Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

PropTech Engagement Fund Round 2

Final Report

September 2022

Leicester
City Council

Local Planning Authority/ies	Leicester City Council
Date Report Submitted	October 2022

Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Executive Summary

Region	East Midlands
LA Rural-Urban Classification Category	*See:* [https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority rural-urban-classification](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-rural-urban-classification) Large Urban
Project summary	Building on the success of two previous digital public engagement exercises, as part of an exemplar project (Estate Regeneration) at Stocking Farm to deliver new council homes and community facilities in an area of digital poverty, Leicester City Council aimed to continue with its innovative consultation approach as the project moves towards Planning application stage. The Stocking Farm regeneration project seeks to reflect the principles of exemplar development including **public engagement**, design quality, energy efficiency, environmental and economic sustainability, and has successfully sought the views of the public through two phases of digital engagement throughout the design process (since January 2021). The aim of the project was to continue engaging with the local community to explore opportunities and shape a vision that will vitalise unused land and property back into use, improve life for local residents and help kickstart the regeneration of this important part of the city.
Funding allocated	£86,750
Supplier(s) Appointed	Deetu
Consultation Topic	Community feedback and views on the latest masterplan proposals for Stocking Farm.
Consultation Outcomes	An iterative community-led design process that has been informed through continued community engagement which has led to a masterplan proposal defined by feedback from the community.
Consultation dates	Stage three of public engagement Digital / Comms Campaign: April-May 2022. In-person event: May 2022

Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Contents Page

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

1. Project Summary

1.1High-level overview of the project:

Building on the success of two previous digital public engagement exercises, as part of an exemplar project at Stocking Farm to deliver new council homes and community facilities in an area of digital poverty, Leicester City Council (LCC) continued with its innovative consultation approach as the project moved towards Planning application stage. The overall project vision is to create a new residential community at the heart of the Stocking Farm area which will provide new homes and facilities to serve the local community and will reflect the principles of exemplar development including public engagement, design quality, public realm, energy efficiency, access, legibility, community safety and cohesion, and environmental and economic sustainability.

An online tool using Deetu's 'engaged space' platform was used as the backbone of a wider engagement methodology throughout the three stages of engagement. Whilst this report focuses mainly onstage 3 of public consultation, stages 1 and 2 are referenced throughout to gain a holistic outlook over the various stages. The online engagement platform was made publicly available and could be accessed via a web browser or any digital device to allow people to understand the masterplan proposals for the site.

The three websites can be accessed below:

Stage 1: https://my.engaged.space/stockingfarm/#home
Stage 2: https://my.engaged.space/stockingfarmstagetwo/#home
Stage 3: https://my.engaged.space/stockingfarmstagethree/

The PropTech Digital Engagement Fund facilitated a broader engagement approach than usual for the third stage of engagement with the Stocking Farm residents which included an updated and more interactive online website as well as the delivery of an in-person engagement event which was held at the newly opened Stocking Farm Community Shop in May 2022 (see Figure 1, 2 and 3 below). The funding also enabled further youth engagement, through the creation of the Digital Classroom Toolkit designed for local secondary students.

PropTech Engagement Fund Round 2

Figure 1: Stocking Farm residents attending the in-person event (May 2022).

Figure 2: Stage 3 online tool- Architects' sketch of the proposals.

Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Figure 3: Interactive display of the Stocking Farm in-person event (May 2022).

1.2 Pre-PropTech Status quo

As Stocking Farm was considered an exemplar project in many areas including its public engagement approach, the strategy chosen was different to the City's Council usual engagement approach. Prior to obtaining PropTech funding the Stocking Farm project team were already working with supplier Deetu for stage 1 and 2 of the engagement therefore were already working beyond usual consultation procedures of the city council. The Stocking Farm project team undertook pre-market engagement in advance of previous phases of work, such as attending TechUk workshops and digital showcases to gain current market insights.

Pre- PropTech funding and working with Deetu, the City Council's usual consultation approach would be to advertise a survey on its consultation hub website that engages with an online platform powered by Citizen Space from Delib. Most typical consultations led by Leicester City Council follow the "We asked, You said, We did" engagement approach. Further information on standard consultations can be found here: https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/we_asked_you_said/. The focus and preferred consultation option for LCC has always been traditional approaches, though the Covid-19 pandemic has somewhat impacted on this and approaches now include digital elements also.

Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

1.2 Outcomes

The key project outcomes from this engagement approach:

• Decrease in officer time and resources.
• Improved number of positive sentiments expressed by the local community and change in opinions of the Stocking Farm masterplan proposals. • Higher quality of returned survey responses through clarity of information provided.
• Improved use of digital technology in a deprived area of Leicester city. • Increased levels of youth engagement through targeted outreach.

1.3 Opportunities:

The PropTech digital engagement fund allowed the team to extend the engagement strategy, which included targeted youth engagement such as the digital classroom toolkit and provide a wealth of resources available at the Stocking Farm in-person events such digital iPads and large interactive TV screens, which would not have been a standard inclusion in LCC's usual engagement approach.

1.4 Funding Review:

Breakdown of costs for the resources, materials and tools required for the public engagement approach:

	Amount Bid	Amount Spent
Officer time / Backfill Role	£27,500	£27, 500
Digital Application	£12, 500	£12, 500
Stakeholder Engagement & Analysis	£11,250	£11, 250
Social Media Advertising	£4,250	£4, 250
Digital Classroom Kit	£4,250	£4, 250
Architect Storyboarding & Audio Narration	£7,500	£7,500
Virtual Drop-in Sessions	£3,500	-
Hybrid drop-in sessions	£4,500	£4, 500
Graphic design and printing costs	£2,500	£3,500
Letters to residents	£5,000	£6000
Equipment hire	£4,000	£5500

Total	£86, 750	£86, 750

Budget line items reflections:

• As shown in the table above the team did offer virtual drop-in sessions in the run-up to the in-person consultation to ensure opportunities for those who were unable to make the in-person dates had the chance to speak to members of the project team. The community were given opportunities to book an online one-to-one session hosted on Microsoft Teams on either Wednesday 4th or Thursday 5th of May 2022, however no online meetings were booked by the public.

PropTech Engagement Fund - Round 2

2 Lessons Learned

The lessons learned as part of the Stocking Farm engagement phases are for all three stages of consultation (i.e including the Proptech phase but also prior) as the team feel there were lessons learnt throughout which are equally relevant and therefore these are included in the table below:

Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
Onboarding: PropTech suppliers, additional consultants, and internal teams	LCC communications team were sighted on the project when the project team applied for the funding. It was felt external funding would be beneficial at this point in time to support and alleviate resource issues for the LCC Comms Team who were dealing with priority covid communications on behalf of public health at that time. Unusually it was LCC Development Team that took forward the PropTech opportunity due to the national covid situation.	-To engage with internal stakeholders early in the process to ensure all expertise can be used in the engagement strategy. -With hindsight, given the resource situation it would have been useful to have a longer period for the funding application submission.
Campaign Development: developing marketing and engagement strategies. This might also include developing survey questions, platform content, or user research.	-For the development of the Stocking Farm online engagement platform content, Deetu created a storyboarding process that helped to build the narrative throughout the 3 stages of engagement. This was created on a 'live' excel sheet that could be edited by the project team members. -In devising the survey questions for stage 1 which was mainly aimed to understand the existing community and retail uses a series of questions were asked on 'how regular these services are used'. For example, asking how frequently the community used the post office led to the misconception that the post office would be completely removed as part of the proposals.	-As a project team this storyboarding format was useful, however if the actual website was presented sat alongside this document, it would have helped the non-designers in visioning of how the site would look. -From this the team understood how the sequencing of questions can lead to misleading conceptions about the proposals, therefore perhaps a user group could feedback on the sequencing of questions before it goes live. Supplier's Deetu have suggested that there are methods now whereby they can commission

	- Between the various stages of public engagement there was misinformation created among the community. Due the covid-19 pandemic the City Council chose to conduct engagement online, however, to provide opportunities for those who did not have access to technology, paper copy of the surveys was made available at the local convenience store, as all local council buildings were closed. However, the store owner was also a key stakeholder in the project and all responses from the paper surveys were coincidentally slightly in favour of the views potentially held by the local shopkeeper. - The digital tool was always designed to work across all devices and browsers, including mobile phones, but there was an initial assumption across the team that Stocking Farm, due to its high levels of deprivation, is a digitally deprived area. However, this proved to not be the case and for Stage 1, 73% of visitors to the tool accessed it via mobile phone. By Stage 3, this figure rose to 90%.	people (user research group) in advance to to test the process and questions and submit responses. -From this, the council project team, going forwards into stage 3 briefed the stakeholders beforehand and that access to the paper surveys were held in a neutral location as it is unlikely to influence the outcome of survey responses. - This shows that it is important to not make assumptions on the target demographic, but to stay open-minded and aware of the different ways people may access any online materials (e.g. desktop computer, mobile phone, etc). The approach from the beginning was to make the tool accessible to as many people as possible. By utilising a multi-stage approach, it was possible to analyse usage of the tool in that first stage and continue to tailor the tool to the audience through the following stages.

Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Campaign launch and management: working with suppliers to 'go live', attending in person / hybrid events, troubleshooting tech issues	The set-up of boards and interactive display of masterplan proposals at the in-person event could have been conducted differently, rather than a formal exhibition board style event.	Given the in-person event was held in the brand new community zone (which is available for public hire), the City Council initially thought it would be a good opportunity to showcase this brand-new space for the community to use. However, in hindsight perhaps an informal coffee morning would have been more appropriate, breaking down those formal barriers that can often discourage members of the public to participate. The main problem being the new Community Space is separated from the main public area, which required people to make a conscious effort to visit the space.
Campaign wrap-up: Closing campaigns, running analysis, agreeing next steps	Further breakdown of the information presented i.e., how many people listened to the audio narration? Was it successful? Analysis showed that the 7 audio tracks on the Stage 3 were listened to a total of 137 times. The ability to speedily analyse the data from the digital tool between stages of engagement allowed us to better understand the community and how residents use the local facilities. For example, Stage 1 showed that most residents who use the shop live, arrived on foot from the west of the site. The design team had previously naturally assumed the facilities would attract people equi-distantly. It soon became apparent that people living to the east of the shops were less likely to use the	By including the audio narration, it opened up the reach of the digital tool to more users, particularly those who may be partially sighted. Although the tool is compatible with screen readers, the narration by a member of the project team (in this case Tim Sloan, architect) sought to make this experience friendlier and more personable. It was useful for the design team to know from the outset that there were multiple stages of engagement to move through during the design process. The extra time invested in this approach feels worthwhile, as it allowed the team to introduce the scheme gradually to the community, leading to there being very little resistance against the scheme. Ultimately this

	facilities most likely due to the significant topography in the area, which would require them to ascend a steep hill to reach the facilities. They are also possibly attracted to larger discount chains to the east of their neighbourhood. This influenced change of masterplan design from the new community shop being placed in the east, to being placed in the west, closer to these residents.	helped to de-risk the project.
Feedback loops: e.g. developing opportunities for ongoing feedback from the community, following up with people who responded to the consultation, sharing consultation insights with key stakeholders	Ensuring feedback loops through keeping up project communication momentum with five editions of newsletters to 2.200+ local residents and stakeholders at pertinent points throughout the project (see Appendix A). Working with local stakeholders- Nisa shop	
Other?	-To carry out further youth engagement, despite the targeted outreach such as the Design the House of the Future competition and the Digital classroom toolkit (targeting secondary-year 10 Geography students). -Consider other local primary schools (to target younger age ranges) as not all school children living near the proposed scheme do attend the nearest primary school (opposite the site). Engagement from the most local school was low. -Establishing a baseline prior engagement.	-To get local primary and secondary schools on board early on in the process to increase levels of youth engagement. To seek opportunities to work with local youth groups in the area such as those who regularly use the onsite multi-use games area (MUGA). -Targeting the Geography syllabus was a useful way to garner the interests of local schools. Being able to offer a whole lesson that teachers could run self-sufficiently appeared to stimulate their interest to be involved. This engagement has since led to career talks etc with the school.

2.1 Additional Reflections:

Approach to engagement (timelines and tools adopted):

• For the online community outreach a multi-stage engagement process was key in ensuring the success of the public engagement strategy. Keeping the community informed throughout de-risked the project in the lead up to the submission of the planning application (August 2022). To date no negative comments have been made on the planning portal website by members of the public, which can be attributed to the extensive community engagement strategies implemented. A more detailed breakdown of the programme and timeline of events is shown below (extracted from the Statement of Community Involvement see Appendix B) across the three stages of engagement.

• Throughout the three stages of engagement five newsletters were sent out to 2200+ residents in the area which provided them updates on the previous stages of public engagement, Community Shop updates, memories of Stocking Farm and what to expect next. These newsletters proved useful for the local residents as the council received positive feedback from the community during the in-person consultation (see Appendix A).

Youth engagement tools used:

• Design the House of the Future Competition- It was recognised that following the first stage of formal engagement that there was little engagement from the under 18s (the largest age group in the area according to the 2011 census data). Therefore, a young people's 'design the house of the future' competition was held with the local and primary schools

• Digital Classroom toolkit- A bespoke website for students of a local secondary school was created - https://my.engaged.space/babington-academy/#about-tab. Opportunities arose for Stocking Farm for increased youth engagement. Stocking Farm was the perfect case study required in the Geography GCSE syllabus in relation to their Urban Change module to illustrate "how urban change has created opportunities", and as an example of an "urban regeneration project to show reasons why the area needed regeneration and the main features of the project" (as quoted directly from the syllabus). The digital classroom toolkit was self-sufficient in that no officer time was required for the teaching which eased pressure on LCC resources needed. Also, the classroom toolkit is a model that can be used again next year therefore provided value for money and proved to be an excellent method to increase levels of youth engagement. Perhaps the only 'downside' to this approach was that it wasn't necessarily focusing on students who lived in the project area or used the facilities there (i.e., were familiar with the area). Other comments could have been received which carried less weight as they were not familiar with the area, but were encouraged to submit a response as part of their school work.

Additional support and guidance required from DLUHC:

• On reflection of this project, it would have been useful if there was additional guidance and bespoke workshops on youth engagement which signpost to

available tools to utilise. The third stage of engagement saw the same patterns emerging from the previous two stages of engagement, where there was a significant lack of engagement from the under 18's age group, which were evidently the largest age group in the area according to the local census data. In the future, if further engagement was carried out in this way a better relationship with the local primary school and local youth groups would have been more beneficial to increase levels of youth engagement. Perhaps forging better connections with these stakeholders would also increase the uptake of youth engagement.

Choosing Deetu as the community engagement supplier:

• Given that LCC is aiming for Stocking Farm to be an exemplar project, LCC felt that the complexities associated with the Stocking Farm community justified the need for a vigorous engagement methodology. Given that Deetu conducted stage 1 and 2 of the Stocking Farm public engagement with LCC, Deetu were very familiar with the project and its complex nature, therefore it seemed obvious that LCC should continue to procure Deetu as the supplier given how close they were to the project and their previous success with the first two rounds of engagement.

3 Pilot Outcomes

3.1 Proposed Outcomes:

One of the pilot's outcomes was aiming to **increase the number of residents engaging with Planning related matters** in relation to the regeneration of the Stocking Farm area. Across the engagement periods, 453 respondents provided a valid postcode. 95% (431) of survey respondents lived with a 2km radius of the Stocking Farm illustrative site boundary (see Figure 6 and 7), demonstrating a hyper local consultation that truly reflected the views of the local community.

Another pilot outcome was aimed to reduce officer time and resources associated with running in-person consultations. Officer time was reduced through the speed of data analysis that Deetu were able to conduct, in comparison to manually having to input data and analyse thereafter. The use of digital technologies has also provided the ability to cross analyse and disaggregate data, layer information maps and to find common themes between the data, which was timesaving for LCC. The quality of outcomes derived proved useful for the Stocking Farm design team in informing certain masterplan elements of the proposal.

Lastly, another outcome was to continue with progress on adopting digital engagement strategies by pushing the boundaries of digital engagement in a deprived area.

3.2 Baseline Data

Whilst there is no like-for-like existing baseline data to use for this project LCC's Survey of Leicester provided a useful overview of the demographics in Leicester and aimed to better understand the lives of Leicester's residents, their households, and

Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

communities, with an emphasis on how they interact with the internet, media and the council. The survey, carried out in Autumn 2021, also aimed to understand how Covid-19 has impacted on the lives of Leicester residents. Despite being a city-wide survey, it can be broken down and further analysed into area specific data such as Stocking Farm data only. The outcomes of the survey provided a useful overview of the area and their levels of digital deprivation, understanding this kind of information helped to understand the kinds of engagement approach that the council could adopt in relation to the use of digital technology for engagement and consultation. In total, 3,272 valid responses, aged18+ with a Leicester postcode, were collected. Around 40% were collected by fieldworkers and 60% online. The sample was reasonably representative of Leicester's adult population.

Another useful consultation delivered by another team and referred to the City Council's 'We asked, You Said' approach would be the consultation regarding opinions on traffic calming measures in an area of the city. Outcomes were that only seven responses were received to the online consultation (using the Citizen Space platform), five were within the consultation delivery area and two were elsewhere in Leicester city. A paper consultation to residents in the area was also carried out where 88 letters were delivered. 39 paper responses including five by online consultation which was a 44% response rate. 31 (77%) were in favour of the proposed traffic calming, 8 (18%) against and 2 (5%) were unsure (including the two responses outside the area). As a result of the support of the proposal, the City Mayor has approved the implementation of the scheme which is scheduled to be installed in the spring 2020.

3.3 Measurement Challenges

Due to the lack of consultations and the anomaly of the Covid-19 pandemic it has been difficult to quantitatively measure the impact of the consultation. That said, the team, senior management, City Mayor and Executive team, the design team and

Deetu were all very pleased with the engagement response rates and information published.

3.4 Demographics

Demographic data was collected via the online survey available on the Deetu engaged space platform. Survey questions on demographic information included postcode, age, and sex.

Age- Figure 8 shows that a range of ages from under 18-65 responded to the online survey across all three stages. Responses from the young age group 18-24 made up less than 10% of the total across the three stages, reflecting the need for targeted youth engagement via the digital classroom toolkit with local secondary schools. Residents aged 45-54 were the most common respondent during stage 3 (35% of total across the three stages).

For the in-person event held at the Stocking Farm community shop in May 2022, 43 members of the community visited in the event (N.b this was the number of people

spoken to in the building on the day, not just the 28 who visited the exhibition in the community space.) held and spoke to various members of the project team. Over 50% of local residents who attended the in-person event were 65+ and no residents 18-24 attended the physical event.

Sex-Women were the largest proportion of responses across all three stages of engagement, contributing to 60% of all respondents as shown Figure 9. As a team we are always very keen to disaggregate data based on sex/gender to understand different usage patterns of facilities and space.

The demographic breakdown of the Stocking Farm engagement practices in comparison to previous consultation responses as outlined in the Survey of Leicester consultation show similar patterns in terms of survey respondents according to age. For the Survey of Leicester, there was a significant gap between survey respondents' age bands and Leicester's demographic profile. Older age groups (36+) were overrepresented and younger age groups, particularly 18–25-year-olds, were under-represented.

3.5 Cost Effectiveness

Saving officer time (to which there is cost, and a trade-off to undertake other work) was a definite obvious benefit to the project. The additional Proptech funding allowed the team to use Deetu as a resource to produce complementary material for the in person event. Their knowledge of the digital element enabled them to dovetail other material in with ease.

If the consultation had been undertaken in a more traditional (non-digital) manner then it could be expected that officers would have been required to attend in-person events at each one of the three engagement stages. The opportunity to disseminate information about the scheme digitally reduced officer time 'on the ground/on foot' (e.g. knocking on doors to rouse interest in the project) significantly.

It has been difficult to quantify actual cost savings on this project given that all three engagement stages were completed digitally i.e. there was no phase (true baseline) to compare against.

4. Community Feedback

4.1 Summary of community consultation

Below summarises the focus of each stage of engagement:
  • Stage 1 sought to understand demand for facilities, frequency of use and local sentiment of the retail and community facilities in the area. This initial phase of engagement raised the prospect of council housing in the area. A total of 241 responses received and findings led to design changes in the masterplan (see

section 5).

• Stage 2 of consultation re-confirmed findings of phase 1, where the City Council shared a generic layout of the proposed site to seek opinion. Questions relating to what the community would like to see in the development proposals were asked to the community (see Figure 10). A total of 141 responses received and findings provided general support for proposals.

• Stage 3, focused on design detail ahead of the planning application submission and a total of 141 responses received and findings provided general support for proposals. As well as the online engagement website which shared detailed masterplan proposals, an in-person event was also held at the Stocking Farm Community Shop over 6th and 7th May 2022 providing opportunity for all to comment. Twenty-eight people attended (with the majority aged 65+ years old.), although staff briefly spoke to an additional 15 members of the community outside of the room. A total of 130 responses were received online. Findings affirmed understandings of the community needs from stage 1 and 2 and shared the illustrative masterplan of the site ahead of planning application submission enabling a smoother Planning approval process.

Over the three phases of engagement, the City Council and Deetu were surprised by the digital maturity of the area in that 95% of residents responded digitally as most of the responses were accessed via mobile phones. See breakdown of different models used to access the website below in Figure 11.

On reflection, whilst this community is in a deprived area of Leicester it should not be assumed that digital deprivation is also high. The Covid-19 pandemic is also a contributing factor that raises the levels of digital accessibility in this area.

4.2 Summary of community responses:

• From the engagement, the post-analysis and key themes from the scheme had an overall positive comment about the regeneration of the site and the introduction of council homes. Approximately, half of the comments suggested that the proposals would make them feel safer in their local area. The feedback confirmed that there is a positive and general desire to improve the current conditions of the site through the regeneration plans proposed at Stocking Farm.

• There was a general positive response to the inclusion of new council homes in the proposals, the third stage of engagement strengthened this positive sentiment when more detailed proposals of the masterplan was shared with the community.

• Some respondents shared fears of losing the local shops and green space to new housing. There were also comments relating to the concerns about increased on-street parking and the potential loss of current parking facilities in the area.

• Other aspects of the scheme have been received well, such as the installation of the new pedestrian crossing along Marwood Road. Several members of the

community agreed that the crossing would improve safety near the school as well.

- Uncertainty about the relocation of the Multi-Use-Games-Area (MUGA) and where provision would be re-provided was a common theme.

5. Delivery on Feedback

All the feedback as part of this third stage of engagement has been taken on board and reviewed by the project team. During the phases of engagement, the learnings and understanding have, to an extent, influenced and changed elements of the masterplan proposals. For example, from postal code analysis and 'heat maps' which allow to map where responses are collected from indicated that concentration of respondent were focused on the west of the site suggesting this is where most footfall occurs given the topography of the site as well. Project architects then considered these as design elements within the final masterplan proposals.

Regarding the issues raised in relation to on-street parking for example the design team have included designated parking areas in the proposals and have provided on-street parking for the additional new homes, addressing concerns raised during the consultation.

Concerns raised against the loss of green and open space, the design and project team have organised a further engagement co-design workshop to help initiate ideas for the children's play space and outdoor area. At the third stage of engagement the team collected details of those attendees that would like to participate and will be contacted later this year/early 2023.

In response to the loss of the MUGA the design team are working with internal sports team to consider other nearby sites.

6. Community Testimonials:

Anonymous quotes from Stage 3 survey responses/in-person event: • [Online survey response in relation to the proposals & engagement] *"you're doing a good job"*
- [Online survey response in relation to the proposals & engagement] *"I am happy with all and my kids will be so happy with the park as they told me to put that in my proposals when we did stage 2"*
- When surveyed at the Stage 3 in-person event, respondents gave the event and access to information about the proposals an average positive rating of 9.2 out of 10.
- [Verbal quote from female attendee to the Stage 3 in-person event] *"Thank you, that was very informative"*

Anonymous quotes from Babington Academy pupils (GCSE Geography): • *"I think the proposals have been very well thought out and [planned], very impressive"*
- *"I feel [it is] a very good regeneration [where] there is green and [natural] resources to socialise"*

Quote from Babington Academy secondary school geography teacher (involved in the roll out of the digital classroom toolkit):

- *The digital classroom toolkit was really useful for showing students how a place can be regenerated. I think the main point that was stated was it doesn't matter how much regeneration Stocking Farm got it would still have negative connotations attached to it. Whether this could be looked at in the new reveal of the area to try and diminish these stereotypes"*

7. Conclusions and Policy Reflections

7.1 Final Conclusions on project

Overall, the engagement approach that the City Council undertook for stage 3 of public engagement was very successful in terms of reaching wider audiences using various digital and hybrid engagement strategies. At the time of writing the Stocking Farm estate regeneration project has now submitted a full planning application to the local planning authority and is awaiting determination. On reflection, in the future to increase engagement with the younger demographic, it would be useful to carry out more engagement with the local schools and increase levels of targeted youth engagement.

It is hoped that the engagement methodology will act as a guiding framework for other estate regeneration projects within the council. There is scope to adopt a more outcome driven methods of consultation and that the City Council will continue to trial methods of digital consultation with regards to estate regeneration led projects. Potential barriers that could prevent engagement approaches like this would be obtaining funding. Financial costs and resources (officer time) of implementing a vigorous engagement methodology is perhaps the biggest obstacle local authorities are challenged with, currently the team believe the best digital approach would need to be completed with a traditional approach to ensure those members of the community who do not have access to the online platform still have a voice.

7.2 Future support from DLUHC:

It is thought that DLUHC could better support local authorities in further adoption of engagement tools through:

- Setting out a more focused agenda on just youth engagement and outreach. It is clear young people are perhaps the most difficult community to reach, therefore it would be useful to have a separate funding pot that is focused on youth engagement tools and techniques as some engagement options ideally would use trained youth engagement workers to obtain the best results.
- In the future it would be useful to see a monitoring and evaluation framework for local authorities to utilise- e.g., identification of a standard format for consultation monitoring, it is thought that this would essentially form more baselines to compare consultation outcomes against.
- Training documents for the use of digital engagement tools that can be supplied to internal Comms teams to help raise awareness and draw attention to the benefits of using online tools. Additional training tools also

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

that will help the transition to digital.
  • Comms streams that flag upcoming DLUHC funding opportunities for local
    authorities to apply at the earliest opportunity, as without funding much of the
    digital engagement approaches would be difficult to implement.

7.3 Policy reflections:

The government guidance on Plan-making was updated in July 2020 in response to
the COVID-19 pandemic which saw new paragraphs added to explain how
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) should be reviewed and updated in
accordance with the latest guidance notes.

Paragraph 78 of the guidance states that "Local planning authorities are strongly
encouraged to use online engagement methods to their full potential". In addition to
this Paragraph 79 mentions how "Local planning authorities should consider how
they can continue to promote effective community engagement by means which are
reasonably practicable, in particular to reach those sections of the community that do
not have internet access". It would be useful in the future for there to be further
guidance on and suggestions of how local authorities can go about adopting
'effective community engagement' and explain more fully what is meant by the term
'effective' for government so that Officers can work towards this ideal.

Leicester City Council adopted their SCI in 2019, however due to the COVID-19
pandemic, a temporary SCI addendum was produced detailing alternative
stakeholder and community engagement communications methods where limitations
were in place on 'traditional' engagement options. The SCI encourages those
intending to submit planning applications for large scale developments to consult
with local communities and ward councilors before making their planning
applications.

Whilst no existing national or local planning limited the team's ability to achieve the
outcomes for this project, it would have been useful to have further guidance on
implementing digital technologies with communities, particularly those seldom heard
communities. It should be noted that none of the three community engagements
carried out for Stocking Farm Estate Regeneration were statutory consultations but
were used to involve the public, understand demands of use in the area, share early
design proposals for comment, and to seek views on the design proposals before a
planning application was submitted.