



## PropTech Engagement Fund Round 2

### Final Report

November 2022



<b>Local Planning Authorities</b>	Harlow and Gilston Garden Town: East Herts District Council Epping Forest District Council Harlow District Council Essex County Council Hertfordshire County Council
<b>Date Report Submitted</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> November 2022



## Executive Summary

<b>Region</b>	East of England
<b>LA Rural-Urban Classification Category</b>	Other Urban/Significant Rural
<b>Project summary</b>	This project set out to deliver quality of life mapping and monitoring via digital and in-person engagement across the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.
<b>Funding allocated</b>	£228,800
<b>Supplier(s) Appointed</b>	Quality of Life Foundation / Stantec / Commonplace / Rainbow Services
<b>Consultation Topic</b>	Quality of Life and Social Value Mapping
<b>Consultation Outcomes</b>	<p>7000 visitors to platform  1015 contributions  553 respondents  336 news subscribers</p> <p>Increased diversity, quality and uptake of community consultation and bettered digital engagement practice.  Mapping and insights into local social value.  Initiated quality of life monitoring across the Garden Town (methodology and indicators).  Raising the profile of the Garden Town as quality-driven and community-led regeneration and growth.</p>
<b>Consultation dates</b>	Digital / Comms Campaign: 15th July - 14th October 2022 (13 weeks) with in person events throughout.



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### 1.0 Project Summary

This project set out to deliver social value mapping and monitoring via digital and in-person engagement across the Garden Town. By building a clear picture of what people currently value, dislike and need and in the context of growth, an evidence-based approach was taken to establish a Quality of Life baseline for the local area. This will be used to support master planning and stewardship arrangements, shape strategies and delivery of development, and to enable monitoring of any changes to quality of life and social value, particularly in relation to current and future planned growth of the Garden Town.

The Harlow & Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) sought to map and monitor what local people value and need through a public digital consultation, 'Your Quality of Life'. The consultation was open from 15<sup>th</sup> July – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022, supported by 49 pop-up events, and the Commonplace consultation platform with the map and comments can still be visited here: <https://qolmap.commonplace.is/>

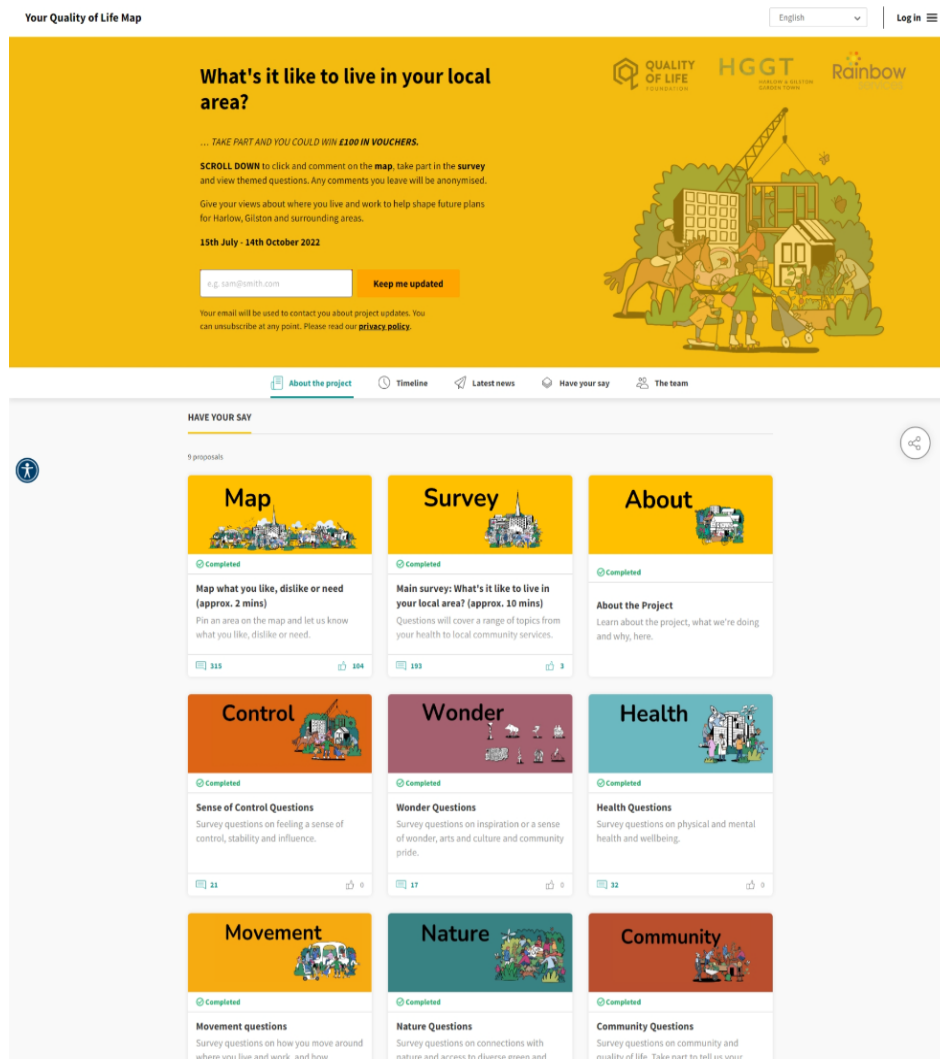


Figure 1.1: The Quality of Life Foundation used the Commonplace platform to survey and collect responses, with tiles which were based around the core consultation and thematic questions.

## Project Aims and Objectives

The key objectives of the project were to:

- **Engage meaningfully, broadly and well:** build local relationships around positive growth, undertake innovative and accessible engagement, diversify input and influence, build local understanding of broad viewpoints, showcase and share best practice.
- **Establish quality and social value data in usable format** to shape policy and guidance, masterplans, development proposals, and stewardship arrangements
- **Develop a Quality Monitoring Framework** based on health and wellbeing for now and future years of growth.
- **Raise profile of HGGT as a quality-driven project:** credibility and accountability through communication and innovation across digital and non-digital engagement and alongside industry-leading suppliers.
- **Contribute to best practice and lessons learned to scale up impact:** with partnering authorities, suppliers, developers, other LPAs, industry, non-profits and other organisations and sectors with an interest in social value, health and wellbeing, and the built environment



The Garden Town's commitment to community engagement and community-led stewardship has progressed recently, with the endorsed HGGT Communications & Engagement Strategy (2021) and the emerging HGGT Stewardship Principles and Objectives (P&Os).

The HGGT Comms & Engagement Strategy sets commitments to:

- Inform: Raise awareness about HGGT and the importance of local communities and stakeholders having genuine input on and shaping how it is delivered.
- Involve: Maximise opportunities for local communities and stakeholders to be involved in shaping HGGT.
- Empower: Build collaborative relationships with local communities and stakeholders, empowering them to play an active role in delivering the HGGT Vision.

The Stewardship P&Os include commitments to:

- Meaningful, inclusive engagement and prioritising and enabling underrepresented groups in decision-making through stewardship design, planning, delivery and management.
- Establish, measure and monitor quality targets relating to the six key principles of healthy growth and stewardship:
  1. Placemaking and homes
  2. Economy and regeneration
  3. Landscape, ecology, blue and green infrastructure
  4. Sustainable movement
  5. Public health
  6. Social value and culture

The PropTech funding and Your Quality of Life project provided an opportunity to progress towards these objectives and commitments, setting methods for quality of life measuring and monitoring, as well as setting standards for our own consultations and public and private partners, with a particular focus on the intersection these have with digital engagement within an innovative pilot programme.

### Project team

The PropTech funding allowed the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town team to work collaboratively with innovators and experts across the proptech, social value and engagement sectors: with The Quality of Life Foundation (social value and engagement experts – and whose monitoring framework is closely aligned with our stewardship key principles and objectives); Commonplace (digital citizen engagement platform); Stantec (social value data analytic experts); and Rainbow Services (local community engagement specialists).

A core working group of officers from across the five-authority partnership met weekly with the external consultants and suppliers.

To inform project outcomes and delivery planning, stakeholder workshops were held with wider groups of officers, local Members, developer partners and Epping and Harlow youth councils.

### Platform and methodology



The project used a hybrid approach, utilising face to face and digital engagement methods in tandem in order to improve uptake and reach a broader and more representative audience. Data was collected on the Commonplace digital engagement platform, which also served as a hub to update the community on upcoming pop-ups, events, workshops and any new questions. Across this project, our methods of engagement and outreach included, but were not limited to:

<b>Communication and engagement methods</b>	
<b>Digital</b>	<b>In-person</b>
Commonplace engagement platform with map, core survey questions (open for 12 weeks). Themed survey questions (released weekly for first 6 weeks).	Press release in local newspapers (and online)
Platform email newsletters	User research workshops pre-consultation with young people to inform our engagement and communications.
HGGT and internal local authority newsletters.	Weekly pop-ups in different locations across the Garden Town (within the three different districts)
Social media posts from HGGT, project and council partners (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn). Including paid targeted advertising (Facebook)	Physical printed surveys and map (for pinned comments)
Promotional videos and posts linked to social media champions e.g. Local news and influencer promotion	Flyers, roller banners and posters (directing to the digital survey platform)
Local news digital advertising (Your Harlow banner)	Printed magazine advertorials (CM17)
Digital Community Newsletters (Harlow Education Consortium) and WhatsApp groups	Workshops targeting geographic areas & priority groups
Online presentations to forums: Harlow Business Forum, Harlow Education Consortium, West Essex Health Inequalities Boar, HGGT Developer Forum.	Flyer posting for specific neighbourhoods



Figure 1.2: Flyers were distributed to different parts of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town areas and at events, with bespoke neighbourhoods noted on them (e.g. “What’s it like to live in Harlow/ Gilston/ your local area”) to raise awareness of the consultation and push to online platform.

### Reporting and analysis approach

The project set out a number of reporting deliverables, in order to meet the requirements of the DLUHC PropTech programme, the five council partners commitments and reporting processes via the HGGT Board, the Quality of Life Foundation and Stantec’s baseline and future monitoring reporting technical and quality assurance requirements, and the need for accessible and clear community feedback.

Analysis for the projects and these reports was complex as it required data analysis from multiple sources, and undertaken by different consultants and suppliers, with the need to check reliability and repeatability of the survey and data collection. The approach to analysis included:

- Baseline socioeconomic data was carried out by Stantec, understanding how the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Area performs when compared to national averages and scores
  - GIS mapping of some of the socioeconomic data was carried out to spatialise some of the key elements of the analysis
- Community feedback via the survey was evaluated by the Quality of Life Foundation using the Quality of Life framework to evaluate the more personal, anecdotal, reflections of residents and community members in the area as part of a holistic picture of the community’s wants and needs
- The survey findings were processed and used by Stantec to complement the baseline socioeconomic analysis, mapping of the survey map responses was attempted to draw out further conclusions in the analysis stage but the smaller sample size of mapped comments (315 comments, 104 agreements) does not allow for statistically significant analysis or conclusions to be drawn out.



- The survey findings were used by QOLF to draw out qualitative and quantitative data from the community feedback
  - Qualitative data was processed by QOLF using Commonplace's Natural Language Processing (NLP) tool to help categorise, sort and quantify the free text qualitative responses to questions in the survey, across questions and across the entirety of the survey data.
- Initial thematic analysis and insights has been summarised within the Community Feedback Report, and recommendations will be made by QOLF to HGGT based on this analysis.
- Further spatial analysis (e.g. of mapped comments, geographic area, and socio-economic data) is being sought in order to provide more localised insights and recommendations.

### **Status Quo pre-Prop Tech**

The Harlow & Gilston Garden Town is a partnership of 5 local authorities, working together to facilitate and enable the delivery of 23,000 homes, and associated regeneration, infrastructure, quality placemaking, and 21st century Garden City Principles around community-led stewardship, engagement, innovation, health and wellbeing.

The Garden Town is not a planning authority, however is heavily involved, and has the ability to influence LPA and developer planning consultations and engagement, as well as consulting and engaging on cross-boundary and strategic policy and guidance documents.

Prior to PropTech Round 2 funding, HGGT consultations were approached with good quality and accessible digital engagement material, content, and surveys, and with various techniques such as online workshops, video promotions and social media advertising. Material and information were often created in-house by the HGGT project manager and working group, alongside the HGGT Communications officer, requiring significant resource and time.

However, these consultations often heard primarily from those who generally had more time, skill, and tools to engage with HGGT, particularly digitally. There was generally limited officer time and capacity/ expertise for consultation data and trend analysis, and less granular detail about demographics collected (and therefore fewer insights relating consultation responses to demographic groups). Consultation comment trackers were often reviewed line-by-line; this process was time-consuming, and potentially overlooked more strategic and thematic analysis.

The use of Commonplace and live dashboard analysis was a new process for HGGT, as was the ability to easily track links and QR codes to measure success of different comms methods; using whole platform language translations to enable increased respondents from underrepresented groups, and; targeting demographic groups (e.g. parents) for more tailored social media advertising rather than solely geographical/ postcode areas. Previous consultations were not as successful as we would have hoped for in maintaining ongoing dialogue with communities to build relationships and trust, something that HGGT is committed to improving.



Previous consultations also had far fewer in-person engagement events (e.g. 6-8 events), with significantly less resource able to be dedicated to these. We also did not use specific local community engagement specialists (Rainbow Services). This meant there was more limited access to local community groups, networks and events and to informal conversations with diverse respondents.

### Outcomes

Through the Your Quality of Life consultation we received:

- 7,000 visitors to the [Your Quality of Life Commonplace platform](#)
- 1015 contributions (contributions to the map and completion of surveys)
- 553 individual respondents
- 365 news subscribers
- 49 in-person pop-up events across the Garden Town

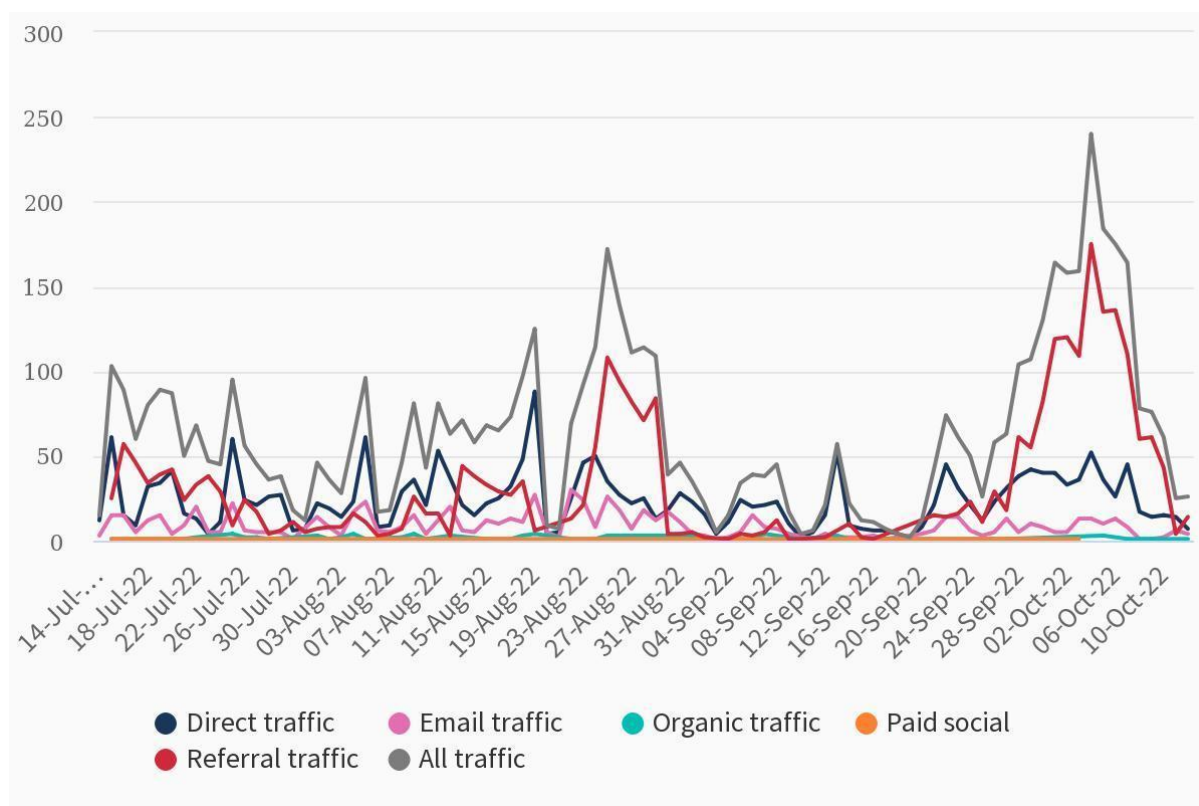


Figure 1.3: Chart from Commonplace dashboard showing visitors over the consultation period

Compared to previous Garden Town consultations, Your Quality of Life has more than tripled the numbers of respondents; and has increased engagement with both younger people under 35 (with 19% of respondents) and those over 75 (4%), with diverse ethnic minority communities (16%), and with people who have a disability or long-term illness (41%).

### Wider non-quantitative impacts from the project

- User research sessions and feedback with the Harlow and Epping Youth Councils (taking place at the pre-launch stage of the platform) provided insight and non-strategic advice on their experiences of what would work with engaging young people aged 13 to 18 years old.
- Employing two young people under the age of 21 from the local area as community researchers to support Rainbow Services and general outreach. The role was



meaningful to their work experience as individuals, building their confidence, skills and knowledge, as well as their educational interests and career aspirations in helping the lives of others in their communities (one studying sociology) and health (one studying sciences for medicine).

- Perceived enhanced community activation and cohesion through a chance for the public to discuss shared opinions and experiences and feel empowered through being part of the decision making process within Harlow and surrounding areas.
- Increased awareness and involvement in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town project and vision as a whole.
- Presenting the project and linking digital engagement to social value monitoring and stewardship more widely: Building Garden Communities Conference (June 2022), Parliamentary briefing at the House of Commons, for TCPA New Communities discussion (November 2022), BPF/ POS conference (December 2022).

### Opportunities

Innovation in social value consultation, measurement and monitoring: PropTech funding enabled the Garden Town to commission social value and engagement experts to pilot new approaches to engage digitally and in-person on the topic of quality of life and social value, in a way that could be linked to partner commitments to stewardship outcomes. This gave us insights to what local people value and need, as well as to some of the barriers to engagement to support our addressing these in the future. The project is also enabling us to establish methods for social value data collection, analysis, visualisation, longitudinal review; and to establish social value indicators to measure and monitor quality and stewardship outcomes over time.

Scale of engagement: Working closely with engagement experts Quality of Life Foundation and Rainbow Services meant that we were able to increase the scale of engagement in terms of activity, geographic and demographic reach across the Harlow, Gilston and Epping areas This included:

- Strategy: writing a 12 week communications and engagement strategy; mapping out and meeting with gateway stakeholders.
- Partnership: Learning from local partners, with Rainbow Services as a conduit e.g. providing non-strategic advice on working with local residents and groups; enabling access to wider areas and demographics.
- Capacity: upskilling local people to become community researchers; training people to use the platform to carry out surveys and pin comments on the map; enabling multiple engagement opportunities / events across the Garden Town (49 in total).
- Designing: a bespoke digital, printed and face to face approach, varied across areas and groups (e.g. pop ups, newsletters, flyers, banners, Twitter) to support platform engagement and incorporating manual data inputting of paper copy surveys (to allow those digitally excluded to take part)
- Monitoring: a mid-point review to learn and better understand which approaches were working and not working, such as where there was low uptake with the survey and platform both in postcode areas and with demographics groups.
- Action: The review enabled us to proactively build-in solutions and refocus our efforts. It also enabled us to take action in the longer term around comms and engagement, based on tested methods.

Testing methods of communication and engagement: We utilised the PropTech funding to test our comms and engagement methods, this included:

- Utilising an off-the-shelf digital platform with the ability to gather project-specific news subscribers
- Researching communication approaches with stakeholders and partners (user research). This allowed understanding of specific communities and demographics, with suggestions for e-newsletters, WhatsApp groups, social media pages, language and accessibility.
- Employing local residents, enabling the opportunity to try different face to face engagement i.e. local people speaking to other locals, including young people speaking to their peers.
- Face to face and printed: Testing, tailoring, trying out and learning from different engagement approaches presented opportunities in local areas and with groups e.g. going to where young people are, targeting social housing estates, and piggy-backing on existing networks and activities.

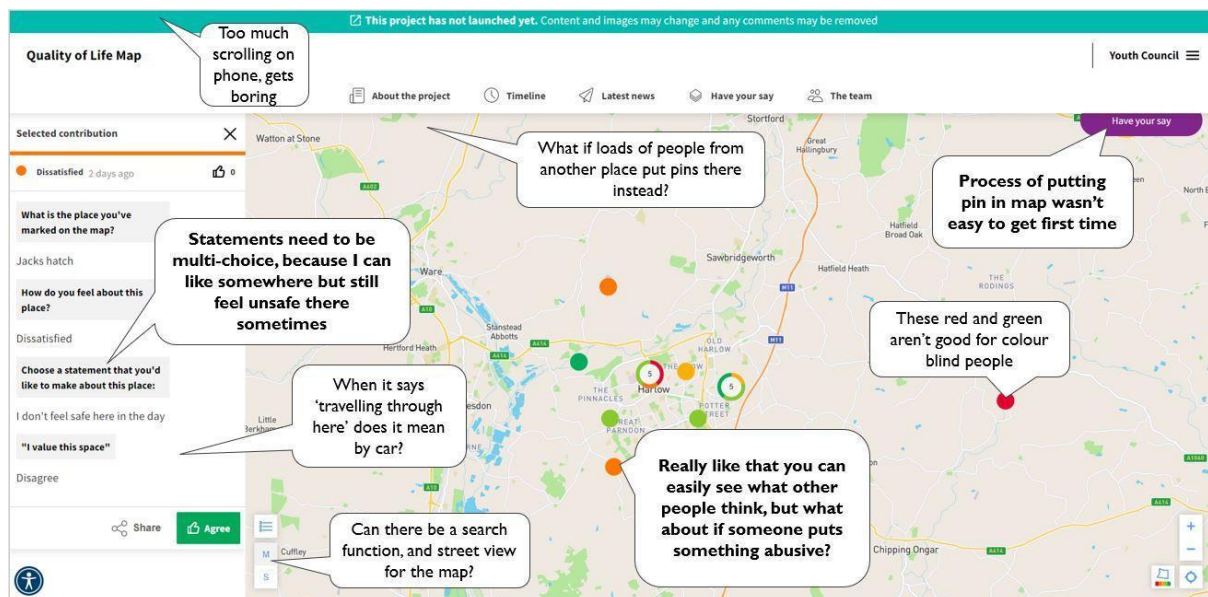


Figure 1.4: Comments made during user research workshops on the digital consultation platform. Visualised to share with the project team.

**Extended consultation programme:** The PropTech funding allowed us to run the consultation for 13 weeks with associated increased engagement activities and comms, rather than the originally planned 6 weeks. This provided more opportunity to reach a broader audience, increase the uptake of respondents, and enabled live analysis and a mid-point review of the consultation.

**Live analysis:** the dashboard and data analysis expertise allowed us to undertake live analysis of the consultation responses, include an in-depth mid-point review and to learn and better understand which approaches were working and not working. For example, spikes in survey / platform engagement to see what works well and understanding low uptake in postcode areas and/ or with specific demographics to enable us to target engagement to those groups. These live reviews enabled us to proactively build-in solutions and focus our efforts where needed.

**Local to local:** Employing two local young people as community researchers was also an opportunity to try different face to face engagement i.e. local people speaking to other locals, including young people speaking to their peers.

A hybrid approach: The PropTech funding provided opportunity to undertake both digital and non-digital engagement, and to understand how these complement, and sometimes clash with one another. A particular challenge was to understand how non-digital engagement can be translated into digital data, with community researchers also taking part in data inputting, and our suppliers working together to understand how this tool can be improved and streamlined on the Commonplace platform.



Figure 1.5: Paper maps were also used to collect feedback from respondents to compliment the digital map on the Commonplace platform. The process of uploading ‘paper’ pinned comments was laborious, however, and also created issues with inputting demographic data. QoLF worked with Commonplace to feedback ways to improve this tool.

### Funding Review

	Amount Bid	Amount Spent
Commonplace (platform licence)	£9,600	£8,000 +VAT
Quality of Life Foundation (social value and engagement expertise and consultancy)	£147,000	£128,000 +VAT
Stantec Better Places Social Value Toolkit	£24,000	£20,000 +VAT
Digital Comms spend	£21,600	£10,896 +VAT



Temporary Staff (Community Liaison Officer)	£26,000	£21,667 +VAT
Commonplace translation (Polish & Urdu)	-	£2,250 +VAT
Survey Monkey license (Digital Travel Diary element)	-	£1154.52 +VAT
Stantec (Digital Travel Diary design & analysis)	-	£27,578 +VAT
Printing and mailing	-	£9779.68 +VAT
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£228,800</b>	<b>£229,325.20</b>

### Funding reflections

- Higher funding needed to be built in for data analytics and segmentation at this scale (thematic and spatial data analysis respondent demographic, respondent geography). Required/ still requires additional time and scope from the suppliers, in future we would want to increase the budget for this stage of work.
- Comms content e.g. video/ animation much lower cost when produced in-house/ across authority partners, more budget required for hard copy printing/ mailing
- Funding for social media advertising proved crucial for driving project uptake but requires clearer M&E drivers to understand value for money.
- Ensure VAT is excluded on relevant costings. Within original project bid we noted costings that were inclusive of VAT following discussions with suppliers, however as a local authority partnership, VAT is refundable on the majority of the services that were required.
- Use of remaining budget to expand digital engagement and monitoring in one key theme (Sustainable Movement). We used this budget to fund the design and delivery of an online travel diary, with an expanded scope of work for our data analysts, Stantec. Given that the HGGT Online Travel Diary has gone live in November, after the wider Your Quality of Life consultation closed in October, it has enabled us to immediately utilise learnings from the YQoL consultation and process, particularly around digital communication and comms, within the Online Travel Diary. It has also provided us with consistency and efficiencies in terms of supplier relationships, demographic data collection, communication networks, and data analysis.



**2.0 Lessons Learned**

Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
<p><b>Getting started:</b> Developing the business case/gaining organisational buy-in to apply for Round 2 funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HGGT and partner officers discussed a number of projects to put forward for PropTech Round 2 funding, prioritising through consensus of HGGT Leads, Placeshaping &amp; Engagement workstream.</li> <li>● Sign off of the project bid was required by the HGGT Director, with Executive Officer Group (Senior level officers at the 5 partner councils) kept informed of the process.</li> <li>● Members were kept informed of the project bid through HGGT Board meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Key to assimilate the project purpose down to a single understandable sentence, (<i>'Engaging across the Garden Town on quality of life and wellbeing, to establish baseline for quality monitoring of growth/ change.'</i>) and project name, so that it could be utilised at all levels. (<i>'Quality of Life Map'</i>)</li> <li>● Needed to ensure that the project aligned with key HGGT priorities for the year (22/23) for HGGT Director and Member buy-in. (Stewardship, good growth, engaging existing residents).</li> <li>● A shared slide deck was used to present the project to many forums, this was key in setting a clear purpose and message for the project.</li> <li>● Important for the project team to have strong internal communications around the project, so that stakeholders (e.g. local authority officers, local Councillors, local developers and planners) can help develop consultation and engagement plans, Simple and understandable project names and purpose are useful to define early, as well as a chart to show who is who. This can be used for both internal and external communications.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Procurement:</b> developing supplier brief and project budget</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Budgets were initially scoped as part of the bid for DLUHC Round 2 funding with three external</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Look to include budget ranges within early project bids, so that scope can be defined in</li> </ul>



	<p>suppliers (Quality of Life Foundation, Stantec, Commonplace), and for and internal budget for comms (based on previous costs and initial budgets provided for video production).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed briefs were worked up through collaborative iterations with the suppliers, for Quality Monitoring (QoLF, Stantec and Community partnership specialist) and for Digital Consultation Platform (Commonplace).</li> <li>• Briefs included: Introduction / Project Summary and Main Objectives / Scope of work / Project Team / Stakeholder Engagement / Approvals / Project Development / Member Briefings / Communications / Sharing Best Practice / Programme / Measuring Success / Deliverables &amp; Outcomes Table / Fee Proposal and Schedule / Subcontracting Requirements and Tasks / Relevant Context &amp; Appendices.</li> </ul>	<p>more detail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an early 2 page brief/ summary sheet to discuss project and aims/ objectives with potential suppliers. HGGT have now instigated a Project Proposal form which provides this.</li> <li>• Be as clear as possible within briefs about deliverables and roles/ responsibilities or expected collaboration for these. Clarity over input required from HGGT and working group, as well as project management tasks.</li> <li>• Be explicit in expectations for digital platform, do not assume that same functionality or version is available if previously used. Request back of house induction/ walk through prior to confirming deliverables and procurement.</li> <li>• Ensure clarity on inclusion/ exclusion of VAT when budget setting.</li> <li>• Project brief should also include: file sharing systems and etiquette, project management tasks and responsibilities, clarity on tech versions and software required, consultation launch requirements and details, live analysis requirements and visualisation (time and resource) e.g. mid-point consultation review and what this will focus on.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Procurement:</b> finding and appointing a supplier(S)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing collaboration between QoLF and Stantec (on mapping social value) and QoLF and Commonplace (on digital consultation projects) and their expertise in digital engagement to map qualitative experience, and previous use of Commonplace for EFDC Safer Spaces project, lead to collaborative bid preparation and selection and appointment of these suppliers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early engagement with LA procurement team was very helpful, to understand the requirements and processes for procurement waivers, thresholds and sign off, data controller/ sharing within contracts and subcontracting aspects.</li> <li>• Highlighting and understanding key risks of procurement and programme delay to senior</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to programme and funding constraints, procurement waivers were sought to ensure that project could progress within timeframe.</li> <li>• Quality of Life Foundation were appointed to Quality Monitoring contract:</li> <li>• Stantec were subcontracted via QoLF, to provide clear communication and management channels for consultation and analysis.</li> <li>• Appointment of Local Community Partnership Specialist was tasked/ deliverable for QoLF.</li> <li>• Commonplace were appointed to Social Value Digital Platform contract.</li> </ul>	<p>officers enabled processes to be expedited as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With more time, would have been beneficial to test budgets through gathering further informal quotes or formal tenders for multiple suppliers, to ensue best value for money, and clarity on scope inclusion/ exclusion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Onboarding:</b> Proptech suppliers, additional consultants, and internal teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal team: A Core Working group was set up with Project Manager to ensure that different specialisms/ council partners were involved in the project team. Weekly meetings were diarised to enable the fast-moving project.</li> <li>• Presentations given by PM to HGGT Leads, HGGT executive officers group, Harlow wider leadership team, West Essex Health Inequalities Board, informal member and PFH catch ups, to onboard with project aims and objectives.</li> <li>• Commonplace provided 1hr online induction workshop for project team (other suppliers and officers) and provided a contract manager to assist with queries.</li> <li>• QoLF and Stantec attended weekly project team meetings, and developed brief, programme and deliverables in detail with project team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment of officer time and resource needed for internal project team and project manager roles. A number of officers were not able to commit the time required to the project. These requirements are now set out clearly an early in our Project Proposal form to avoid lack of resource on projects hindering progress/programme.</li> <li>• Clarity on subcontractor management (who is main point of contact, who is managing this sub-contract), and general project management details (e.g. who sets up meetings, invites, agendas) to be set out from the outset. Very clear PM role (within suppliers and authorities) is helpful.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consultation Development:</b> developing marketing and engagement strategies. This</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-producing a Comms &amp; Engagement strategy pre-launch, along with a mid point review of the approach. Also produced a social media &amp;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder workshops, Developer Forum and Member Briefing were all very important steps for project development and project buy-in.</li> </ul>





<p>might also include developing survey questions, platform content, or user research.</p>	<p>newsletter strategy as an appendix (during the consultation).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2 x Stakeholder engagement workshops with officers across planning, engagement, health &amp; wellbeing and comms. Focusing on purpose of project, intersections with other projects and priority groups for engagement.</li> <li>● 1 x Member briefing and workshop to develop engagement plan and understand local community and priority groups</li> <li>● 1 x Developer Forum pre-consultation to review intersections with development proposals and any social value work or strategies.</li> <li>● A Consultation and Engagement Plan pre-launch, along with a mid point review of the approach.</li> <li>● 2 x User research workshops with Harlow and Epping Youth councils to test the digital platform, survey, and consultation materials.</li> <li>● Consultation questions based on national survey questions to enable benchmarking. Survey questions were developed based on the Quality of Life Framework and national survey questions to enable benchmarking and on the HGGT Vision and HGGT Stewardship Principles &amp; Objectives; these were developed with the working group, and tested with specialist officer s(e.g. sustainable mobility workstream) where appropriate.</li> <li>● Throughout project development, consultation and launch a key issue has been file sharing across three suppliers and five authorities, with preferred file sharing system of QoLF (google docs) not available to a number of LA officers.</li> </ul>	<p>Getting these diarised was particularly difficult so the earlier these stakeholder milestones can be set the better.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shared Consultation and Engagement Plan is crucial tool to help ensure that all methods, ideas and logistics are captured in one place. It can also be used to check against at mid-point review of consultation, to understand success and failures, plus focus resources in areas and groups.</li> <li>● User research was essential to map readability and reading confidence, platform navigation, understanding of QR codes, language accessibility. Crib sheets enabled officers and supplier to work together to ensure successful and useful workshops, and beneficial for future user research.</li> <li>● Benchmarking questions with in-depth officer and QoLF review was crucial for ensuring solid insights and repeatability yet with local Garden Town nuance. Benchmarking against national survey questions helped to ensure the questions were accessible to communities, as well useful for the LAs consultations and strategies going forwards. Need to be clear at an early point which questions/ language cannot be altered due to benchmarking purposes.</li> <li>● Shared file system – build this into a project brief, get required access arrangements sorted as early as possible with IT team.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consultation launch and</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Digital consultation launch and management:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure ample time for launch, and for</li> </ul>



<p><b>management:</b> working with suppliers to 'go live', attending in person / hybrid events, troubleshooting tech issues</p>	<p>Quality assurance required all information to be ready for platform 3 days in advance of launch for Commonplace to review. However, there were a number of technical and platform issues at the point of launch some of which continued throughout the engagement period. Some of these were bespoke project issues that were resolved through collaboration of suppliers and specific escalated meetings e.g. inclusion of local landmarks and sculpture trail to help wayfind on the map, UTM campaign links not showing correctly, latest news images and text glitches. Some issues however were platform wide e.g. accessibility icon not available on all devices; not migrating same dashboard functionality into Commonplace version 2.0, poor communication about language translation of platform, platform outages/ errors. Senior level meetings were held to resolve as many of these as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consultation launch (15th July) then 6 x weekly theme launches, this meant that significant time was spent uploading/ reviewing/ user testing information and questions in a staged manner rather than done simultaneously. This was done to alleviate resource pressure for project team and to increase uptake and interest with the intention of repeat visitors to the platform.</li> <li>● Shared social media and newsletter strategy created between comms leads.</li> <li>● Face to face engagement and events were organised by Rainbow Services and QoLF. Programme of events was shared across project team for input and for attendance. Community researchers (two paid volunteers, both local young</li> </ul>	<p>technical testing of website. List out consultation launch as separate stage specifically within briefs, both technical and comms requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staged approach to launch/ release of material has benefits in terms of comms, not overwhelming platform visitors with all information/ questions at once, and ensuring that core questions and map remain focus. However not clear that it produced the time and resource efficiencies for project team that were intended. It did allow us however to learn and improve as we went, including consultation language, survey length, focus and project team working relationships.</li> <li>● Ensure there is clarity on speed with which technical issues will be resolved or escalated. Have clear method by which someone can report a tech issue (whether in project team, or public).</li> <li>● Use map to show where in person engagement/ events are planned. This would have been a helpful tool to communicate with project team and wider stakeholders.</li> <li>● It may have been helpful to involve suppliers/ consultants within some DLUHC Show &amp; Tells/ sharing practice, to ensure they could learn and share as per the LAs.</li> <li>● Live analysis needs significant planning. We had intended to undertake fortnightly analysis however this proved too resource intensive. A mid-point review instead provided a suitable in-depth review and the ability to have time to action insights to improve and target comms</li> </ul>
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	<p>people) were hired to provide more resource for face to face events, pop ups, flyering.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DLUHC Show &amp; Tells and catch ups were attended by HGGT project officers prior to launch and through consultation, to discuss issues, share practice and hear examples of successes and pitfalls elsewhere in the PropTech programme.</li> <li>• Live analysis: to track success of consultation relating to geographic and demographic breadth. Intended to allow us to shape comms and engagement in order to ensure diversity and representation in respondents. This resulted in our in-depth mid-point review.</li> </ul>	<p>and engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared live social media/ newsletter strategy helpful part of Comms &amp; Engagement Strategy to ensure all project partners aware of current messaging/ public media.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consultation wrap-up:</b> Closing campaigns, running analysis, agreeing next steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letting the public know that the engagement period had finished and announcing voucher winners (incentives to take part)</li> <li>• Building on midpoint review and historical and current data collection / reporting to set up analysis</li> <li>• Regular team meetings to discuss programme deliverables</li> <li>• Reporting and deliverables from the project: HGGT Board Report(s), DLUHC Interim Report, DLUHC Final Report, Community Feedback Report, Future Quality Monitoring Report and recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty with giving away incentives! Only 1 of 7 prize vouchers was accepted. Early clarity on process for incentives (e.g. who has access to email address list, who sends email, how it is phrased, how long is given for collection of incentives) would have been helpful. May have been more effective/ people less likely to think it's a scam email if able to be sent from a LA email address. Next time consider separate form for email input.</li> <li>• Brief to set out expected analysis approach (note, this can be difficult if new team members working together/ on new innovative work).</li> <li>• Continuation of weekly meeting very helpful post-consultation, do not assume that resource/ input will necessarily reduce for close of consultation.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not underestimate the resource and time required for creating, reviewing and gaining approvals for multiple and often simultaneous reports. Simplify deliverables (when setting brief) and reporting responsibilities / timelines wherever possible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Feedback loops: e.g.</b> developing opportunities for ongoing feedback from the community, following up with people who responded to the consultation, sharing consultation insights with key stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Council sessions: As well as carrying out user research on the platform, we wrote up the changes made to the consultation as a newsletters and circulated this to subscribers and directly to the Youth Councils. We will provide the YCs with the Community Feedback Report.</li> <li>Newsletters to platform subscribers and local networks</li> <li>Community feedback report</li> <li>HGGT Board report(s)</li> <li>HGGT Leads updates</li> <li>HGGT Internal Stakeholder workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blog posts/ newsletters after early workshops can be a useful and transparent feedback loop.</li> <li>As well as building on the momentum of during the engagement period, it's also important to continue with updates via newsletters post-conversation and to find ways to keep conversations going.</li> <li>The Community feedback report needs to be accessible, particularly around data visualisation. Groups engaged pre or during consultation can also review the community feedback report in draft, again as user research into its usefulness and clarity.</li> <li>Face to face updates and workshops (e.g. with internal stakeholders) to disseminate the information from the consultation and recommendations/ next steps are as important as written reports, and may be more successful in providing regular feedback.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Other?</b> Stakeholder engagement and sharing best practice and lessons learned across existing networks and building new ones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Embedding into overlapping workstreams:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Linking with pathfinders design coding</li> <li>- Embedding in developer commitments and LPA guidance and policy docs</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Sharing via existing working channels:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stewardship Working Group for LPAs</li> <li>- Developer Forums</li> <li>- Member Briefings</li> <li>- Team Briefings</li> <li>- Neighbourhood planning group forums</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More time for stakeholder engagement to develop approaches would have been helpful, where they were not directly funded by the bid.</li> <li>● Having a standardised template for these was really helpful, and allowed us to tweak presentations, instead of starting afresh each time.</li> <li>● That said, tailoring and updating these in a fast paced project was time consuming, so getting briefings into diaries early was good; and a shared workspace for the most recent version would have saved time.</li> <li>● Measuring impact/ reach of the project (especially where meetings are part of regular briefings, vs specially attended events) is less clear.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Attending conferences and speaking events:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social Value workshop with QoLF and Landsec</li> <li>● Presenting to DLUHC Show &amp; Tell on user research, engaging youth councils and developing M&amp;E</li> <li>● Presenting the project in Digital Panel at Building Garden Communities Conference (June 2022)</li> <li>● Preparing a Parliamentary Briefing Note and presenting the project at the House of Commons, for TCPA New Communities discussion around linking quality of life with stewardship approaches (November 2022)</li> <li>● Presenting at the British Property Federation / Planning Officer's Society Conference, as invited by DLUHC to discuss Round 2 project (December</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More resource for stakeholder engagement and communications to prioritise, manage, target, engage, and share progress through social media channels, attend conferences, workshops etc.</li> <li>● Identifying mutually beneficial working groups where we can demonstrate impact</li> <li>● Establishing a way to track where our project is referenced</li> <li>● Apply for awards – even if you don't win, it's great press!</li> </ul>



	<p>2022).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● YQoL project shortlisted for Archiboo award for Best Digital Community Engagement</li> <li>● Your Harlow video interview</li> <li>● Harlow Business Forum presentation</li> <li>● West Essex Health Inequalities Forum</li> </ul>	
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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?**
  - We undertook a hybrid consultation approach (digital/ non-digital) in order to reach the broadest audience, increase uptake and in recognition that there are a number of digitally excluded people within the local area. Methods included those listed in report above and: platform newsletters, digital newsletters, flyers, banners and posters, and HGGT social media posts, with face to face pop up events with pop up banners, speaking at local business and community forums, and liaising with local networks.
  - This was planned and carried out on a weekly basis (with budget costs highlighted in the outcomes spreadsheet).
  
- **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?**
  - Having more templates and examples/case studies to learn from e.g. round 1 projects.
  - Support from a network of similar social value projects happening at the same time. e.g seminar / webinar / focus group
  - Reporting templates available at the outset, so that expectations and planning resource for these would be clearer, up front
  - Example briefs/ brief contents for digital consultation platform suppliers and data analysts
  - Process templates/case studies to learn from e.g. round 1 projects (for consultation launch, project set up/ brief, list of PropTech suppliers)
  - Common definitions and glossary of terms around digital, data, engagement
  - Clearer expectation or requests of suppliers to attend some PropTech Show & Tells/ catch ups alongside LA project officers
  - Definition, scope and organised discussion/debate around what digital means and the role of digital vs hybrid vs offline for good community engagement, and how we address digital exclusion in these projects.



- Definition of what inclusive and meaningful engagement means, and guidance for the resources required to deliver it. (I.e, independently examined examples of what is working/not working elsewhere, including costs)
  - Further information on demographic questions (e.g. shared templates/ benchmarkable to central gov data sets.)
  - List of central gov digital datasets, for benchmarking and reference purposes.
  - A shared workspace where authorities can meet and share thinking or guidance in an informal way, for example, on emerging approaches to social value going beyond procurement; project management templates; or toolkits for ways to engage young people.
- **What was the primary reason you chose your particular PropTech supplier?**
    - Quality of Life Foundation's monitoring framework is closely aligned with our own aspirations for monitoring healthy growth; they are one of the leading organisations researching social value and its application in the built environment; and have a robust quality review process for their own work, demonstrating transparency, accountability, and best practice.
    - Quality of Life Foundation also have a track record of working successfully with Stantec, Commonplace and other local authorities and communities, and strong connections across all sectors in the built environment, so that the opportunity to scale achievements and lessons learned can be better leveraged later.
    - Commonplace were also familiar to some project officers in the partnership, given they had been used previously for Safer Spaces projects. The previous use of the platform and back of house dashboard was attractive in terms of officer understanding and response tracking/ visualisation.
- **Were there any wider surprises which surfaced through undertaking the project?**
    - Difficulty in delivery and appetite from wider stakeholders for Urban Room (as a single static location) to act as central hub for programme
    - Digital exclusion was noted as an early challenge, however witnessing the extent of digital exclusion through day to day barriers for local people and the very real 'digital divide' (across age groups, confidence in digital skills, and affordability offering access to devices, data and broadband)
    - The difficulties of tapping into communication 'bubbles' (closed social media platforms and pre-existing networks both community and authority) which we had assumed would be more straightforward given the extent of our collective network.
    - Council staff were unable to support engagement with at risk groups, such as elderly and young people, because DBS checks were needed, which take longer than the programme ran to put in place.
    - Accessibility of the survey – the need for language to be literacy level of 12 year old reading. This also meant that the survey and questions needed to be even shorter and more succinct than we originally considered.



- The incompatibility of our platform version with some of our wider analysis purposes, and the dashboard capabilities which were not migrated onto our version of the platform.
- Not a surprise, but an ongoing challenge was the inability to establish a shared workspace, making document sharing and management more difficult.
- The lack of responses to prize winner emails – we only had one voucher out of seven collected (despite repeated emails).
- The lack of a definition of ‘social value’, either across HGGT or more widely at a recognised or national level. It is considered very differently amongst organisations and individuals, and this is something we intend to address within our Community Feedback Report.





### 3.0 Pilot Outcomes

#### Proposed Outcomes

We prepared a draft set of monitoring and evaluation measurements to test the below outcomes, and this has been translated into the attached Outcomes table.

The outcomes that HGGT set out to achieve through the PropTech funding were to:

- Engage meaningfully, broadly and well: build local relationships around positive growth, undertake innovative and accessible engagement, diversify input and influence, build local understanding of broad viewpoints, showcase and share best practice.
- Establish quality and social value data in usable format to shape policy and guidance, masterplans, development proposals, and stewardship arrangements
- Develop Quality Monitoring Framework based on health and wellbeing for now and future years of growth
- Raise the profile of HGGT as a quality-driven project: credibility and accountability through communication and innovation across digital and non-digital engagement and alongside industry-leading suppliers.
- Contribute to best practice and lessons learned to scale up impact: with partnering authorities, suppliers, developers, other LPAs, industry, non-profits and other organisations and sectors with an interest in social value, health and wellbeing, and the built environment

The PropTech Round 2 programme specifically supported this project and others on the programme with a vision to:

- Increase the use of digital engagement within the planning process
- Make the planning system more accountable and democratic
- Offer alternative routes to engage alongside traditional forms of engagement
- Work with local authorities to help establish best practice, scope requirements for digital engagement guidance, and understand barriers to be overcome to allow LAs to adopt these tools at scale.

Specific outcomes measured for the PropTech Round 2 programme include:

- Increase in quantity of people engaged in consultations
- Increase diversity and representative engagement in planning consultations
- More positive community engagement in planning consultations
- Reduction in officer time or budget spent on consultations

#### Baseline data

This project used a mixture of data sources to build a baseline that is both statistical (Survey Questions) and spatial (Map questions). The data collected over the course of the engagement was then compared against this blended baseline of statistical and spatial data. Through the project we collected socio-economic baseline data (enabling benchmarking for quality of life assessment) and we also HGGT consultation baseline data (to measure the success of the project against digital engagement and consultation practice objectives).

#### HGGT consultation baseline

We used two previous HGGT-wide consultations as quantitative baseline consultation data:



- HGGT Sustainable and Healthy Living consultation (Nov-Dec 2020). This was consulting on the draft HGGT Sustainability Guidance and HGGT Healthy Town Framework documents. These were guidance documents, created to have material planning weight. The consultation lasted 6 weeks and was entirely online, with no in person engagement, as this was during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- HGGT Transport Strategy consultations, which was consulting on the draft Strategy, and the targets and objectives within it. This was two consultations, (Jan and Sept - Nov 2020). The second consultation period was specifically to reach groups which had low representation in the first consultation period (schools and businesses).

We decided to include both of these consultations, as we considered that the Sustainable Healthy Living consultation was an example of relatively strong digital engagement but with no in-person engagement, whilst the Transport Strategy specifically had a follow on consultation to improve underrepresentation.

When benchmarked against the above previous Garden Town consultations, there were improvements on quantity, diversity and sentiment of consultation responses. Your Quality of Life has more than tripled the numbers of respondents from the previous HGGT consultations:

- Your Quality of Life consultation (July – Oct 2022): **553 individual respondents**, 1015 contributions
- HGGT Transport Strategy consultations (Jan 2020 & Sept-Nov 2020): **154 respondents**
- Sustainable Healthy Living consultation (Nov - Dec 2020): **139 respondents**

We maintained engagement with people younger than 35 and increased it with those over 75:

- Your Quality of Life consultation (2022) **Under 35 (19%), over 75 (4%)**
- HGGT Transport Strategy consultations (2020): **Under 35 (18%), over 75 (2%)**
- Sustainable Healthy Living consultation (2020): **Under 35 (19%), over 75 (2%)**

We increased engagement with diverse ethnic minority and underrepresented communities:

- Your Quality of Life consultation (2022): **16%**
- HGGT Transport Strategy consultations (2020): **16%** (data on ethnicity only collected on second round of consultation)
- Sustainable Healthy Living consultation (2020): **6%** ethnic minority/ underrepresented communities

We increased engagement with those who have a disability or long term illness.

- Your Quality of Life consultation (2022): **41%** have a disability or illness that impacts their life (this is higher than the representation within the Garden Town area)
- HGGT Transport Strategy consultations (2020): **Data not collected**
- Sustainable Healthy Living consultation (2020): **14%** consider themselves to have a disability.



To establish the socio-economic context of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town area, mapping work was conducted by Stantec. Stantec used statistics from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), to locate HGGT area’s performance regionally and nationally and allow responses to be benchmarked against existing demographic and socio-economic markers.

Stantec conducted a baseline of expected quality of life across the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town area, using data derived from ONS, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Consumer Data Research Centre, Electoral Commission, Police, Natural England, and Ordnance Survey and Lower Super Output Level (LSOA). The expected quality of life baseline can be compared to the engagement results to assess the relevance of expected quality of life statistics. The aim was to derive baseline data at a more granular scale than quality of life survey datasets are typically available at, allowing more locally applicable and relevant analysis to occur. The LSOA geography was selected as it is both small enough to relevant at a local school, but also a common denominator among the available data.

The baseline data comprises 62 datasets at LSOA level (see Appendices). The raw data is ranked by the main themes and sub themes of the Quality of Life Framework, and a total ranking is used to estimate quality of life overall.

By design the baseline data sets are national in coverage, it is therefore necessary to conduct local data collection in the area of interest in order to refine the baseline. Many national datasets will have less relevance locally, and local data collection ensures the data is more reliable spatially and temporally. An important outcome of this data collection will be to refine the scoring of the baseline data and improve the accuracy of the predicted quality of life baseline.

In comparison to the baseline data, it appears the age groups 55-74 are overrepresented in the engagement responses while the over 75s, and under 25s are underrepresented. 35 – 54-year-olds are represented proportionally in line with expected statistics.

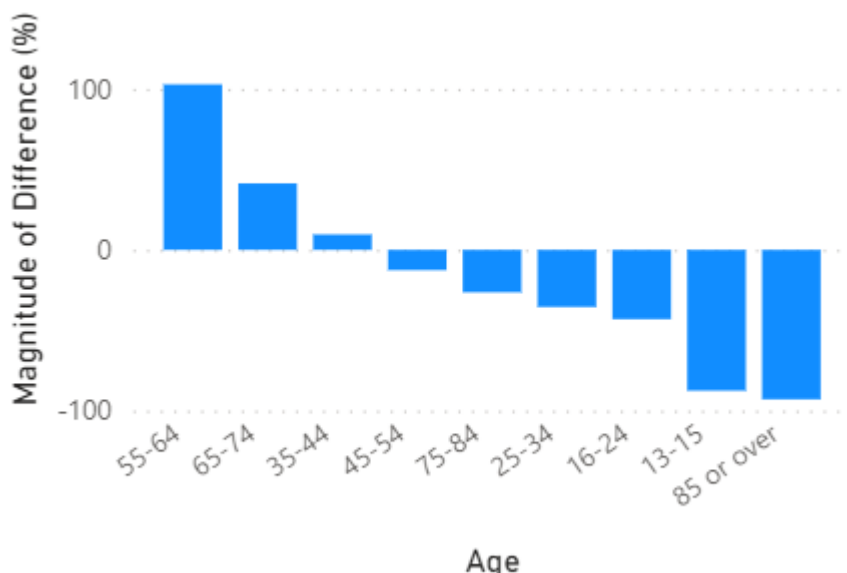


Figure 3.1: Magnitude of difference chart for Age: baseline data versus consultation data

In terms of employment, retired and part-time employed people are overrepresented in the engagement responses, while students, long-term sick or disabled, self-employed, caring for



family and unemployed are underrepresented. The engagement appears to capture an expected proportion of those in full-time employment.

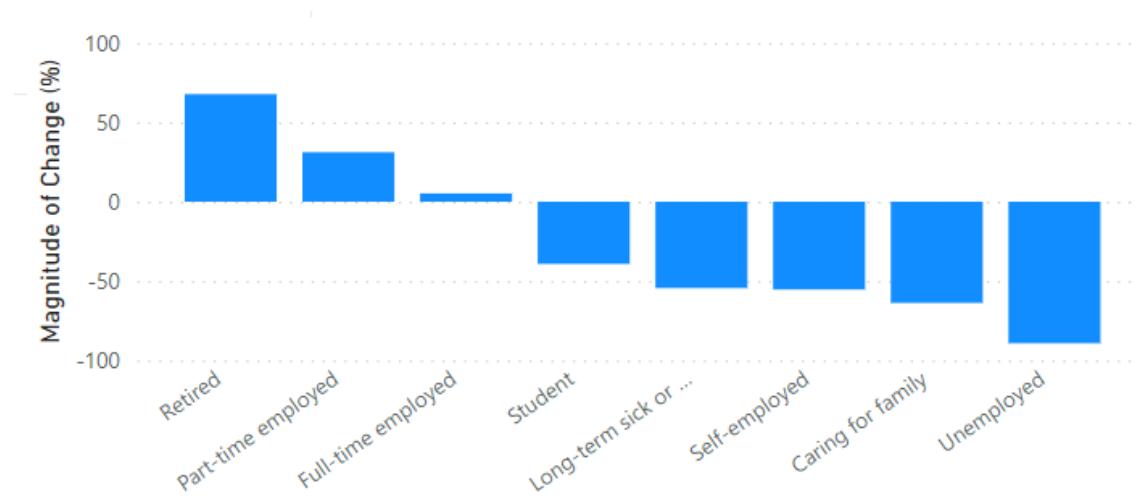


Figure 3.2: Magnitude of change chart for employment: baseline data versus consultation data

People with a university degree or above are overrepresented, while Those with trade apprenticeships or no qualifications are underrepresented.

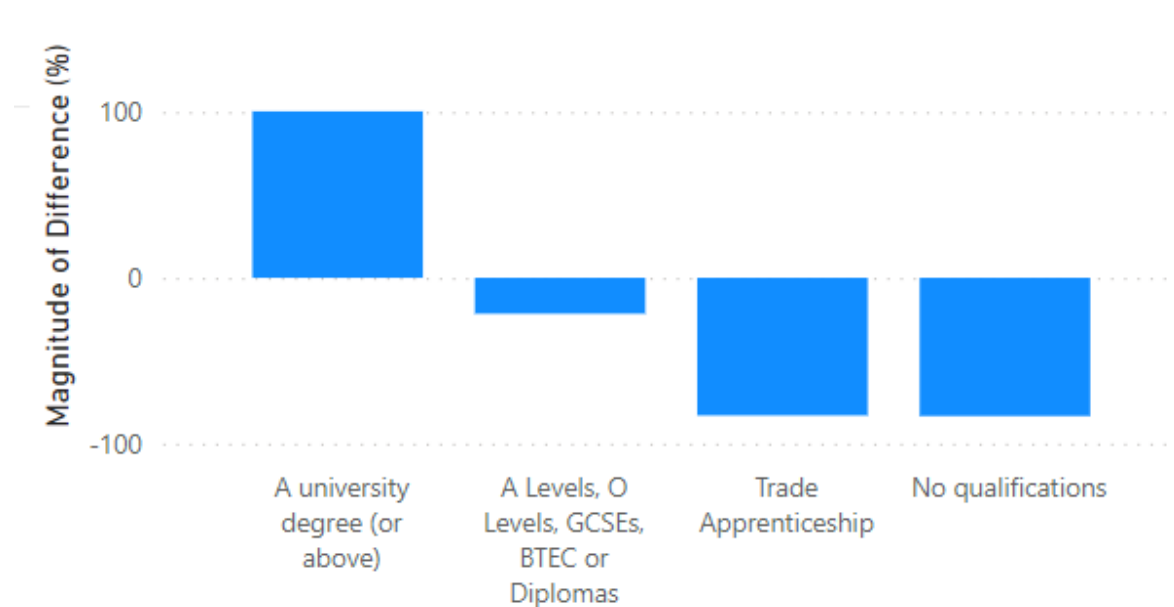


Figure 3.3: Magnitude of difference chart for qualifications: baseline data versus consultation data

Income is represented within a 50% range of expected values, although it appears those earning between £25,000 - £75,000 are underrepresented, suggested that those on either extreme of the income ranges are more likely to engage.

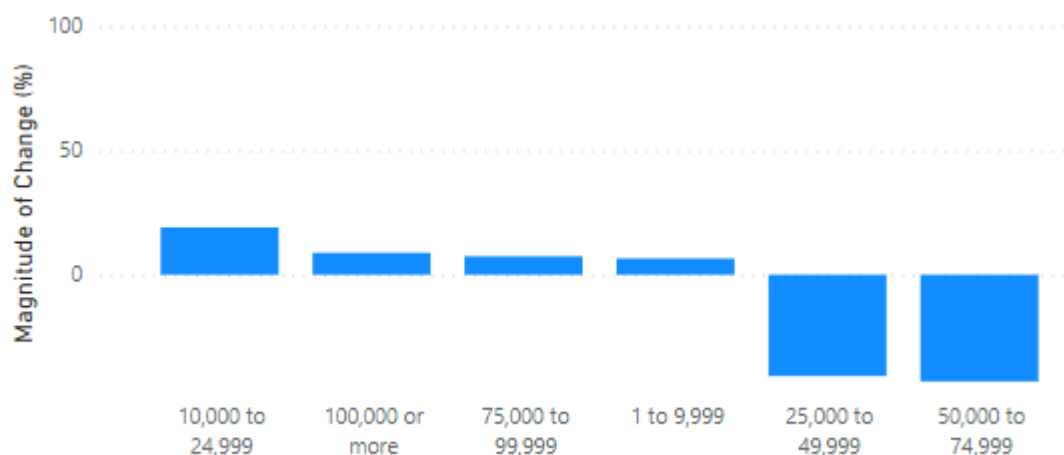


Figure 3.4: Magnitude of change chart for income: baseline data versus consultation data

### Benchmarking data

In addition to this, the survey questions included a multitude of questions drawn from other national surveys by the Quality of Life and HGGT teams to allow for benchmarking of the responses in the reporting and analysis stages of the report (*More information on this process in section 4.0*). Sources include:

- Sustrans
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- Office for National Statistics
- Natural England
- Department for Transport
- UK Government Disability Unit

In practice, these questions provided another level of analysis to the themes we used to plan and categorise question topics. For the core questions, which yielded the highest volume of responses, we drew mainly on the Taking Part and Community Life (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) Surveys. Benchmarks from other surveys listed above were included but did not amass enough responses to be analysed and interpreted meaningfully.

From these benchmark questions, we found the following:

- In general, we can see that the people of Harlow, Gilston and the surrounding area tend to be more active and engaged when it comes to visiting heritage and historical sites. Particularly, historic parks and gardens are well visited (*Figure 3.1*).
- In Harlow, Gilston and the surrounding areas most people tend not to feel able to have any real impact on the decisions that impact their local areas (*Figure 3.2*).
- A large majority of residents felt a strong connection to their local area. Residents of the Harlow and Gilston area rank their sense of belonging higher than the national average (*Figure 3.3*).
- Generally, respondents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live with 69% stating that they were either 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' (*Figure 3.4*).

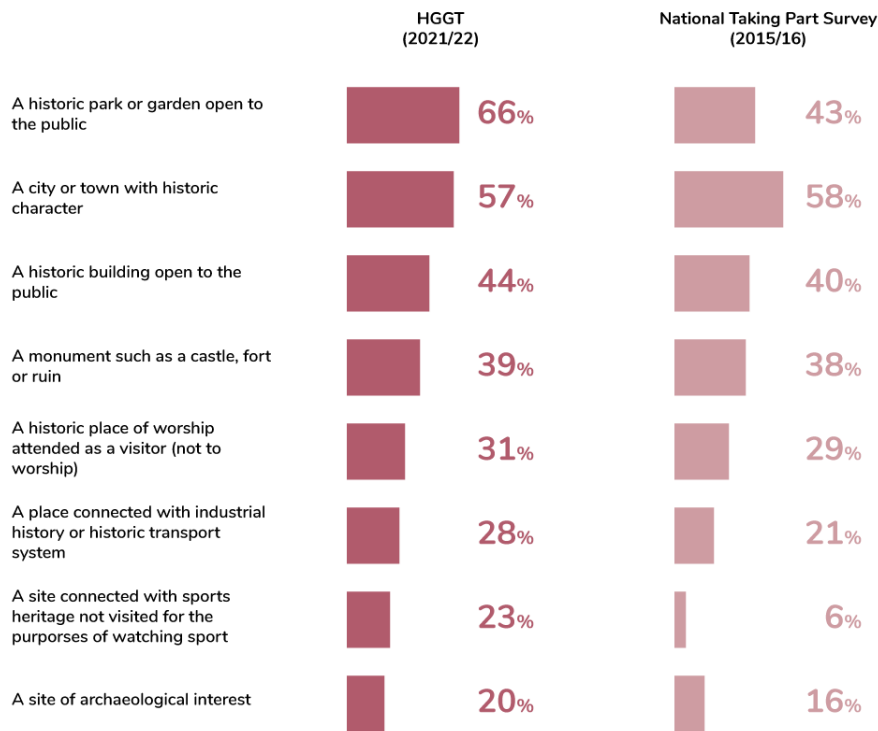


Figure 3.5: A comparison of local responses vs results from the National Taking Part Survey to the question “In the last 12 months, have you visited any of these places?”

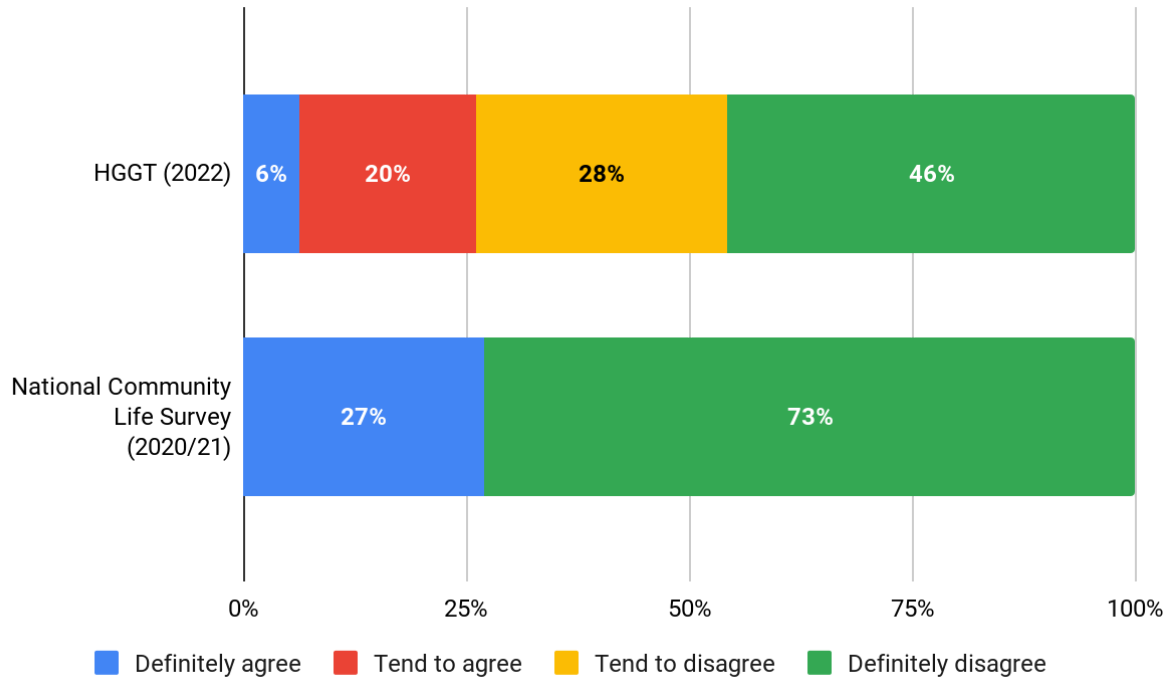


Figure 3.6: A comparison of local responses vs results from the Community Life Survey to the statement "To what extent do you agree or disagree that you personally can influence decisions affecting your local area?"

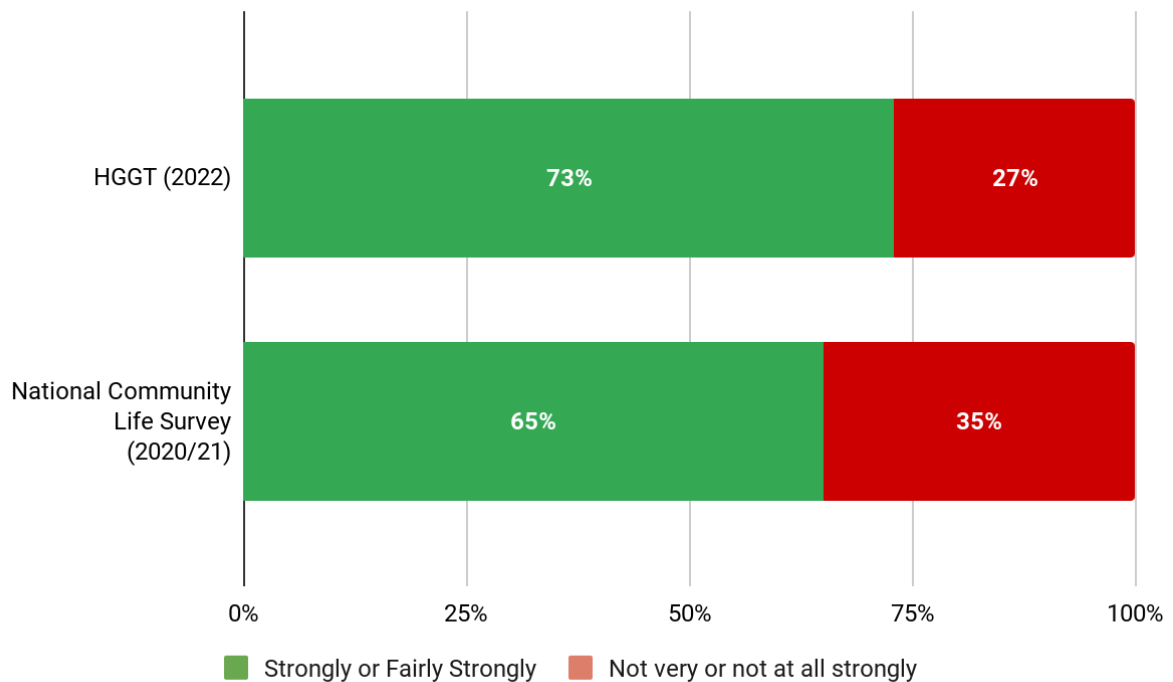


Figure 3.7: A comparison of local responses vs results from the Community Life Survey to the statement "To what extent do you agree or disagree that you personally can influence decisions affecting your local area?"

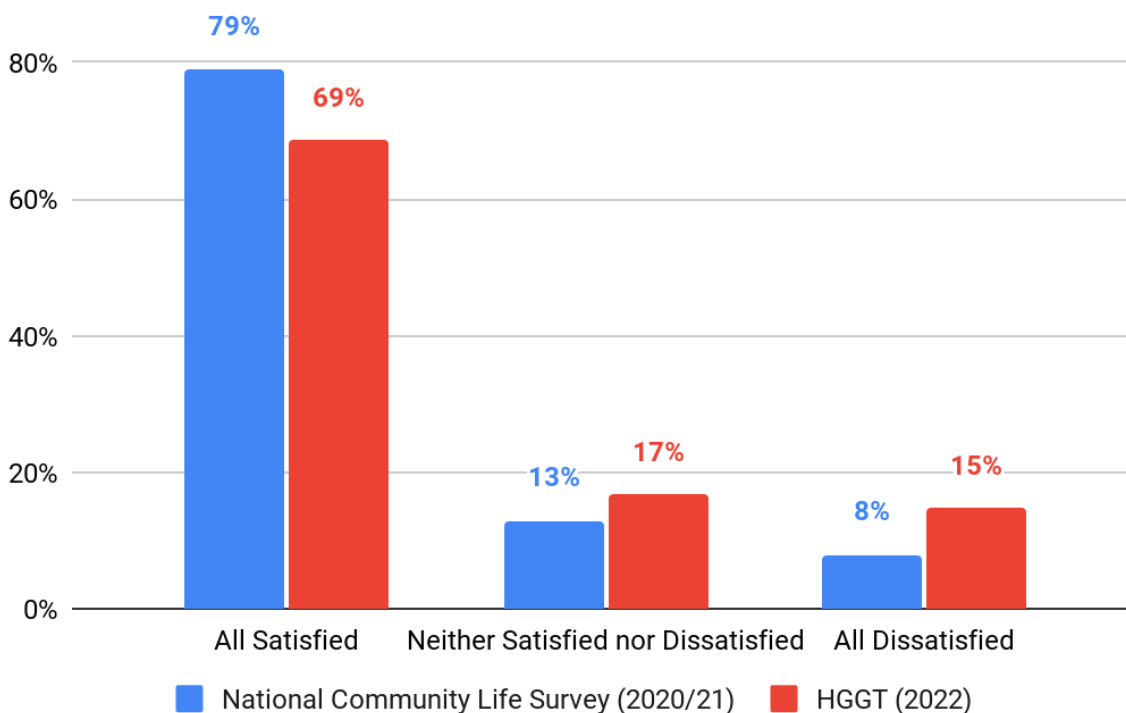


Figure 3.8: A comparison of local responses vs results from the Community Life Survey to the statement “How satisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?”

### Measurement challenges

Clear measurement challenges were around the fact that a number of our outcomes were not quantitative but quality-focused and outcomes also focused on embedding new and better practice and processes into the HGGT project and long term planning, design and stewardship approaches in our own and partner projects. This means that we may not see the fruits of our labour in terms of outcomes immediately, and the recommendations and associated updates/ changes/ initiatives which we will look to action over the coming weeks and months will be a truer reflection of the success of this Your Quality of Life project. However, we recognise that turning qualitative successes into more quantitative measures can be very useful in terms of buy-in, communications, and emphasis, and have reflected this in the attached Outcomes Table.

The desired outcomes of “Establish quality and social value data in usable format” and “Develop Quality Monitoring Strategy” remain work in progress, as these require the analysis from Your Quality of Life consultation to enable the establishment of social value indicators which are tied into our HGGT Vision and Stewardship Principles & Objectives. These indicators will allow longitudinal re-assessment, for measuring the change and growth across the Garden Town. The challenge of turning consultation data analysis into longer term indicators is a new area of innovation in large scale social value data collection, and Quality of Life Foundation are expertly placed to collaborate with HGGT to ensure that this data is useful and used to influence plans and projects going forward.

Combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis is a challenging yet, ultimately, worthwhile and necessary approach to make sure numbers and statistics relate directly to lived experience. Working as a multidisciplinary team, with a relatively new digital platform, meant a process of constant and positive learning for all parties involved. It became clear that live analysis needs significant planning. We had intended to undertake fortnightly analysis, however this proved too resource intensive. A mid-point review instead provided a





suitable in-depth perspective and provided actionable insights to improve and target communications and engagement. Urchin Tracking Module (UTM) parameters were useful to show digital and physical reach of certain engagement methods. Though it became clear that the process of creating these should have been more collaborative from the start to minimise confusion and differentiate between manually and automatically generated UTMs. Another challenge of data collection came from understanding and factoring in limitations of certain technologies, such as, Natural Language Processing (NLP) to assist with qualitative sentiment analysis and geographic mapping software. For both of these technologies at present, a human eye is needed to scrutinise and achieve a more nuanced and detailed level of analysis.

On benchmarking, we faced issues around compatible data points - we also faced issues around sample size across the survey. As we deployed a rolling survey questionnaire methodology (where new sets of questions were released via the Commonplace platform bi-weekly), response rates were inconsistent across the different question sets, giving us a varied number of responses. This was particularly challenging when it came to doing more granular analysis around the responses of specific communities that we had outlined as target demographics (see demographics). As responses to demographic questions operate on an opt-in basis, not all demographic responses were collected evenly, especially responses to more identifiable sensitive demographic information, understandably.

This was also the same issue we had around understanding and mapping the spatial responses. The issues around measurement and analysis were twofold, one being the limitation of the Commonplace platform's spatial data collection, as the process of adding comments to maps had user experience issues. The second coming from being unable to carry out detailed analysis of said spatialised data, as Commonplace can only map responses based on sentiment and did not have a back-end option to allow for easy segmenting and analysis of collected responses.

Further challenges around ensuring the project was locally specific whilst still benchmark-able, e.g. tying in the questions to HGGT's Stewardship Principles & Objectives whilst ensuring a balance of with national benchmarking and Quality of Life Foundation Monitoring Framework questions.

All these challenges were either worked around or directly addressed over the course of the project. However, when thinking more exclusively about impact challenges, measuring the cost effectiveness of the project via a direct comparison of digital vs traditional/physical engagement methods was an one of the more difficult challenges (see section below).

### **Demographics**

At the end of both the online and physical survey there were optional demographic questions. We had a total of 12 demographic questions, which are noted in the table appended to this report. These were shaped through benchmarking against national surveys, and in consideration of future segmentation of the data against HGGT priority groups (e.g. understanding how many people working in SMEs had taken part in the survey). Physical survey demographic data was uploaded onto the digital platform manually when transcribing hard copy surveys.

To understand if survey data was representative, Stantec created a dashboard using Power BI, which allows both datasets (survey and Census 2011 for example) to be compared. Below is an example of the dashboard page setup to show respondent age data (left) and local census data (right). This was used by Stantec and Quality of Life Foundation to test the reliability of the data and insights and understand how representative they are.

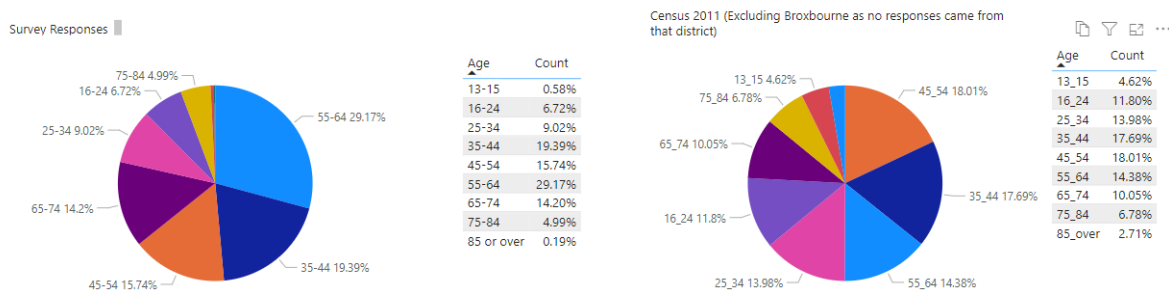


Figure 3.9: Example of Power BI Dashboard comparison data visualisation of baseline and consultation data

Compared to previous HGGT consultations, Your Quality of Life consultation collected a more granular level of detail on demographics than either two baseline consultations (as noted above). This allows more clarity on insights and statistical reliability, but also increases the number of demographic questions (which can reduce likelihood to complete/ finish the survey) and increases the amount of data and analysis.

### Cost effectiveness

Tracking engagement metrics across both digital and physical methods, we can see that generally digital engagement represented the majority of responses, with 553 online responses vs 45 paper surveys. On a project as interconnected and broad as this, the number of stakeholders, team members and delivery channels mean that a direct cost effectiveness comparison between the two methods is challenging.

Inconsistencies in different metrics reported to us via the different digital platforms made it hard to get an accurate picture that we can use as a point of reference for cost analysis of digital engagement. Basic costs such as promoted social media posts could be factored together but does not provide a direct connection to survey responses per pound of spending on a social media platform campaign despite the use of UTMs to track where people are coming from.

In addition to this, across both digital and traditional engagement channels quantifying reach, impressions and its direct conversion to a completed survey is difficult. E.g. If a poster directs someone to an online consultation tool, should it be considered a non-digital or a digital engagement cost? Clarity about how to measure this (from the start of the project) would be useful.

For traditional engagement, on the other hand, costs associated are also complicated. Accounting for engagement budgets is not enough, costs would need to include hourly rates of local researchers and wider associated costs, such as consultant team costs. The Quality of Life Foundation had attempted to measure time against this project internally, set against the deliverables for each project stage, using a self-reported summary of days spent per week on each stage but the fast-paced nature of the project and the changes that we had to constantly make in the delivery stages in response to challenges meant that this wasn't successful as a method to track hours against the project - in addition to this, this method would only account for time spent by the Quality of Life Team and not other team members.

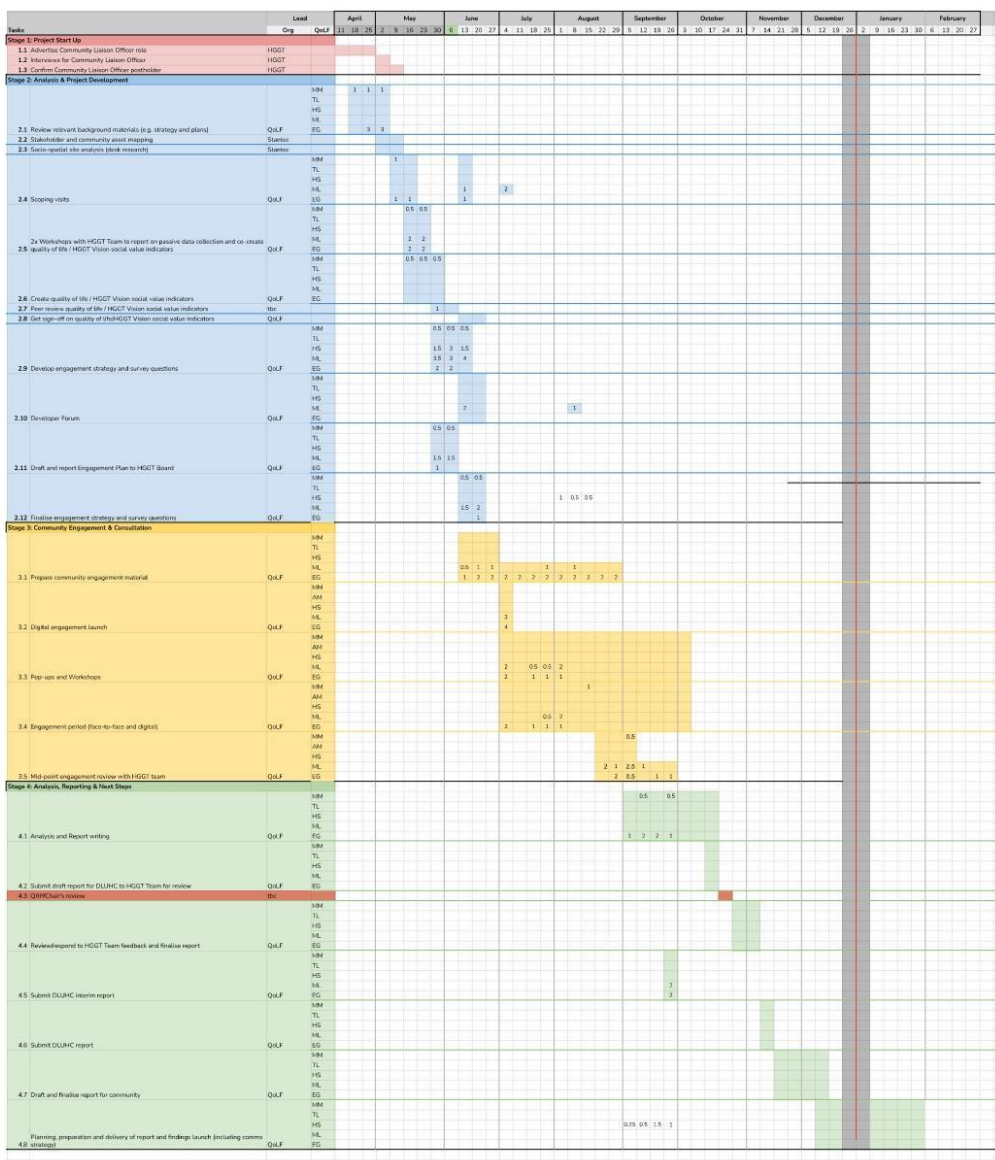


Figure 3.10: Quality of Life Foundation Project tracker used to track time against project tasks throughout

It would be valuable to understand which methods are best used for different groups however, as this could bring greater efficiencies, increase quality and uptake. Also, by engaging with people in ways that are tailored to their needs and interests, we expect we would be able to build better relationships and ongoing engagement in the planning process.

We were able to reach a wider group, but because we didn't trial various methods against a control version, it's difficult to say which different elements of our approach influenced engagement uptake. For example, people may have felt more comfortable engaging digitally if they felt morally aligned with maintaining in-person engagement as an option, or because of content, branding, timing of communications releases, etc. If we were to conduct a post-survey evaluation of people's experience, this might give us an indication, but this would have meant asking more questions and risk losing engagement with the primary survey.



## 4.0 Community Feedback

### Summary of community consultation

#### Consultation Focus

We focused on understanding what local people in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town value, like, dislike and need, to establish a quality of life baseline for the area's growth and regeneration plans - this is work that will be continued beyond this project through the development and delivery of a Future Quality Monitoring Strategy.

#### Survey Questions

We started the process of survey design using the Quality of Life Foundation's Monitoring Framework standard survey questions, which are complimented with an extended list of contextual questions selected based on the setting of the survey. This early stage involved developing the questions to ensure that they captured relevant feedback from respondents, whilst ensuring that we had national benchmarks to draw comparisons against. In addition to this, we mapped survey questions against HGGT's Principles and Objectives, ensuring that the feedback can be tied into the future planning and strategy work for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Area via the Future Monitoring Framework.

The process of formulating this mixture of questions was a collaborative one. At weekly team meetings, both the Quality of Life and HGGT teams would discuss the questions, addressing issues around phrasing and accessibility as well as any suggested amendments made during the week. The survey questions were updated and amended up until their staggered release via the Commonplace platform to the public. This process also allowed the teams to be more agile and responsive, adding and tweaking questions based on any findings or conversations during the project.

#### Targeted demographics:

We identified focus/ priority groups to engage with, through project development with stakeholders (officers, Members, developers). These groups were:

- Young people and youth groups, including Youth Councils (Epping Forest and Harlow), schools and colleges
- Affordable housing community, including permitted development office to residential residents
- Business community, particularly SMEs, plus the hospital as the largest local employer.
- Gypsy/traveller communities
- Community and sports groups
- Rural communities surrounding Harlow

#### Challenges / surprises around engagement with specific groups:

- *Children and young people*: Engaging young people in surveys is always a challenge. Acknowledging this, we had incorporated the voice of young people in the early stages of the survey, running user research workshops with Epping and Harlow Youth Council as well as involving Rainbow Services in the process of running a youth workshop and going to where young people hang out. However, this did not translate into significantly more uptake from young people. We would note that it cannot be assumed that digital engagement = youth uptake, and the purpose of the



project has to be explicitly tailored to this audience. In-person events were more successful in engaging young people. Many were also reluctant to enter the demographic information.

- *Local Gypsy and Traveller community*: Access to and engagement with the Gypsy Traveller and Roma (GTR) community presented challenges, including being unsuccessful in arranging appointments through gateway/ community G&T liaison or in engaging with settled members of the community via social housing associations, and safety concerns raised with community researchers accessing some local sites where they experienced anti-social behaviour. This was an underrepresented priority group that we consider needs very focused, concerted engagement, with significant avenues to explore, and needs to remain a priority going forwards.
- *Men aged 65 and over*: low digital engagement from male aged 65+ community on social media; they were the least engaged with the audience on Facebook.
- *LGBT Community*: Responses from this community were double the typical population representation percentage nationally. This was an encouraging result, as we didn't actively seek to improve engagement response rates from this particular demographic.

### Summary of community responses

In terms of uptake rates, this engagement programme outperformed previous efforts by HGGT. The following provides a brief overview of the general numbers achieved by this project, for more detailed breakdowns of engagement statistics please review the outcomes table (See *Appendix*).

#### Platform engagement:

- Device access: Desktop: 64%, Mobile 24%, Tablet 12%
- 7.4% overall contribution rate from visitors to the platform
- Tracked digital (excluding social media or paid adverts/newsletters) response rate: 46%
- Tracked digital (excluding social media or paid adverts/newsletters) approx. total visitors: 560

#### Social Media engagement:

- Facebook attracted more visitors than any other campaign, despite this, those on Twitter were more likely to actually complete the survey or comment on the map with a 35% response rate.
- In total, 179,165 local people saw the Your Quality of Life content at least once across the 12 week project period on Facebook.
- Tracked digital (including social media or paid adverts/newsletters) approx. total visitors: 3302

#### Physical summary:

- Tracked physical: response rate with physical flyers/posters/banners: 39%
- Tracked physical: approximate total reach of physical flyers/posters/banners: 1363 people
- 45 hard copy surveys completed





*Sense of belonging and upkeep of public spaces:*

Generally, people are satisfied with living in the Harlow area and feel like they belong to their immediate neighbourhood. However, people also felt that there was a clear decline in the upkeep of the town centre and public spaces. In this vein, comments around the condition of roads and cycle paths highlighted the need for maintenance and investment in those areas.

The condition of the public spaces and infrastructure in Harlow has also been reported to have a negative impact on the mental wellbeing of some people, while comments concerning healthy lifestyles have referred to a lack of affordable options when it comes to gyms and food options. However, options for community walking groups have been mentioned positively.

*Arts, culture and social offer:*

Whilst residents of Harlow and the surrounding areas have a high level of engagement with cultural and heritage sites, there is a need for a wider offer for arts, cultural and social offers in the area. Residents reported feeling generally dissatisfied with the offer of local services and amenities in their local area. Going further, comments concerning antisocial behaviour were often accompanied by acknowledgement of the lack of facilities or activities that cater specifically to young people, beginning to highlight how certain issues could be mitigated through investment in social infrastructure.

*Parks and Green Spaces*

The parks and green spaces in Harlow were repeatedly mentioned as an essential part of life in the area, contributing greatly to the community's mental and physical wellbeing and providing much needed respite.

These spaces, comments noted, are accessed by all and are incredibly important to the community. Opinions were split as to whether these spaces were well maintained. Others also mentioned that they are concerned about the future of these spaces, as Harlow continues to grow.

*Influencing their area*

The people of Harlow feel very strongly about the future of the town and want to play a big part in it. When it comes to influencing decisions about what happens in their area, especially when it relates to future developments and regeneration, residents felt strongly about the lack of clear and direct lines of participation and influence to the council and its decision-making mechanisms. This is reflected in the high percentage of people who said that they don't feel like they can personally influence decisions affecting their local area and is especially the case for younger respondents, aged 16-24.

*Transport infrastructure*

Buses and public transport connections were rated poorly by respondents to the survey. In addition to this, a high proportion of those with mobility issues especially reported that they were not satisfied. People who use buses noted lack of reliability, high costs and poor connectivity across the town as key barriers. Walking and cycling, on the other hand, are scored relatively neutrally. Primarily, the condition of cycling paths around Harlow were also a barrier noted by people who responded.



### *Regeneration and growth*

When thinking about the future, Harlow residents are apprehensive about the impending growth of the town. These concerns are closely associated with the expectation that an increase in the population of the area will further exacerbate issues of traffic congestion, strained public services, anti-social behaviour and crime and littering which were noted to be of particular concern in Harlow Town Centre. In addition to this, concerns around the loss of green spaces through this process of intensification were consistent throughout the survey. All in all, these were the main reasons listed by those who mentioned that they would like to move away from the area within the next 5 years.

### **Summary of recommendations**

Going forward, we have identified a set of recommendations that we believe should serve as the priority for the Local Authority to begin tackling issues raised by residents of Harlow, Gilston and the surrounding areas. The full list of recommendations contains more detailed information and some references, these have been provided in the Community Feedback Report.

***Building community capacity:*** A lack of control and influence has come up through a number of responses regarding change and ongoing stewardship. However, in Harlow, Gilston and the surrounding areas this must be balanced alongside a response that indicates clear pride and positive feeling about the local area. This struck The Quality of Life Foundation as something of an untapped potential within the community, presenting an opportunity to work with them going forward. We recommend unlocking this potential by involving the community more directly in matters relating to the management and policy development, tapping into existing skills and knowledge.

***Facilitating and empowering existing community groups:*** Community groups also provide a good focal point for addressing other issues and concerns. There are a few groups currently working on empowering the local community within Harlow, Gilston and the surrounding areas. Acknowledging this, we recommend engaging with these groups to respond to queries relating to speeding, active travel, walking and cycling.

***Prioritise transport network investment:*** Freedom and ease of movement through Harlow, Gilston and the surrounding areas is essential in ensuring the thriving of the current and future communities. A decline in investment in public transport infrastructure can lead to an overreliance on cars in the area, further driving down air quality, walkability and the spread of bad parking practices. Investment in this area should be informed by further engagement with the community.

### **Delivering on feedback**

Community feedback is crucial in the development of a Future Monitoring Framework for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town area, informing how the Local Authorities will prioritise actions and KPIs in med-to-long term strategic decisions. The outcomes for this survey will be reported on early in the new year in our HGGT Board Report Recommendation and Action Plans; and via the Future Quality of Life Monitoring Strategy, following issue of the





Community Feedback Report, which will include Quality of Life Foundation's insights, and analysis,

Over the next few weeks, the project team will continue to work together to translate the findings and recommendations into a framework to help guide future planning and policy in the Garden Town. As part of this process, questions around how the strategy can be executed and what policy levers can be put into place to introduce accountability to the framework will be the focus of conversations between HGGT and the Quality of Life Foundation.

### **Community testimonials**

#### **Kate Greer, Project Lead - Rainbow Services (Harlow)**

*"The QOLF project has differed to previous engagement projects I have worked on as it covered a much wider geographical area. It's been enjoyable to meet residents, professionals, and business owners across the border in East Herts and Epping! At times it was challenging to ensure we were viewed as an independent charity, with the sole aim of ensuring local people's thoughts were heard, but I believe we achieved this.*

*Engagement on this project has been on a large scale. We attended many events over the Summer and spoke to people from so many neighbourhoods. It's been interesting to hear what people value in their local area and what they feel should be improved, there were some clear key themes relating to green spaces, transport and regeneration.*

*Emma-Lea and Ibrahim were key to the success of the project, we were able to increase the amount of engagement work we carried out and as they both have such warm and friendly personalities, people were happy to speak to them.*

*Although this was a digital project, the face to face engagement worked well and I personally found it the most enjoyable part. Having conversations with residents allowed us to truly understand people's feelings about where they live, their history with their local area and their hopes for the future and future generations. Following these conversations, we were able to encourage people to share their thoughts by either completing a survey or adding a pin to the interactive map to make sure their voices were heard.*

*Unfortunately, some people had doubts about participating in the full survey due to worries about whether it would be anonymous. On some occasions we were able to completely allay concerns, other times we completed the digital map on their behalf but on the rare occasion people declined to participate.*

*If I were to do this project again, I would ensure we had a shorter version of the paper survey as I feel this would have been more inviting. I would also consider more door to door engagement, although this would be very time consuming, it may have resulted in more people getting involved."*

**Emma-Lea Bailey - Local Community Researcher - Quality of Life Foundation**

*“This role has taught me a lot, especially speaking to the younger generation and learning their views and opinions on the area. The whole project was definitely different from my expectations, it was a lot more interesting and diverse than I was expecting. Being a community researcher has provided me with a lot more knowledge on research and engagement and confidence in myself and in working with the public. It has shown me and others in the public that there are ways to voice your opinion and let your voice be heard, which is a positive.*”

**Mohammad Ibrahim - Local Community Researcher - Quality of Life Foundation**

*“I saw people getting hopeful and happy for someone to be listening to their voices about their living situations. There hadn’t been such sort of [sic] campaign before this project and also people’s voices were remained unheard for so long. Moreover, this platform gave opportunity for everyone from every age group to speak and share their needs... I felt the intense feeling of joy and peace while I was listening to people and working for noble purposes of bringing changes and making differences in someone’s life; it gave me a sense of that I was actually doing something purposeful and meaningful.”*



Figure 4.3 Local Community Researchers attending a number of engagement event across the Garden Town.



## 5.0 Conclusions and Policy Reflections

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

This project has afforded us the funding and impetus to expand, test, and innovate in considering consulting and collecting social value/ quality of life data at scale, in a multi-authority context. We have been very keen to ensure value for money, given the funding we received, whilst pushing for a number of different and varied outcomes, including some short term and many longer term.

If doing the project again, a more focused, distinct project to solve a single (or limited) problem or achieve an outcome, would certainly have avoided some of the challenges we faced given the complexity of the project. However this was not the ethos that we joined the programme in. We wanted to try to push at the intersections of digital community engagement, social value consultation, longitudinal data monitoring, at a Garden Town scale of regeneration of an existing town and growth of 23,000 new homes. We are grateful for the support and momentum that PropTech funding has provided to allow us to initiate this long-lasting project.

### **What longer-term changes, if any, do you expect to make as a result of this pilot? If not, why - what barriers are preventing long term adoption?**

- In-person and digital engagement approaches and methods updated both in strategies, plans and in practice.
- Definitions of stewardship, social value, quality of life to be agreed and used across Garden Town work.
- Community-led stewardship approaches further defined, through understanding community priorities, strengthening connection and dialogue with the community and ongoing feedback loops created.
- Quality of Life Monitoring strategy established, aligning with Garden Town Vision stewardship principles and objectives, with quality of life indicators informed by Your Quality Of Life consultation and expert recommendations.
- Quality of life data gathered during the consultation being referred to and utilised by developer partners to inform their masterplanning, design code, development and regeneration project work.
- *Barrier:* Working out the best way to disseminate data and insights which are analysed both thematically (from survey questions) and spatially (through maps) to a wider audience of community, developer partners, officers and members may be a key barrier in the reach of this project. Next steps to ensure that the outcome 'Social value data in an accessible and useful format' include workshops with stakeholders, and longitudinal consultation data & dashboard considerations
- *Barrier:* Selecting a digital consultation platform to continue to work with (and the associated long term cost of maintaining this) which enables excellent community engagement but also allows for long term longitudinal monitoring/ cross-referencing of data. We may need to explore a number of PropTech suppliers to understand whether a single solution is a best-fit or if existing in-house software/ capacity can assist with this long term adoption.
- *Barrier:* Continuing to have resource and buy-in to enact the lesson learnt and key recommendations which are coming out of this project, given the annual funding cycles, resource limitations.



**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?**

- Organisations working with young people
- Equality, diversity and inclusion experts
- Socio-economic experts
- Organisations or teams working with Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GTR) communities
- Research and monitoring teams to support LPAs integrate approaches and adopt / adapt systems to fit
- Organisations specialising in processes and decision-making aligned to longtermism and data management
- Different user groups, and particularly underrepresented groups, to test various platforms and methods

**Did any existing planning policies limit your ability to achieve your goals for this project?**

- Lack of definition/ requirements for digital consultation within policies, such as what is meant or required by inclusive or meaningful engagement, to make it clearer what success looks like;
- Inconsistent definitions of social value and with the most common interpretation being much more limited than our own
- Absence of policy for community-led stewardship

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

- **Social Value and Engagement:** Two separate, but linked policy areas - increased focus on community-led approaches and to prioritise underrepresented groups in defining these, in order to bring greater quality of life to communities, equitably.
- **Stewardship**, to exist beyond guidance, be defined beyond assets, requires community-led approaches and holistic consideration of best practice for social, ecological, and socio-economic factors
- **Design coding**, to include specifications which take, digital communication and engagement, health & wellbeing and stewardship outcomes into consideration.

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

Please refer to lessons learned

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

Please refer to lessons learned

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

User testing with underrepresented groups, focussing specifically on young people and traveller communities. In addition to this, further funding should go to projects focusing on exploring the capabilities of current digital engagement tools, with particular emphasis on platforms' ability to balance digital and physical approaches and consolidate both sources of data effectively.



**6.0 Appendices (delete this section if not applicable)**

**Please also see appended:**

- Project Comms & Engagement Plan
- Youth Council Workshop: user research crib sheet
- Your Quality of Life Community Feedback Report (Quality of Life Foundation)
- Full list of Demographic Survey Questions asked

**Demographics**

Table showing the breakdown of different demographic markers for respondents to our survey. This was an optional set of questions, so not all respondents' demographic information was captured but enough was collected to give us an understanding of how representative survey uptake was.

Age:	Gender:	Ethnicity:	Employment and income:	Disability:	Gender and Sexual orientation:
13-15: 3 (1.09%) 16-24: 21 (7.61%) 25-34: 29 (10.51%) 35-44: 59 (21.38%) 45-54: 50 (18.12%) 55-64: 65 (23.55%) 65-74: 39 (14.12%) 75-84: 9 (3.26%) * 85 or over: 1 (0.36%) * (likely to be more due to digital exclusion / lack of demographic data from some physical surveys may mean data does not fully reflect older group participation)	Female: 101 (66.5%) Male: 45 (29.6%) Other: 2 (1.3%) Prefer not to say: 4 (2.6%)	<p><b>Overall percentage of people from ethnic minorities and/or under represented communities: 16.22%</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gypsy or Irish Traveller - 1</li> <li>• Any other White background - 5</li> <li>• White and Black Caribbean - 1</li> <li>• White and Black African - 2</li> <li>• White and Asian - 2</li> <li>• Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background - 3</li> <li>• Indian - 3</li> <li>• Pakistani - 2</li> <li>• Bangladeshi - 1</li> <li>• Caribbean - 2</li> <li>• Any other Black/African/Caribbean background - 1</li> <li>• Any other ethnic group - 1</li> <li>• Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British - 124</li> </ul>	<p><b>- Most respondents earn over £25k but 25% earn less</b></p>	<p><b>- 41.1% have a disability or illness that impacts their daily life.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vision (e.g. blindness or partial sight): 3</li> <li>- Hearing (e.g. deafness or partial hearing): 10</li> <li>- Mobility (e.g. walking or climbing stairs): 11</li> <li>- Dexterity (carrying things, using keyboards): 5</li> <li>- Learning, understanding or concentrating: 4</li> <li>- Memory: 1</li> <li>- Mental Health: 16</li> <li>- Stamina or breathing fatigue: 7</li> <li>- Social or behavioural (Autism or ADHD): 5</li> <li>- Other: 5</li> <li>- Prefer not to say: 14</li> <li>- No disability or illness: 82</li> </ul>	<p>- 4.64% of respondents said their gender was not the same as their sex registered at birth or they preferred not to say</p> <p>- The sexual orientation of participants was 80.67% straight or heterosexual / 4% bisexual / 4.67% Gay or Lesbian / 2% other / 8.67% prefer not to say.</p>