



PropTech Engagement Fund Round 2

Final Report

October 2022

Havant

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Local Planning Authority	Havant Borough Council
Date Report Submitted	27 October 2022



Executive Summary

Region	South East
LA Rural-Urban Classification Category	Large Urban
Project summary	The pilot project was to digitally engage with the community on the recent refurbishment of two play areas (Waterlooville and Emsworth) and on two play areas that are due to undergo refurbishment (Front Lawn and Bidbury Mead) using CIL funding. This will inform future play area design and refurbishment, which supports our corporate priority of reducing childhood obesity.
Funding allocated	£83,450
Supplier(s) Appointed	CitizenLab, Sally Fairall and Associates Ltd, SmartSurvey
Consultation Topic	The needs of the local community in play area design. This supports our Leisure team in refurbishing sites with equipment and facilities that increase and encourage uptake and usage of play areas, which in turn supports our aim of increasing physical activity and reducing childhood obesity.
Consultation Outcomes	The high-quality comments and recommendations have fed directly into the procurement specifications when looking for suppliers to refurbish future sites.
Consultation dates	The digital engagement was live from 2 August to 9 September.



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1.0 Project Summary

- **Summary:** provide a high-level overview of the project in a few sentences or bullet points. If applicable, include links to your project website and/or images of consultation materials.
- **Status quo pre-PropTech:** how did your local authority approach planning consultations before you received PropTech funding?
- **Outcomes:** what did the project achieve? Summarise the main impacts in a few bullet points, a table, or other format. Note: there is a section dedicated to project outcomes further on in this report so only include a high-level summary here.
- **Opportunities:** what did the funding allow you to do that you wouldn't have been able to do otherwise?
- **Funding review:** we are working to help other LPAs budget in the future and understand where you encountered surprises. Please fill out the table below and include any additional reflections about the funding in the text box underneath the table. For example: was more/less funding needed than you expected and for what elements? With the benefit of hindsight, how would you re-do your budget if you were starting this project again?

Summary

This was the first digital community engagement project that Havant Borough Council has run. The aim of the project was to engage with those in the community about play areas in the borough, specifically what equipment and facilities they would like to be included at refurbished sites in the future. This supports our corporate priority aim for a safe environment that encourages healthier and more active residents.

<https://havant.citizenlab.co/en-GB/folders/play-areas>

Status quo pre-PropTech

Before PropTech funding, the authority did not have a digital engagement platform or capability to actively engage with residents and other stakeholders. Typically, planning consultations had taken traditional methods such as face-to-face exhibitions and meetings and conducting online surveys.

Outcomes

The key outcomes of this project were as follows:

- Engaged with 244 residents (52% of those aged 40 and under – a target group that the authority has been less likely to hear from in the past)
- Provided actionable recommendations on what should be included in future refurbishment of play areas. This has been included in specifications for procurement for two upcoming sites (Bidbury Mead and Front Lawn)
- Provided recommendations and considerations for future play area design and refurbishment
- Has given the authority an active digital community to ask them their views about



refurbishment of another play area site that has come forward (Springwood) due to UKSPF funding.

Opportunities

The funding gave Havant Borough Council the opportunity to acquire a digital community engagement platform, something that the council did not have before. This has enabled the authority to build a digital community (we now have 315 users on the site) to engage on a variety of different corporate projects. The digital functionality allows us to gather feedback from resident quickly on ideas and proposals. It also allows us to “close the feedback loop” and share findings and how this informs decision-making and next steps of a project.

Funding review

	Amount Bid	Amount Spent
Digital Engagement Platform 1yr basic licence	£23,500	£34,700 - CitizenLab 2-year licence – Including Premium Upgrade
Social media	£6,500	£119.99 Kinemaster software for TikTok videos £300 Facebook promotion and boosting
Software customisation – SmartSurvey and Konveio inclusion	£3,450	£2,700 (SmartSurvey) £6,750 (Konveio Premium)
Project Delivery	£20,000	£13,000
Communications	£5,000	£3,768.75 (Sally Fairhall Assc – citizen recruitment agency) £3,739.53 (4x iPad Pros with cases for on-site survey completion) @£14,000 (in process of procuring 5x 50inch touch screen terminals to be sited in Council community centres in the 5 areas of the borough for citizens to interact through the CitizenLab platform with the Council’s projects and plans)
Design	£25,000	£4,055.19 (Mac book Pro and Creative Cloud for internal Design)



		officer to significantly improve quality and timing of output
TOTAL	£83,450	£83,450

In terms of a funding review we based the initial bid figures on a 1 year CommonPlace contract. As it turned out CitizenLab was the preferred supplier and for not too much more we were able to secure a two year premium licence together with supplemental software from SmartSurvey and Konveio. These software add-ons bring significant improvements to the corporate engagement platform with built in integration with CitizenLab which will reap benefits as the whole engagement programme evolves for both the Local Plan and specific council projects, e.g., regeneration masterplans for Waterlooville, Havant town centres and Hayling Island Seafont.

The low social media spend is a lesson learnt in that we have excellent internal officers in the communications team who have worked in the project team approach to get the messages out there through our channels successfully without having to bring in expensive consultants, which was the initial approach being considered.

Similarly with the design of the engagement our in-house creative designer was able to create visual content relatively easily for the initial play park project and insert it into the relatively simple CitizenLab platform. Our Insight manager was able to create the written content alongside the visuals for the relatively simple pilot play park project very effectively by working internally with the leisure team officers. Therefore, the positive internal teamwork has both brought out our skills and meant we did not need to bring in external specialists at considerable cost.

The positive interest that this project has created has given the team members a sense of pride in being involved in something really innovative for Havant BC, that has clearly shifted our approach and all at a time when morale could have been low due to the 'split'. We have therefore used funding that was initially envisaged to have gone on external consultants on procuring equipment that the whole council can use to increase our citizen digital engagement.

The project has enabled Havant BC to successfully undertake the technical exercise in procuring an 'off the shelf' digital engagement platform. However, it has realised so much more, perhaps through its timing, it has galvanised a variety of council officers around an innovative and transformational approach to our citizens. This has the potential to be a catalyst for ongoing whole council transformation which brings citizens views into the co-creation of policy and on the ground development projects.



2.0 Lessons Learned

As part of developing guidance for best practice, we want to understand the lessons learned at each stage of your project. We know that these project stages might look different for different projects so feel free to edit the table to reflect your particular experience. Please provide as much detail as possible as these insights will be integral to developing national best practice guidance. Where applicable, please share links or attachments to supplementary evidence such as a copy of your business case, supplier briefs etc. These can be included in the appendices at the end of the report.

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>	<p>Havant Borough Council (HBC) (Former Head of Planning, currently a P/T Regeneration Project Manager) and East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) (Funding Manager) received emails from Commonplace on 16 December 2021 advising us of the funding opportunity. Both people being on Commonplace’s database as previous purchasers of Commonplace. It was therefore a little random that HBC became aware of the funding opportunity.</p> <p>The opportunity was very welcome as HBC had just finished engagement on a Hayling Seafront Ambition Plan that garnered a lot of responses from the usual demographic that responds to planning and regeneration proposals – i.e., largely retired/older people. Whilst the engagement had attempted to be innovative by introducing an online comment mapping tool, that turned out to be very clunky; requiring</p>	<p><i>As a small council Havant can be relatively agile to move forward opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>The key lessons are that the right person with a real interest in the opportunity needs to get involved from the start, have capacity to progress it and some influence and leadership ability within the organisation.</i></p> <p><i>The short timescales for the submission (Over Christmas break as well) meant that the opportunities for formal process for agreement were limited. Exacerbated in our case by the council split taking over!</i></p> <p><i>As a relatively small (and now even smaller) council HBC has a small group of officers involved in the Council’s whole engagement activity. Therefore, involving those corporately focused officers, rather than just the planners,</i></p>



Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
	<p>respondents to identify the location they wanted to comment on – then fill in a separate online form followed by council officers having to transfer the comments to the location in the back office through a separate process.</p> <p>This experience highlighted the need to upgrade the planning and overall council engagement toolbox, to improve useability and attract more diverse engagement.</p> <p>The PropTech funding was therefore very timely. The funding would enable an up to date off the shelf product to be procured to significantly upgrade the council’s engagement tools.</p> <p>The HBC Regeneration Project Manager took the lead on the project/bid as he had a longstanding interest in improving community engagement and therefore promoted the opportunity within the council via CEO, Director and Head of Service and gained general support to submitting a bid to the fund. It was all relatively informal. Pre-Christmas an initial investigation into the products was undertaken and demos arranged for the new year, together with an initial idea for using the tool for a community project that we had recently gained funding (Economies for Healthy Lives).</p> <p>In the New Year East Hampshire and Havant</p>	<p><i>meant there was a holistic perspective for transforming the whole council’s engagement performance rather than focused just on planning.</i></p> <p><i>The application form was focused and relatively straightforward which enabled the tight deadline to be met without the need to get external advice or too many internal people’ input.</i></p>



Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
	<p>politicians agreed that our 12-year partnership and shared teams would be split and separate CEO, Directors, Heads of Service etc would need to be sorted out. This situation became the main event of the councils, so the PropTech bid was left to the small officer group to progress.</p> <p>As we had already had general agreement to submitting a bid the officers involved carried on with the submission and copied in the relevant Director and Head of Service when submitting to DLUHC on 25 January. No formal report to the Executive Board or any member board was undertaken – probably because of the Big Split and no slots on appropriate agendas. The Bid submission was effectively the business case.</p>	
<p>Procurement: developing supplier brief and project budget</p>	<p>HBC got confirmation that the bid was successful on 1 March 2022. That news was kept internal until the formal news release on 21 March. During that initial period the regeneration project manager started project planning to identify the internal officers who would need to be involved and they were appraised of the successful bid. Further demos from CommonPlace and CitizenLab took place. The advice from DLUHC was invaluable at this point in terms of using G-Cloud for the procurement due to the short</p>	<p><i>Leadership to provide a wider vision of the benefits and get a varied cohort interested to provide their time to the project.</i></p> <p><i>As much detail as possible in the bid submission pays dividends in drawing up the supplier brief.</i></p> <p><i>Ability to do various searches on the G-Cloud was useful to see the variety of suppliers in one place and compare their solutions.</i></p>



Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
	<p>timescales for the funding.</p> <p>Advice was sought from the council's procurement team and solicitors on the use of G-Cloud, which they were not familiar with. However, with the tight timescale they adapted to the necessity and joined in with the DLUHC webinars on this for assurance. Bob Macleod's advice was very useful through this process.</p> <p>The bid submission principles remained the main supplier brief and project budget document.</p> <p>The DLUHC webinars on 16, 17 March; 6, 7 April, further demos from Commonplace and Citizenlab ,together with browsing other suppliers on the web and G Cloud, plus other approaches from suppliers who picked up on the funding award all played a part in the evolution about how HBC could most effectively use the funding.</p> <p>Brought in the Council's Insight team manager at an early stage for their expertise in this field and her specific experience with some of the suppliers in her previous role. Whilst the initial project was planning/regeneration related (at that point) it was always envisaged that the platform would be used corporately and so the corporate Insight team would be the longer-term users/managers.</p>	<p><i>One product 'Build-IT' that looked very interesting was not on the G-Cloud and therefore the advice I received from colleagues was that it would take several weeks longer to do the procurement or go for some form of exemption. The exemption was not justifiable as the product was similar to others. This shows that the promotion of getting on the right framework for suppliers is very important.</i></p> <p><i>The words that the suppliers put into their G-Cloud submissions is crucial as that sets out how you select a winner. Tricky for the suppliers to know which words will be key to buyers' searches.</i></p> <p><i>Listening and engaging with the suppliers to understand how their products work for your situations is very important. Whilst suppliers always say they can do anything (at a price and after some time) you need to be clear on what the product does now.</i></p> <p><i>Find out who in your organisation has any previous experience with these products and get them involved as early as possible.</i></p>



Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
<p>Procurement: finding and appointing a supplier(S)</p>	<p>After trying out the G-Cloud searches a few times a date was set to make the final selection. A virtual meeting with lead officer (Regeneration Project Manager) two procurement officers and a lawyer was convened on 3 May and the selection made using key words from the Bid Submission (a distilled version of the criteria is at Appendix B). The key word search proved satisfactory to get three final searches, which was reduced to a single supplier after the other two's offers were assessed as niche and not the overall package that was being sought.</p> <p>This online process was witnessed by the procurement officer and lawyer who were satisfied. CitizenLab was selected, mainly on the basis that it is a broad-based platform that has a range of features and is being invested in by the company. The other front runner, CommonPlace, came across more as a tool for individual projects that didn't necessarily knit together corporately. It was also twice the price of CitizenLab.</p> <p>After the selection was completed CitizenLab were told on the 3 May of the decision, as were Commonplace.</p> <p>CitizenLab suggested that we use the G-Cloud call off contract template for consistency. The HBC lead drafted as much as possible within the</p>	<p><i>The procurement process is formal and potentially audited. Therefore, it is essential that a solicitor and a procurement specialist is involved.</i></p> <p><i>Keep a positive relationship going with all potential suppliers, even if they are ultimately not selected.</i></p> <p><i>The provision of a 'call-off' contract template was essential in getting the very tight timelines agreed as there was no need for lawyers to start trying to create their own style</i></p>



Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
	<p>template, got CitizenLab to fill in as much of their bit as possible and then sought views on the draft from the HBC procurement and legal officers by 12 May 2022, who provided a few extra comments. On 19 May the agreed final draft contract was sent to the Council's CEO and S151 officers for their agreement to sign together with a narrative on the process undertaken and the benefits that would accrue. Confirmation was given by the CEO on 20 May and the signed contract returned to CitizenLab.</p>	<p><i>on this which always ends up wasting time and money as solicitors will always have their own different perspectives!</i></p> <p><i>A clear explanation of the benefits to the whole council of the procurement to the CEO, and more importantly the CEO being interested in the project enabled the CEO to quickly agree to the contract, whilst also seeking the agreement of the S151 officer who also raised no objection. The direct link to the CEO/S151 was due to the Council split as the heads of service were transferring to East Hampshire and so didn't feel it was their responsibility anymore – which worked positively to get it all moving as the project leads just pushed on as it all felt like it was the right thing to do.</i></p>
<p>Onboarding: Proptech suppliers, additional consultants, and internal teams</p>	<p>CitizenLab were very responsive once we had informed them of our decision on 3 May. The initial 'kick-off' meeting was arranged for 24 May to give time for the contract to be finalised, which was 20th May. The team had an opportunity to 'play' with the platform prior to the next two onboarding sessions which was useful to understand what it did and ask better questions at the next sessions. These were 'Participation Strategy' 30th June and 'Design and Build'</p>	<p><i>The tight deadlines focused the project team and our need to get an engagement project live meant that we quickly moved away from the initial 'Link Up Leigh Park' employment and training engagement to the relatively simple and ongoing play area refurbishments. As we were quite autonomous in our governance – it was the project team that made decisions we were able to quickly agree the shift in project focus. This agile approach</i></p>



Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
	<p>session on 7 July. During this period, we had regular project team meetings to make sure everyone knew what they needed to produce. It was during this period that the team decided to focus on the Play Park refurbishments- reviewing citizen feedback on two sites recently completed and seeking views on the next two sites to be refurbished. The Insight Manager started to construct the survey and the Citizenlab site on the Play Park refurb approach. We had a project plan (attached Appendix A) and had weekly team meetings to discuss next steps and progress.</p>	<p><i>was essential in focusing on a deliverable project. Whilst our particular situation with limited executive/Corporate governance due to the 'Split' meant we could just do stuff, as long as the team were all agreed; it shows the need to have inbuilt flexibility on such short deadline projects. If we had not had the split the extra governance may have been a hinderance: so, the lesson is to get the OK from the start that the team can work flexibly and agile to adapt to changing situations. It is also clear that the formal team meetings, Project plan and a positive belief in the project enabled our success.</i></p>
<p>Campaign Development: developing marketing and engagement strategies. This might also include developing survey questions, platform content, or user research.</p>	<p>As mentioned above, once onboarding with Citizenlab took place, the project team met every week to ensure momentum was kept and actions delivered. This included representatives from the Insight, Communications and Leisure teams, who were key in driving forward the marketing and engagement approaches.</p> <p>Our key development actions were as follows: Platform content: Insight and Communications worked together to build the Citizenlab site. This included visual content (such as videos and pictures), written content (explaining to residents what the project was about) and engagement content (survey questions and qualitative exercises.) As mentioned above, the team was</p>	<p><i>It was really important to bring in corporate resource (I.e. communications and insight) in to the project at the outset and to ensure they were part of weekly team meetings as campaign development was largely down to them, and important they are clear on timescales, objectives and actions for the project.</i></p> <p><i>As we had not run a digital engagement project before, we did not know how well promotion and recruitment to the site would be. Therefore, our three-pronged approach was felt to be the best way to monitor success to see the best approaches that we could learn for next time. Using Google Analytics, it</i></p>



Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
	<p>quite autonomous, so we created the content quickly and signed off internally in the project team. As ultimately the findings were to be used by our Leisure team (as they work directly with refurbishment suppliers), they had ultimate sign off on the content of the site to ensure it met their requirements.</p> <p>Marketing and engagement promotion: Our approach was threefold. Firstly, through council communication channels (such as social media) to promote the platform. Secondly, through our Leisure team who specifically has signage at the play areas and visited the sites to hand out business cards promoting the site. Thirdly, through professional recruitment, whereby we specifically targeted those who are less likely to engage through council communication channels and less likely to visit the play area sites in question. Professional recruiters were provided with “screeners” whereby we specifically asked demographic and behavioural questions to ensure we targeted a specific sample of residents and to gain a mix of backgrounds.</p>	<p><i>is clear that social media was very effective in encouraging participation to the site. There is a direct correlation with social media promotion and sign ups to the site. However, although this worked well for this project, we realise that this may not be the case for other projects, dependent on the subject matter, and likely will take a multi-method approach to promotion and recruitment in the future and continue to learn from this.</i></p> <p><i>It was also clear that due to the design of the site (and probably the subject matter) that our qualitative exercises had much higher engagement (and richer insights) than our quantitative survey. We monitored the responses coming in every day whilst the consultation was live, and we adjusted our approach accordingly. The nature of our project team and the platform meant that we could pivot and adapt accordingly. We kept our qualitative exercises open for longer due to the quality of responses we received.</i></p>
<p>Campaign launch and management: working with suppliers to ‘go live’, attending in person / hybrid events, troubleshooting tech issues</p>	<p>As the launch of our project was predominantly digital, this went smoothly. We set up a call with Citizenlab before the project went live to troubleshoot the site and they gave some further suggestions of how to boost engagement (for e.g. including videos). One of the officers in our</p>	<p><i>Would highly recommend that digital engagement platform providers troubleshoot with their clients before any of their projects go live, particularly their first one to ensure there are no tech issues at least on launch. Citizenlab also gave us advice and guidance</i></p>



Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
	<p>Leisure team has a drone, so he took some footage of one of the sites and we uploaded it as part of the visual content on the platform.</p> <p>The project team were clear at the outset on our launch and close date, therefore communications activity was scheduled accordingly.</p> <p>Our professional recruitment supplier was briefed during our development phase, so our professionally recruited participants were ready to access the site as soon as it went live.</p>	<p><i>on how to increase engagement and uptake, particularly as people are less likely to read “walls” of text and therefore how to make the site visually appealing, easy to understand information and therefore keen to take part. We are lucky that one of our officers has his own drone, as we do not have corporate equipment of this nature.</i></p> <p><i>It was important during our development phase that timescales were clear and actions attributed to officers, so that the site (and supporting communications for e.g.) were all ready for the launch.</i></p>
<p>Campaign wrap-up: Closing campaigns, running analysis, agreeing next steps</p>	<p>Due to the high level, and high quality, feedback we were receiving from participants through the site, the project team decided to extend the engagement for an additional week. Supporting communications went out through our council channels to promote this and to encourage final comments.</p> <p>We chose to not promote a “hard close” of the project, as our Leisure team informed us that we may have another site, Springwood, which we would also want to engage upon due to the use of UKSPF funding. The launch of this is happening at the beginning of November, encouraging an “ongoing engagement” approach.</p> <p>The team were also aware of the upcoming Reg 18 Local Plan consultation, which was due to</p>	<p><i>Due to the agile nature of the team and the platform, it was easy for us to make a quick decision to extend the closing date of the project. As our communications for this were mainly digital, it was easy for us to promote the extension.</i></p> <p><i>Corporately, the view is that the platform will facilitate a digital community, and key corporate projects will use the platform as a key engagement method by default.</i></p> <p><i>Therefore, there will continually be promotion and recruitment to the platform, and at least have one project “live” at all times. The hope is that this will continually encourage people to sign up, because the promotion is fresh but also that there is something for people to</i></p>



Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
	<p>launch 4 weeks later (and Citizenlab would be used as one of the engagement methods) and therefore wanted to promote to current users of the Citizenlab site that a new project would be launching that they could take part in if they so wish.</p> <p>The project team, through our weekly meetings, had already agreed our reporting deadlines, and that the analysis and reporting needed to be provided to the Leisure team by the end of September to enable them to write specifications to go out to procurement for suppliers to refurbish Front Lawn and Bidbury Mead sites.</p> <p>The analysis was undertaken by the Insight team. This was done through our survey platform (where graphs are automatically generated on closed questions) and through Citizenlab's reporting function on qualitative comments. These were analysed into themes.</p> <p>The report was prepared alongside key recommendations and provided to the Leisure team. This has now been used to create the procurement specifications and are currently out to tender.</p>	<p><i>actively engage with at all times. We are in open dialogue with Citizenlab on continuing to improve the functionality of the site, particularly in regard to analysis and reporting. We are lucky that we are working with a supplier who is actively engaged with continuing to invest in their platform to provide new features and enhanced functionality. It was important for us at the outset that we were clear on the needs and requirements of the Leisure team so that the platform design (the questions that were asked), the timescales, the analysis and reporting met their needs and actively fed into actionable results.</i></p>
<p>Feedback loops: e.g., developing opportunities for ongoing feedback from the community, following up with people who responded to the</p>	<p>As mentioned above, the success of this project means that it will be continued for the next play area site, Springwood, which has been brought forward due to UKSPF funding. Alongside this, we have also created (on advice</p>	<p><i>It is vital for any engagement project that participants feel listened to and that their contribution is valued/makes an impact. It is really important for us that we develop opportunities for ongoing feedback through</i></p>



Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
<p>consultation, sharing consultation insights with key stakeholders</p>	<p>from Citizenlab) an area on the site which feeds back on the engagement work to date. This particularly focuses on the key findings and how these are going to be used. Where there are areas that cannot be taken forward, clear explanation as to why this cannot happen (or why it cannot happen at this stage.) We will also allow people the opportunity to comment on this feedback to continue ongoing conversations with the community.</p> <p>For those who responded to this project, as they signed up to the site to take part, we have their email addresses. We are able to contact them through Citizenlab to notify them of when a new project (such as the Local Plan consultation) has gone live and that they can comment or view the materials if they wish. Participants can deregister from the site at any time also.</p> <p>We have also been in dialogue with Hampshire County Council and with Hampshire and IOW Integrated Care Board on wider health related projects. Some of this work covers obesity, and they have viewed this site and the key insights have fed into their programme of work on Whole Systems Approach to Obesity. We are continuing this knowledge share in the new year (providing feedback from our Local Plan consultation.)</p>	<p><i>Citizenlab so people can see the benefit their feedback and contribution have, and that they feel listened to/valued. This in turn supports positive relationships with those we service and supports evidence-based decision-making.</i></p> <p><i>For us, having people sign up to the site to take part is really valuable as we can then contact them through the site to notify them of any updates or new projects that they may wish to take part in.</i></p> <p><i>As the site is also public, we clearly communicate to those that their comments can be viewed by others. In terms of sharing and disseminating findings, as it is publicly available, this allows us to be open and transparent with our community but also our stakeholders on the feedback we receive and how it is used.</i></p>



Final Reflections: Where applicable, please also respond to the following questions:

- How did you conduct community outreach (digital and/or in person)? What approach, including timelines, budget, and tools were adopted?

A Gantt chart overview of the Project is attached at Appendix A

The engagement was scheduled to run from 2 August 2022 to 2 September 2022 but was extended to 9 September 2022 due to the success of the engagement tool element of the project. In order to provide varied, interesting and continued engagement with participants, the engagement period was split into two phases which were conducted as follows:

	Phase 1 (2 – 20 August)	Phase 2 (21 August – 2 September)	Phase 2 extension (3 – 9 September)
Waterlooville Recreation Ground	Online survey	Comments tool	Comments tool
Emsworth Recreation Ground	Comments tool	Online survey	Comments tool
Front Lawn Recreation Ground	Online survey	Ideas tool	Ideas tool
Bidbury Mead	Ideas tool	Online survey	Ideas tool

Promotion of the site

The engagement exercise was widely publicised using council communication tools (see Appendix F) and residents were able to sign up to the Citizenlab tool to participate in this project.

Signage was also placed at the play areas, so users and passers-by could scan the QR code or use the URL link to take part.

Leisure officers also visited the play areas with business cards (with QR code and URL link) to encourage users and passers-by to take part.



Finally, professional recruitment was undertaken to specifically target those who we are less likely to reach through the above activity. In total, 29 participants were recruited who were more likely to be under the age of 34, all to currently have low / no usage of the above 4 play areas and all to report low / no previous engagement with the council. The Professional recruitment was through [Sally Fairhall Assc](#) and the costing was Recruitment @ £60 per respondent x 30 = £1,800; Incentives (based on the industry standard of £35 per hour) x 1.5 hours = £52.50 per respondent (i.e., paid @ £17.50 per week) x30 respondents = £1,575 PLUS 25% handling fee = £1,968.75. TOTAL = £3,768.75+VAT

- Looking back at this project, was there additional guidance or support from DLUHC or other stakeholders that would have been helpful to work through these and other stages of delivery?

The support was very good and there was always someone to contact if there were any queries. So even in hindsight there was no other points that we feel we needed more support on.

- What was the primary reason you chose your particular PropTech supplier?

CitizenLab was chosen because it was promoted as a holistic solution to bring a whole organisation's citizen engagement together. This was essential in building community trust in the Council, which like many government organisations has lost trust and is perhaps not particularly relevant to many citizens, other than emptying their bins and causing planning mayhem. Councils provide so many more excellent services and facilities and this needs to be positively promoted. A whole council citizen engagement integration is a key element in demonstrating that we do talk to each other within the council and build customer confidence.



3.0 Pilot Outcomes

- **Proposed Outcomes:** What outcomes were you aiming to achieve? To what extent were these achieved? What were the main outcomes (quantitative and qualitative) of your project? **(Please use the attached spreadsheet to detail this further).**
- **Baseline data:** what existing data did you use to compare your project's outcomes to? Did you review or change this approach at any point? How does your baseline data compare with the outcomes achieved in your Round 2 PropTech project?
- **Measurement challenges:** how did you measure the impact of your outcomes? Did you have any challenges assessing the impact of your project? If so, in what ways?
- **Demographics:** (if applicable) how did you collect demographic data as part of your consultation? If so, please share any demographic breakdown of consultation respondents (e.g., age, gender etc). How does the demographic of your PropTech funded consultation compare with previous consultation responses?
- **Cost effectiveness:** did a digital engagement approach save time or resources compared with traditional engagement approaches? If so, how was this measured?

Proposed outcomes

To inform future refurbishment of play areas, digital engagement was undertaken to meet the following objectives:

- To understand usage, views, and experiences of users of recently refurbished play areas
- To identify aspects of recently refurbished play areas that users:
 - Like and therefore contribute towards a positive experience/usage
 - Would like to see changed or improved to therefore improve the experience/usage
 - Aspects that are important to consider for future play area design/refurbishment across the borough
- To understand usage, views, and experiences of users of play areas due for refurbishment
- To identify aspects with users of play areas due for refurbishment:
 - That they like and think should remain
 - What they would like to see changed or improved to contribute towards better usage/experience
 - Aspects important to consider when refurbishment is undertaken
- To understand with low / non-users across all four play areas:
 - Why usage is low/not currently being used
 - What could encourage take-up or higher usage, particularly through play area design and refurbishment



- To understand with all other play areas they visit (both within and outside of the borough):
 - Where they visit and usage
 - Aspects that they like of these play areas
 - Whether they would like to see these (if not already provided) in play areas in Havant

Our project met all of the above objectives in deepening our knowledge and understanding to inform future play area design.

Our engagement response was as follows:

	Online survey	Comments / Ideas tool*
Waterlooville Recreation Ground	85	34
Emsworth Recreation Ground	42	36
Front Lawn Recreation Ground	56	39
Bidbury Mead	106	63

The key outcomes are summarised in section 4 below.

Baseline data

Our baseline data was limited as we had not undertaken digital community engagement previously. Previous online surveys had been undertaken in 2021 regarding Waterlooville and Emsworth play areas to understand current usage and enjoyment of play areas. It should be noted however that questions in the 2022 engagement specified usage since the refurbishment works had been undertaken.

The below table provides a comparison of usage data between previous online surveys and the surveys conducted within this engagement project:

	2021 Engagement	2022 Engagement
Usage of Waterlooville Recreation Ground		
Less than once a week	36%	71%
Once a week	29%	16%



2-3 times a week	21%	11%
4 times a week or more	14%	4%
Enjoyment of Waterlooville play area		
Yes	45%	72%
No	39%	1%
Not sure	16%	27%
Usage of Emsworth Recreation Ground		
Once a week	80%	84%*
2-3 times a week	16%	17%
4 times a week or more	4%	0%
Enjoyment of Emsworth Recreation Ground		
Yes	60%	100%
No	24%	0%
Not sure	16%	0%

* Once a week or less for 2022 engagement

Measurement challenges

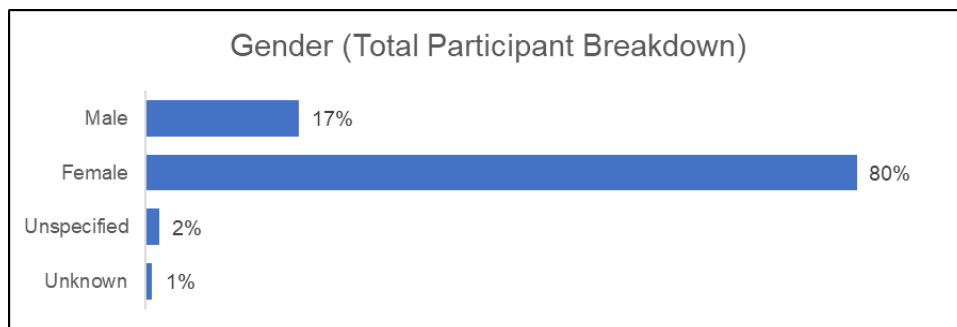
This project was exploratory in the sense of understanding current usage and what refurbishment requirements would meet the needs of the community and encourage usage of the play area sites. Therefore, true measurement of impact of the project will be once refurbishment has taken place and to ascertain if the design meets needs and drives further usage. Now that we have Citizenlab as an agile tool to engage with the community, we can assess through future engagement to drive continuous improvement in play area design and refurbishment.

Demographics

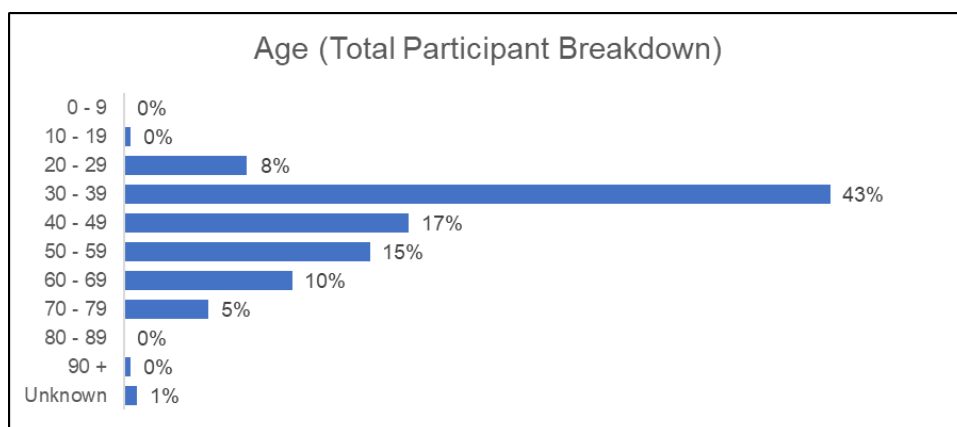
The following charts provide a breakdown of demographics amongst the play area project participants:



Gender Breakdown



Age Breakdown



Demographics were not collected in previous baseline data.

Cost effectiveness

This project did not primarily aim to save time or resources, but rather to reach sections of the community we are less likely to hear from and to gather rich insights to understand what people want from play area design in the future.

4.0 Community Feedback

- **Summary of community consultation:** what was the focus for engagement and what questions were asked? How were these questions decided? Were there any surprises (either in responses and/or who responded)?
- **Summary of community responses:** what were the key themes and learnings from the consultation?
- **Delivering on feedback:** how has the community feedback shaped the project delivery plans? How has this validated, challenged, evolved key assumptions and potential project outcomes?
- **Community testimonials:** If available, we would love to see any direct testimonials from community members about their experiences on the



project in their own words. We would appreciate it if any testimonials could be attributed to specific individuals or local groups, but quotes can be kept anonymous if preferred (please state if this is the case).

Summary of community consultation

The engagement was focused on the provision of play areas in the borough of Havant, as this links to a key part of the Council's Corporate Strategy to provide a safe environment that encourages healthier and more active residents. The engagement was split to meet the following objectives:

- Feedback on two play areas that were recently refurbished (Waterlooville Recreation Ground and Emsworth Recreation Ground)
- Ideas and views for the two play areas that are due to be refurbished (Front Lawn Recreation Ground and Bidbury Mead)

Refurbished play areas

The engagement sought to both understand usage, views and experiences at the recently refurbished play areas and gain insight into how users feel about these improvement works. These findings inform the design of future play area provision in the borough and seek to ensure a more positive experience for users of these facilities.

The engagement was conducted via two methods – an online survey and the commenting tool on Citizenlab. The questions included in the online survey were discussed and agreed by the project team and covered the following:

- Usage and regularity of visits
- Enjoyment of users and views on recent refurbishments, including views of individual play equipment items and park facilities
- Visits to other play areas and reasons for this

The commenting tool invited participants to submit views on the play areas since their refurbishments, with the introduction text highlighting that this could include the following:

- The benefits or impact the refurbishments have had for local people
- Things that may not have worked so well
- Things to consider / important for future play area refurbishment in Havant.

Play areas due to be refurbished

The engagement sought to understand current usage and what elements users feel should be included within the proposed refurbishment works. These findings directly inform the specifications for the improvement works.



The engagement was conducted via two methods – an online survey and the commenting tool on Citizenlab. The questions included in the online survey were discussed and agreed by the project team and covered the following:

- Current usage and enjoyment of the play areas (including views on why users may not enjoy using these play areas)
- Items to play to be retained or removed
- Motions of play to be featured in the new play area design
- Visits to other play areas and reasons for this.

The commenting tool invited participants to submit views on the play areas due to be refurbished, with the introduction text highlighting that these will inform future design and refurbishment.

Response rates by engagement method were as follows:

	Online survey	Comments / Ideas tool*
Waterlooville Recreation Ground	85	34
Emsworth Recreation Ground	42	36
Front Lawn Recreation Ground	56	39
Bidbury Mead	106	63

For both exercises, the commenting tool was viewed to be more valuable than the online survey element. This tool allowed participants to provide in-depth feedback of their experiences, while also enabling the project team to engage in a conversation with users to tease out further detail where needed. Additionally, it allowed participants to view and comment on other participant's posts, which fostered a more engaging and energetic discussion of the key issues amongst users. Whilst both engagement methods provided useful feedback, evidence gathered from the commenting tool has proven more valuable when considering the future provision of play areas.

Summary of community responses

A number of key themes were raised during this engagement, and these are summarised below.

Refurbished play areas

- Feedback across the engagement project was largely positive regarding refurbishment at both play areas, with the majority stating that they feel both



play areas offer a variety of equipment, now have an improved visitor experience and the feeling of it being a lovely and beautiful place to visit.

- The items of play installed at these play areas were mostly enjoyed by respondents. At Waterlooville the swings, slides and inclusive roundabout were firm favourites, and at Emsworth swings, multi-unit and climbing frames.
- Many participants were also very positive about the use of spongy tarmac (to prevent injury for falls) and fencing around the play area (believed specifically designed to keep dogs out of the play area and to ensure children cannot wander off on their own.) An underlying theme to many responses was safety and play area design aspects that factored safety were very well received.
- Amongst participants who have not visited either play area since their refurbishment, they provided positive responses. This was particularly regarding visuals provided on Citizenlab of the play areas and reading user comments, with many stating that they therefore were encouraged to visit the new play areas.
- Particularly regarding Waterlooville, there were some responses regarding concerns of vandalism and anti-social behaviour. This included some play equipment being broken and broken glass on the ground in the play area. Participants were keen for this to be addressed to alleviate safety concerns and overall level of enjoyment of the space.
- For both sites, feedback was received regarding the desired need for more seating, or for this to be a consideration in future play area refurbishment.

Play areas due to be refurbished

- Largely across the engagement, most participants welcomed refurbishment of both play areas, with many indicating that upgrades to equipment would encourage them to visit more often.
- Across both sites, many stated they would like to see swings, slides and a climbing frame / monkey bars either introduced or kept as part of the refurbishment.
- Many also stated they would like to see more seating and picnic tables as part of the refurbishment. This would allow parents/guardians to be able to sit close to their children using equipment and to be able to spend more time at the play area (by having the facility to eat a picnic for example.)
- A key consideration for both sites for future refurbishment is the ground surface, with many desiring a soft tarmac flooring that is weather resistant. This provides a safe surface for children and addresses dirt, mud, and flooding in winter months (this was felt to be a particular issue at Bidbury Mead and discouraged users visiting in wetter months.)
- For Front Lawn in particular, there was a desire for more sensory and interactive equipment to be included in future play area refurbishment. This was felt to be a valuable addition, particularly for those with disabled or SEN children.



- For Bidbury Mead in particular, some would like to see the refurbishment include fencing around the play area to separate children and dogs using the wider park.

Delivering on feedback

The community feedback has directly shaped the provision of play areas within the borough, as the evidence has been factored into the design of the specifications that will be shared with contractors who bid to conduct the proposed refurbishment works. Key themes that were raised during the engagement, particularly views on what items of play were wanted by users and the importance of wider facilities such as seating, have been a valuable contribution to this design.

Additionally, the feedback has validated the refurbishment works already carried out at Waterlooville and Emsworth Recreation Grounds as there was a positive view on these improvements that support the enhancements made at these areas.

The key themes taken from this engagement were fed back to participants via the Citizenlab tool, with an infographic highlighting the following points:

- Your feedback means contractors will quote on what you wanted
- Both playgrounds will:
 - o Include play equipment that is inclusive and accessible for all
 - o Include equipment for young and older children
 - o Be widely spaced for safe play
 - o Include picnic tables and bins
 - o Use anti-slip surfacing throughout
- What we couldn't do:
 - o Fence off sites without reducing the quality of play equipment
- Contractors will be appointed to complete the works in 2023



5.0 Conclusions and Policy Reflections

- If you could re-start this project what, if anything, would you do differently?

On reflection there is nothing specific that needed changing. The particular situation of Havant, with the 'split' from East Hampshire coming out of the blue in January 2022 worked in our favour. It became a project that galvanised Havant officers going it alone to deliver real value for our community by transforming our approach to citizen engagement. The tight project timeline was also good as it gave us real focus, particularly as the DLUHC support and CitizenLab engagement were all positive. We had the 'live' play park project to work as a practice run for the upcoming Local Plan Reg 18 consultation. Looking back many things have positively aligned, both through serendipity and positive collaborative team working.

- What longer-term changes, if any, do you expect to make as a result of this pilot?

As confirmed above the timing of the project with the 'Split' has been advantageous in providing a catalyst for wider strategic change in the council's approach to citizen engagement.

At the operation level the pilot has changed the 'standard' approach that was used in play park refurbishments from a quick web based online survey that generated random quantity of comments to a more qualitative and focused response that is produced in easily digested report format that is then fed straight into the contract specifications to get tenders that fully take on board the detail comments that are generated through the pilot. This switch from quantity to quality of engagement will build trust in the organisation and demonstrate that the council listens.

Starting on the play parks helped the team learn the CitizenLab platform so that when it came to getting the Local Plan Reg18 consultation live it has been done significantly quicker, more effectively through the use of the relatively simple platform layout that provides a clear and user-friendly interface. This is an upgraded and more efficient approach to Local Plan engagement.



- What (if any) other stakeholders (outside of those who responded to consultations) do you think should be involved alongside LPAs to support long term adoption of digital planning?

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) should be championing digital citizen engagement and producing proposals for updating consultation regulations to make digital engagement a priority. The RTPI often seems stuck in the 'traditional methods' of church halls with an older demographic. Their 2020 research paper 'the [future of engagement](#)' was a start but even that is now getting outdated as it was pre-covid.

All the professional built environment bodies should be promoting digital citizen engagement looking toward establishing an industry standard/commitment this would support investment in the market and give the industry a boost in terms of customer trust at a time of significant upheaval. Government has a central role in pulling together the professional and trade organisation to develop an approach that can be mutually beneficial during this period of change. As we found in Havant with our 'split' challenging times provide opportunities for accelerating transformation with responsible leadership to push ahead despite the chaos that often surrounds such times.

- Policy reflections:
 - Did any existing planning policies limit your ability to achieve your goals for this project?

Having hit the buffers with our last attempt at a Local Plan (Inspector told us to withdraw, as concerns over housing delivery) we had a clean sheet to start this process with. Similarly our internal 'split' issues meant the project team just got on with it unhindered.

- Are there any policies (national and local) you'd like to see changed in the future? If so, how?

Improving general understanding of why we really need more homes can be done locally. The 'government document 'Fixing the Broken Housing Market ' was a good attempt, but probably only read by a few hundred interested people/groups – getting key messages out locally may build trust and greater opportunity for the 'silent majority' who need homes to stand up and make some noise. An invitation to a church hall isn't going to do much and whilst the Regulations continue to focus on Statements of Community Involvement ticking 6 week consultation exercise boxes then this is less likely to change. Perhaps the target in the Regulations should be on demonstrating engagement with a % of the population together with specified demographics – make it a challenge so it drives innovation.

- Where do you think further guidance is required, either for local authorities and the wider PropTech sector?



learn from the market sector – what are the most successful product/service engagement programmes

- How could DLUHC better support LPAs in the future with the further adoption of digital citizen engagement tools, best practice guidance, or other support?

Work with the professional and trade bodies in the 'planning/development industry' to promote the benefits of digital engagement using case studies and events. Working with the major software vendors – Microsoft, Idox, Capita etc – Suppliers shouldn't really be dealing with individual councils and striking individual deals; a focused centralised approach would help consistency and drive innovation.

- If additional funding was available - what do you think future Proptech Fund rounds should focus on delivering / achieving?

A big push on getting more and younger people engaged in their future place. Gaming (Minecraft style) in schools as part of the curriculum.

Please use this space to include any quotes from your team about your project. Don't forget to attribute the quote so it is clear whose perspective you are sharing (e.g., 'project team member or 'supplier' etc).

“Across the last three months, our CitizenLab team has worked closely with Havant Borough Council's innovative project management team to launch their online consultation platform, and their first consultation on refurbishing play areas. The Havant team were very clear in their objectives and outcomes and brought together expert teams on everything from communications to analysis in order to ensure the success of their engagement project. They used best practices for online engagement to encourage residents to play their part in the decision-making process, and to close feedback loops. In just three months, Havant's Play Parks consultation became one of CitizenLab's top 10 performing projects across the quarter, which is a real testament to the hard work of the project team.”

Rabi Wilson, Supplier and Government Success Manager, Citizenlab

“The use of CitizenLab has enabled an ongoing two-way conversation with residents. Many of these residents would not have engaged with the Council and our team previously. The project team's creative ideas are directly being used to influence the design and specifications for new play areas in the borough. The findings will be shared with contractors who will bid for the works to complete the refurbishments. Importantly, residents who have engaged will be able to see exactly how their comments have led to tangible outcomes when the parks are complete with new equipment and features that meet their needs and wants. It has also provided us the opportunity to respond to any ideas that may be out of scope or unfeasible and being open and honest in explaining why. This will hopefully build trust over time.”



Simon Hasted, Project Team Member and Senior Leisure Officer, Havant Borough Council

6.0 Additional reflections and feedback for DLUHC (optional)

This is a space for you to provide any additional reflections or feedback for the DLUHC team that you prefer not to be published publicly.