



PropTech Engagement Fund Round 2

Final Report

September 2022



Local Planning Authority/ies	London borough of Lambeth
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Executive Summary

Region	London
LA Rural-Urban Classification Category	Lambeth is a 'Major Urban Local Authority' in central London.
Project summary	<i>This project aimed to better visualise possible changes to public spaces in Lambeth using 3d technology. Through improved visualisations, we could gather more meaningful and focused feedback from the community.</i>
Funding allocated	£92,164.00
Supplier(s) Appointed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cityscape • Vu City • Commonplace (existing supplier)
Consultation Topic	<i>Community feedback on improving public spaces in Lambeth</i>
Consultation Outcomes	<i>Enhanced preliminary designs informed by community feedback</i>
Consultation dates	<i>Digital survey: 13 June 2022 – 17 July 2022 In Person events and workshops: May – August 2022</i>

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1.0 Project Summary

- **Summary:** Lambeth Transport Strategy team are creating changes to public space across the borough to improve walking and cycling and tackle the climate crisis.
- We were awarded PropTech funding to investigate how to better visualise public realm changes for non-design expert audiences.
- We wanted to understand how we could use digital platforms and 3D models as tools to better facilitate engagement workshops and incorporate into communication strategies and materials.
- **Status quo pre-PropTech:** Lambeth Transport team has recently created a new structure to engagement on schemes through a dedicated community street design team.
- Prior to the creation of the team, engagement was through statutory objection processes to traffic orders (advertised onsite, online and in the press).
- PropTech funding has been a valuable stream of funding to experiment and innovate engagement methods.
- **Outcomes:** As a result of this design engagement, 6 public realm projects have been progressed with detailed community input.
- The 6 sites have moved from concept to technical design amounting to £2.08 million in capital works to be built in spring 2023.
- **Opportunities:** The funding allowed us to create detailed visualisations that articulated change in a more accurate and immersive way than previously achieved.
- Through accurate visualisations communities could feedback with more depth creating a more participatory design process that better reflects local priorities.
- The process has set the precedent for how we could further improve community feedback mechanisms and gamify digital engagement.
- **Funding review:**
 - We chose to create the engagement strategy and facilitate workshops in house. This meant reallocating costs from 'build and host of platform' to 'project management' to cover officer staff costs.
 - In our bid we incorporated comms within workshop materials however have separated it out in the budget overview below

	Amount Bid	Amount Spent
Landscape Design	£6,000	£6,000
Project management and facilitation (incl staff costs)	£15000	£34,332
Building and hosting of digital platform	£52,000	£35,440
3d model acquisition (Cu-	£785	£785

City)		
Materials-workshops	£10,000	£1,120
Communications	0	£10,073
Contingency (10%)	£8,378	£0
TOTAL	£92,163	£87,750

2.0 Lessons Learned

Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
<p>Getting started: Developing the business case/gaining organisational buy-in to apply for Round 2 funding.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We undertook pre-market engagement to understand the current realms of possibility for 3d models. 2. A proposed timeline for engagement that would fit with wider project timelines and aligned with delivery for capital works was developed 3. Identifying specifically what community feedback was needed to progress designs supported project development 4. Having defined project scope and draft timeline supported internal buy-in and evidenced how funding could be used productively 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It was important to understand the functionality of current engagement platforms for wide scale engagement ie what types of media can the platform host, what type of interaction is possible. 2. 3d models are widely available, however there is a lack of environments that can host interactive 3d models that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDPR compliant • HTML compatible • Fully accessible • Phone first and responsive design in design
<p>Procurement: developing supplier brief and project budget</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief created based on the Council's successful bid and resultant feedback from Vu-City (Appendix 1) 2. Pre-engagement with rendering companies to notify them of the upcoming tender 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief could have been more detailed in terms of project requirements to enable a more accurate fee estimate from

		bidders
Procurement: finding and appointing a supplier(S)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5 suppliers were identified 2. Cityscape Digital were successful. <p>The quality metric reviewed elements such as the understanding of issues and local context and proposed methodology</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Next time we would like to invite more local companies to bid to support our corporate priorities to support and harness local skills and economic growth.
Project development: Models developed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kick-off meetings with both suppliers with a clear project timeline helped to quickly progress the project. 2. A clear understanding of project deliverables (including file formats) were essential to support suppliers respond with questions/ supporting data they required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppliers requested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWGs of all concept design • Map of locations and expanse of areas under consideration • Examples of materials, furniture and planting types to be used in rendering of models • Lambeth requested files as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scalable models to host on the Vu City model • PNG views (birds-eye and street level) of models to be hosted on commonplace • MP4 'fly throughs' to express models hosted on commonplace 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working in 3d environments across different suppliers proved to be challenging due to different workflows 2. Models needed to be edited with new geometries to work in different workflows 3. Varying post-production environments meant rendering didn't translate like for like between 3d models and host environments. 4. Photomapping onto models proved to be an efficient way of situating models within an actual urban context and familiarising the viewer with the scene.

<p>Engagement Strategy:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A comprehensive online, print and in person engagement strategy was created (Appendix 2) 2. Learning from previous rounds of engagement supported how much budget was allocated per communication method 3. Geographical areas were defined for print mail-outs and poster distribution. 4. Social media assets were created to test both organic and paid for posts. 5. To widen participation, in-app social media poll was trialed to gather feedback and shorten user journey. (Appendix 3) 6. Online survey was complimented by in person drop-in events and stakeholder workshops 7. Early engagement with local schools allowed time for sessions to be timetabled into the school calendar. 8. Making use of community centres and markets within areas ensured high interaction rate. 9. The most successful engagement made use of regular local events ie a weekly farmers markets 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having a defined brand guideline and illustrations supported efficient development of communication assets across print and digital. 2. Digital communications significantly outperformed print communications in conversion rates to filling out survey 3. In person events allowed for more in depth qualitative research and supported community buy-in allowing local people to build familiarity with engagement officers
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<p>Campaign launch and management:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political buy-in was ensured through cabinet and ward councillor briefings to spread message widely and encourage participation in engagement 2. Engagement launch was marked with press-release, mail-out to all residents in the area and emails to local stakeholders. 3. We developed a design PDF to aid stakeholders to have conversations with their networks (Appendix 4) 4. School workshops followed replicable format with array of worksheets and activities 5. Both closed and open sessions allowed for a mixture of feedback from local stakeholders and residents with varying levels of understanding about the public realm changes proposed 6. Deploying on street market researchers to encourage people to attend drop-in allowed for better engagement rates 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Throughout school sessions activities were adapted based on student response and student/ teacher feedback to sessions 2. Stakeholder workshops were better attended with two weeks' notice and significant follow-up 3. Taking digital technology to community venues had varying levels of success. 4. Printed worksheets and posters were more effective in engaging insitu, than computer screens. 5. If project is repeated, VR sets would enhance virtual environment experience 6. QR codes linked to the survey were helpful to direct people to complete in their own time 7. Whilst the designs were helpful in articulating proposals, some community members felt they were too specific/ finished and didn't allow for full coproduction 8. By focusing feedback on specific locations some residents felt feedback wasn't possible for the wider area or that other locations had been neglected
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<p>Campaign wrap-up:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commonplace dashboard allowed for efficient analysis of survey responses 2. In person engagement feedback was used to compliment survey responses 3. School workshops and stakeholder workshops provided feedback beyond proposed locations allowing for further small-scale changes to be developed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better recording of demographic data at in-person events would support evidencing success of project engagement
<p>Feedback loops:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where necessary models were updated in light of community feedback 2. A map of further improvements for each LTN area was developed to compliment model locations 3. A 'feedback' phase was developed to coincide with the decision reports summarising feedback and final designs for the LTN upgrades 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sharing updates with Ward Councillors helped to ensure there was clarity on how community feedback had been incorporated into final designs.

3.0 Pilot Outcomes

- **Appendix 5**

4.0 Community Feedback

- The detail of our engagement is captured in **Appendix 6 and 7** • Prop-tech funding allowed us to devise a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy to gather feedback on potential upgrades to the public realm
- Individuals fed back to us in a multitude of ways including through workshops, worksheets, drop-ins, classroom sessions and most substantively through online surveys.
- For Railton, we received 633 online contributions and 60.13 % were 'positive' or 'mostly positive' among these:
 - Location 1: Shakespeare Road 124 comments, 216 agreements
 - Location 2: Railton Road South: 116 comments, 90 agreements
 - Location 3: St Matthews Road 39 comments, 44 agreements
- For Oval, we received 199 online contributions and 72.98% were 'positive' or 'mostly positive' among these:
 - Location 1: Claylands Road 53 comments, 3 agreements
 - Location 2: Fentiman Road 70 comments, 16 agreements
 - Location 3: Dorset Road 50 comments 7 agreements
- Community feedback both validated and challenged designs proposals
- As a result of feedback 5 of 6 designs were updated, 1 design did not need updating.
- As a result of feedback gathered through this engagement we have redesigned the engagement for future LTNs.
- Rather than presenting detailed concepts, in future rounds we will present the space 'as-is' with multiple options to help shape discussion and feedback.

5.0 Conclusions and Policy Reflections

Proptech Project:

- The most effective element of the project outputs were the fly-through videos as they played an effective role in communicating proposals to a wide range of audiences.
- Both prop-tech companies were incredibly agile and able to deliver at pace which sets a good benchmark for LAs to develop innovative engagement approaches
- 3D models are essential to create a shared visual vocabulary between designers and communities
- The renders improved community perceptions of the change being proposed
- Vu-City offers an opportunity for transport planners (rather than only town planners) to integrate this platform into their planning phases to make it a critical element of co-design.
- If Prop-tech companies can develop greater functionality in digital engagement platforms such as Commonplace, there will be greater scope for individuals to propose changes.
- Currently the only feedback mechanisms in the digital engagement platforms are through written word, geo-tag, photo-upload or option choice on a survey.
- In future projects we would like to explore drag and drop modelling technology integrated into engagement platforms to allow residents greater autonomy in proposing and designing options for public spaces.

Digital Engagement

- Digital engagement improves the efficiency and reach of LA public engagement greatly
 - Digital engagement can tackle the burden of 'consultation fatigue' by relieving the amount of time a citizen is required to commit to engage
 - Significant upskilling is needed within LAs for officers to becoming digitally literate in what is possible and procure/ scope projects effectively

Feedback on Engagement:

- As we innovate community involvement within the UK planning/ transport planning process it is important that this is factored in to legal and governance processes to ensure feedback shared plays an integral role in decision making
- We need to develop coherent citizens journeys through the different stages of feedback on projects so innovation in one stage is not isolated/ at odds with other stages and statutory objection processes.

6.0 Additional reflections and feedback for DLUHC (optional)

- Proptech provided great support for Lambeth and we were required to attend regular update meetings and check-ins. However, at times both the length and frequency of 'show and tells'/ 'check-ins' felt unnecessary when the project teams were extremely busy not just with this project but a whole range within our transport portfolio.