comment and needs to have links within the ‘Story maps’ for example, links to different policies and links to evidence base. Wording of some of the pages need to be re-read so that they are instructing people correctly e.g. Town Centre 2 : The Town Centre 2 The Town Centre Character Areas, it refers to 'the five character areas below' but the Character Areas are actually on the next pages. It might be more useful to if the outdoor OS map layer was the set standard as the road names will help people located where they are join a map. Chapter and policy needs to be clear when you are looking at the page,
- GDPR – needs to have a statement if this was to be used as part of the consultation
- Will there be a demo/how to use guide when live?
- Accessibility – Audio needed and other language options offered. Real robust plan to have demo tools. Images need Alt Text.
- Data collection at sign in – what information are we looking for and are we measuring demographics?
- Barriers – repetitive entering of personal information like email addresses
- Further features that would benefit the tool – An upload feature but with a limited upload size. This would support comments and feedback.
  - Pin points
  - Hyperlinks to other documents and webpages
  - Map key/legend
  - Clearer boundaries and pin points/labels
- Content –
  - \* Further explanation of what the policy says and how it will be implemented – Pop up feature or something similar
  - Minimise the use of acronyms
  - Numbering of the document needs to be followed in this – written plan has numbered paragraphs

<b>Library session</b>	<b>14/03/2022 @ Heaton’s Library 2pm</b>	<b>Face to face</b>	<b>Identified as frontline staff that will Play a role in supporting members of the public to respond to the consultation.</b>
	<b>16/03/2022 @ Great Moor Library</b>	<b>Face to Face</b>	

14/03/2022 – Testing session with 4 Librarians from Heaton Moor Library. The group had an open discussion and tried out the ‘Story maps’. Feedback came through open discussion about the product and was noted down.

Questions asked and General Feedback

The first 2 participants liked the tool and said ‘anything to make the planning process more understandable’ is a benefit. They mentioned that the computers in the library were well used but did comment that more people would use a mobile device for this because of ease of use. Whilst watching the video in the demonstration, one of the participants had to get their glasses and said it would be good if the video could go to full screen, they did comment that the video was clear and helpful in understanding the topic of the Local Plan.

When looking through the Story maps, there was a comment on a feature to show anonymous previous comments, which then led to them asking if they could leave a comment anonymously as a user. As general feedback they said if this was coming to libraries in the future then this would be good to share with ‘coffee morning groups’. Some general feature feedback topics that were mentioned during their test:

- Language – it was full of Council buzz words, it may be hard to understand by a lot of people. The language that was used may be complicated and high level for a good portion of Stockport’s population
- Accessibility – have we thought about Neuro-divergent users?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mapping tool – clear and well balanced but would benefit introducing a map key. It was easy to use and they would be confident showing other people how to use it.</li> <li>● Locality vs borough view – following a discussion around the map view and usability, they would prefer to see what was outside their front door instead of a whole borough view but did say it would depend on who was looking at it and where their interests lied.</li> <li>● Did like the layout of the plans as chapters and seemed straight forward</li> <li>● One key point that was highlighted was that they would like to see this being built as a whole product for all and not added features for people who have a visual impairment or have hearing difficulties.</li> <li>● User guide is imperative, especially with people who are not confident with digital</li> <li>● An index would be helpful with navigation</li> <li>● Under each topic it would be helpful to have some introductory text – to know what they will find in each chapter.</li> <li>● In the locality vs borough they said they would be more engaged with their locality</li> </ul>			
<b>Young people Session</b>	<b>23/03/2022 Youth Council</b>	<b>Face to face/Online</b>	<b>Identified as a key demographic for feedback purposes</b>
<p>Lawrence went along to one of the Youth Council meetings to showcase the Story maps and get some feedback from their experience of using it. There were 5 people in attendance and 1 person who had dialled in from MS Teams. Open discussion was the approach chosen to discuss the tool and its features, although there was a Jamboard available for anybody to input if linking in via teams or wanted to convey any information after the session, although this wasn't used.</p> <p><u>Feedback and key themes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Users wanted to find out about what was going on in their locality more than they would the whole borough.</li> <li>● A user highlighted more map view options as something to explore</li> <li>● Language wasn't an issue and they were not overwhelmed by the content</li> <li>● Comments section – easy to use and were more likely to use than a traditional survey.</li> <li>● They wanted to see more pinpoints or colours to highlight the area in question</li> </ul>			
<b>Start Point – Woodley</b>	<b>22/03/2022 First session</b>	<b>Face to face</b>	<p><b>Start Point Café, Woodley</b> A coffee shop that has an interest in Community organising and social action, which has partly led to it being a partner in the Digital Inclusion Alliance with the council – Mainly focussed on helping digitally excluded residents in gaining digital skills, confidence and access to use the internet. They were seen as an ideal group of people to speak to as they are developing their digital skills and will provide useful user journey feedback.</p>
	<b>25/03/2022 Second session</b>	<b>Face to face</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> Session – Session on the 22/03/2022.			

<p>There were 10 people in attendance. The session started with a demonstration of the tool and then they both sat in smaller groups to have more of a detailed discussion. A lot of the feedback centred on previous attempts to engage or not engage as the case may be with them on previous consultations and changes within Stockport. One member of the session asked if their comments would even be looked at or just disregarded. They explained that as part of the next iteration that there would be a section on how to comment.</p> <p><u>General Feedback talking points</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication – This was key as several members said that the council and planning need to more in terms of communicating changes</li> <li>• Language – Need to use clear, accessible language in the tool as well as when communicating with the public</li> <li>• There was value in visualising where changes were on a map.</li> <li>• We need to have clear processes in place to feed back to their feedback.</li> <li>• Other forms of communicating other than just digital – Letters and texts</li> </ul> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> session – Session on the 25/03/2022 at Starting Point, Woodley</p> <p>There was a total of 7 people in the session. From the learning from the previous session we distributed the URL for the test site and everyone had their own device in which they could access the site and test. This helped as there was no presentation facilities at the venue. The UX designer walked through the tool and then attendees were invited to test it. They provided their feedback through open discussion.</p> <p><u>General Feedback and talking points</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likes – Index menu feature through the ‘Hamburger’ and the overall feeling was it was easy to use.; balance of text and mapping information</li> <li>• Content – was missing how the policies were going to be implemented</li> <li>• Future functionality – Jump to links, downloadable information, pick up where you left off feature.</li> </ul>			
<b>Neighbourhood Forums</b>	<b>22/03/2022</b>	<b>MS Team</b>	<b>As groups all working on Neighbourhood Plans for their local areas they have been identified as a group that have an interest in Planning Policy and will be a suitable in giving feedback on the map. J</b>
<p>Early evening session with representatives of the Neighbourhood forums in Marple, Woodford and High lane. There were 5 people in attendance. They were invited to provide their feedback through open discussion or via the Google Jamboard.</p> <p><u>General feedback</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers – GDPR and accessibility comments if we were to take it forward. Highlighting trust issues with what we do with the information that is being collected and a need to make it clear.</li> <li>• Future functionality – the attendees wanted to see a ‘Your comments’ to revisit, comment update.</li> <li>• Comment – they were not clear on the search box functionality.</li> </ul>			
<b>Development Plan Working Party (DPWP)</b>	<b>30/03/2022</b>	<b>Face to Face</b>	<b>The Development Plan Working Party (DPWP) is made up of elected members of the council, the purpose of the meeting is to seek views from the DPWP and for them to note and comment on different aspects of the Local Plan. It was decided</b>

			<b>that they would be a suitable group to gather feedback from due to their high level input on the draft local planning.</b>
<p>Several members of the DPWP were interested in seeing the 'Story maps' mapping tool. They provided the opportunity to test the Story Maps via MS teams. 3 councillors attended the session and provided their feedback through open discussion.</p>			
<p><u>Feedback</u></p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Future functionality - wanted more bespoke data on their relationship to the borough and the information they have seen</li><li>● 'how to use' guide is imperative and should be located at the start of the maps;</li><li>● clear introduction about what this is trying to achieve and give context on what the Local Plan is trying to achieve;</li><li>● Barrier – scalability an issue when minimised.</li></ul>			

## [Appendix 2 – Press release 1 published on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021](#)

Stockport Council awarded £90K by government to widen Local Plan engagement

The council has received the good news that their bid to the government's PropTech Engagement Fund has been successful.

This new funding stream from the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities is designed to support local authorities to accelerate the adoption of technology that will enhance community engagement and deliver a modern planning system. The council is 1 of 13 local authorities nationally who have been awarded up to £100k each for their selected project.

The £90,000 awarded to Stockport Council will allow the creation of a mapping tool to bring their Local Plan to life when it goes out to formal public consultation, allowing people to explore and comment on specific aspects of the plan more easily. It is hoped that this interactive, more visual approach will appeal to a wide audience and increase engagement, especially with younger people and those that may have experienced barriers in engaging with consultations in the past.

The Stockport Local Plan will set out the vision for future development in the borough. The council is required to produce the plan which will be used to assess planning applications for new developments in Stockport over the next 15 years.

It will ensure that Stockport has the right land, the right homes and the right infrastructure in the right places, for current and future generations.

Cllr David Meller, Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration at Stockport Council, said: "This is welcome news and the funding will allow us to engage with residents in a more creative and interactive way, so that we can get a wide range of feedback from as many people as possible, which is really important."

Cllr David Sedgwick, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focus and Engagement, said: "As a Council, we're always looking at new and innovative ways of reaching people digitally and this funding will go some way in allowing people to really understand what we're trying to achieve and get them interested in this important plan for the future of Stockport."

Find out more about the [Local Plan](#).

[Stockport Council awarded £90K by government to widen Local Plan engagement - Stockport Council](#)



### Appendix 3 – Press release published on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Local Plan receives mapping tool boost thanks to Government grant

Stockport has been granted £90,000 from The 'PropTech Engagement Fund' which will be used to secure a new mapping tool that will be used during the Local Plan engagement process

Stockport's Local Plan will be brought to life via a state-of-the-art mapping tool that has been funded thanks to a Government grant.

In August 2021, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced the 'PropTech Engagement Fund'.

The fund was set up to support local authorities to adopt technology to involve communities, deliver a modern planning system and to help broaden the range of voices being heard.

Stockport Council was awarded £90,000 to be used to develop the mapping software to assist the consultation process of the Local Plan, which will take place in early Autumn 2022.

The Local Plan will play a central role in making sure that we have the right sustainable homes, jobs and infrastructure in the right places, and that we are protecting the valuable natural areas and assets that make Stockport such a great place to live.

It will also aim to set out clear rules and guidance on development and give clear indication of what will and won't be permitted in the borough. The council is required to produce the plan that will be in place for the next 15 years.

The aims of the PropTech pilot focused on allowing residents to explore the borough through the interactive story maps. In turn, these maps would then inform residents about the Local Plan whilst also looking at different aspects of it before asking resident to leave their feedback.

With the initial development completed, the team went out to test the map in the community. Several testing workshops were arranged with identified members of Stockport's community to provide feedback and inform the projects next steps including residents, frontline workers, community groups, Councillors and youth council representatives.

The aims of the engagement were to trial the use of the map face to face and online, and how the map can capture and process feedback; to test how the tool can be used by frontline workers to increase engagement and to test how we share the map through communication to reach residents who are not-yet-engaged with local planning.

A spokesperson for Stockport Council said: "We hope this new tool will enable the Local Plan to be more accessible to groups and people that are underrepresented in planning decisions and increase the understanding of local planning.

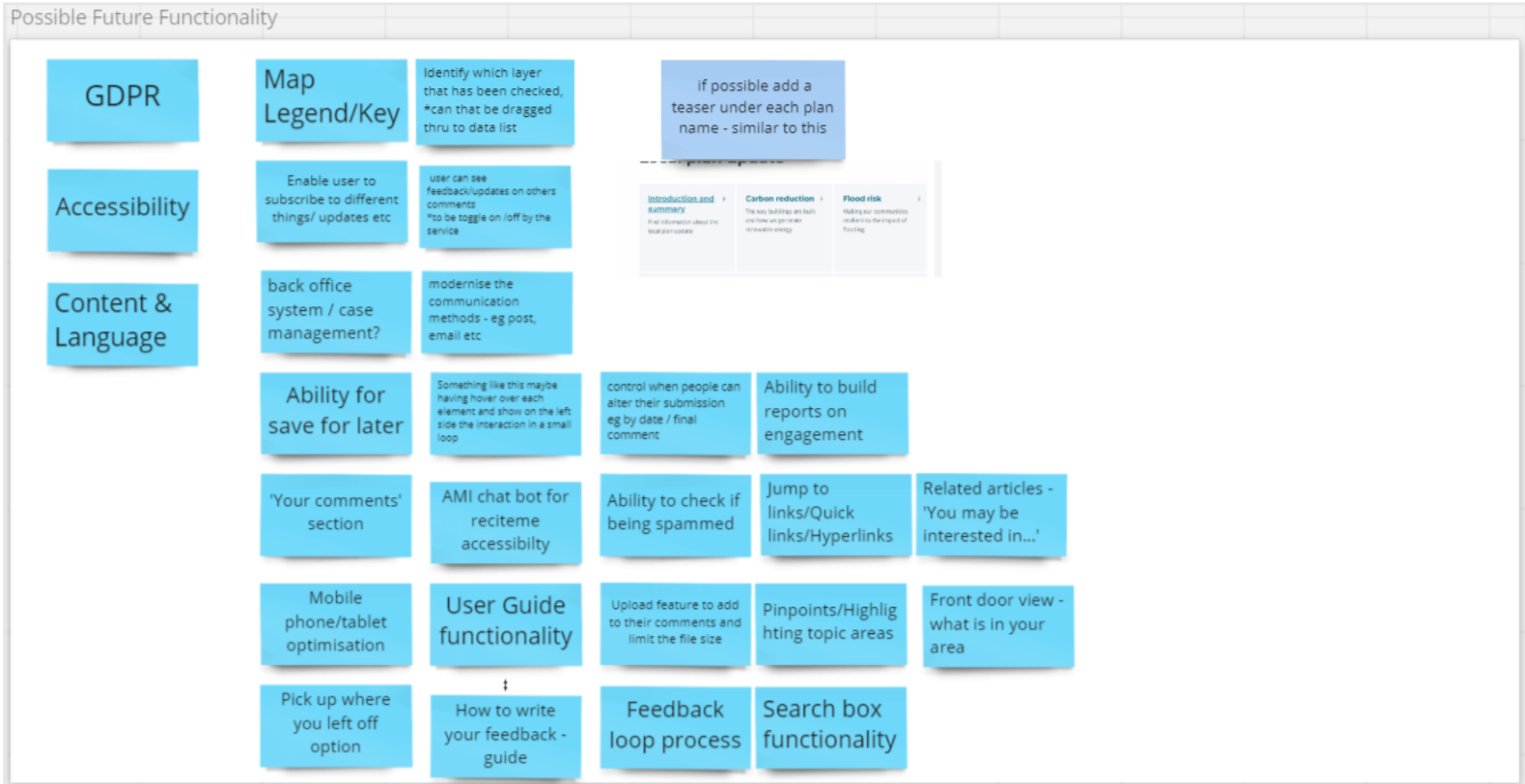
"We want everyone in Stockport to have the opportunity to comment on the draft Local Plan and help us shape it into the best possible plan for Stockport and this tool is designed to help bring that about."

The council will be going out to consultation on the draft Local Plan in autumn 2022.

For more information, please visit the [Local Plan website](#).

[Local Plan receives mapping tool boost thanks to Government grant - Stockport Council](#)

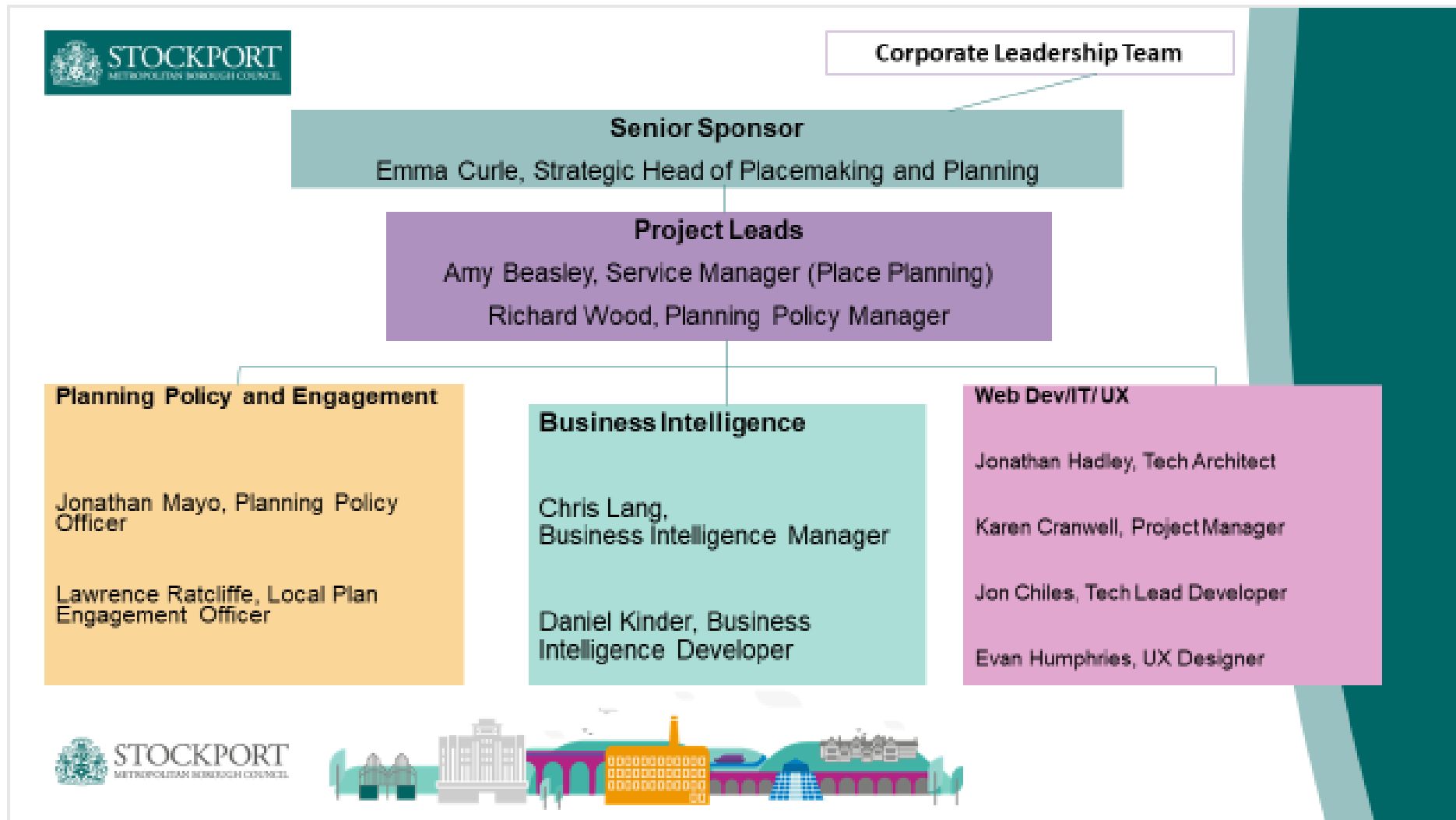
## Appendix 4 – Key themes highlighted to inform future functionality



Appendix 5 – Project team Retrospective - 06/04/2022



## Appendix 6 – Project Team



Appendix 7 –Key events

