



PropTech Engagement Fund Round 2

Final Report

October 2022



Local Planning Authorities	SW Hertfordshire - comprising Dacorum Borough Council (DBC), Hertsmere Borough Council (HBC), St Albans City and District Council (SADC), Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) and Watford Borough Council (WBC), supported by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).
Date Report Submitted	28 th October 2022



SWHERTS
Joint Strategic Plan



Realising our Potential



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Executive Summary

Region	East of England
LA Rural-Urban Classification Category	<p>The SW Herts area comprises a mix of urban and rural areas. District classifications are as follows based on: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-rural-urban-classification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dacorum Borough Council - Major Urban • Hertsmere Borough Council - Significant Rural • St Albans City and District Council - Significant Rural • Three Rivers District Council - Major Urban • Watford Borough Council - Major Urban
Project summary	To generate interest, enthusiasm and engagement in developing a strategic vision for South West Hertfordshire. The vision will underpin a statutory Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) that is being prepared by five Councils, supported by Hertfordshire County Council.
Funding allocated	£121,750
Supplier(s) Appointed	Bang the Table / Built-ID / Penknife / Iceni Projects
Consultation Topic	The project supplements and extends the reach of a scheduled Regulation 18 consultation, allowing a continued focus on engaging the 18-25 demographic and other hard to reach groups such as those in deprived and rural areas who typically don't take an interest in planning matters, particularly long-term strategic planning. It follows on from the successful 'SW Herts – Your Future' work carried out by the SW Herts Joint JSP in early 2020.
Consultation Outcomes	<p><i>Eg. How has the feedback from the consultation informed / validated / changed the approach to project delivery?</i></p> <p>Key project outcomes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social-media based 'quick-fire' polls continue to be a good mechanism to ensure significantly higher participation rates in planning consultations, particularly from those who do not usually engage. However, the type and nature of questions that can be asked are somewhat limited, so this approach is best suited for seeking feedback on high level topics at the start of a plan-making process, rather than more complex / detailed matters as a plan develops. • The age profile for those participating in the polls that were used in this engagement project appears to have changed post-covid – with much higher participation rates for the



	<p>over 55 age groups than for a similar poll conducted in early 2020 (also advertised via the same social media channels), as part of the ‘Your Future’ engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 18-25 year olds are keen to ensure their views are being taken into account – but the best ways to engage with that demographic are always evolving. ● Directing the conversation away from solely planning issues where possible, removing unnecessary acronyms and instead focussing on the benefits of joint long term working, appears to encourage greater interaction – although it was evident that it becomes harder to remove planning terminology during statutory consultation stages. Respondents appear to be more focused upon commenting about their current area and current concerns, rather than envisaging how this may be changed for the better in the future. It is similarly hard to elicit more ‘strategic’ views from respondents, regardless of age, with feedback tending to be more locally specific. ● Ensuring a comprehensive engagement strategy, aimed at capturing the views of a fully demographically representative cross section of an area, is an expensive and time consuming process – and likely to be out of reach for many individual local authorities without further financial support. ● Successful planning engagement requires input and support from communications, IT and graphic / design specialists, as well as planners, to ensure the messaging is as clear, visually stimulating and targeted as possible. ● The variety of tools used, particularly the social-media targeted survey, which was tested with Youth Forum attendees in advance and amended to reflect their feedback, made the conversation more relevant, interesting and accessible. This helped drive up response rates and awareness levels. ● The feedback received for this engagement provides a strong basis for future work on the JSP.
<p>Consultation dates</p>	<p>Full consultation runs from 5th September to 4th November 2022. The Give My View poll element ran for 3 weeks from 5th to 26th September 2022.</p>



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1.0 Project Summary

- **Summary:** *provide a high-level overview of the project in a few sentences or bullet points. If applicable, include links to your project website and/or images of consultation materials.*

To develop and deploy a comprehensive Regulation 18 consultation programme relating to the 'Realising Our Potential' document (see appendix) that seeks to generate interest, enthusiasm and engagement in developing a shared vision for South West Hertfordshire, establishing a two way dialogue, which can be used to underpin the emerging Joint Strategic Plan (JSP).

Consultation to be web-based, utilising a 'quick fire' poll promoted via social media, interactive web-based consultation document, explainer videos and a suite of social media graphics to try to reach out to as many people as possible.

To utilise feedback from a newly formed Youth Forum to try to ensure the consultation programme elicits responses from the 18-25 age group and other hard to reach demographics, who are historically under-represented in planning consultations, but critical to engagement when preparing a plan with a 2050 time horizon.

- **Status quo pre-PropTech:** *how did your local authority approach planning consultations before you received PropTech funding?*

The five local authorities that make up South West Hertfordshire have all historically approached planning consultations in slightly different ways. Due to budget and technological constraints, the focus has traditionally been on hard copy documents, paper newsletters, a simple webpage(s) hosted on the council websites, supported by a series of in-person exhibitions.

Recent Regulation 18 consultation carried out by the districts has begun to embrace more innovative approaches to engagement, although uptake varies. Some have established bespoke micro-sites to try to make consultation more interactive, prepared videos to explain the consultation and /or hosted virtual exhibitions. This transition to more web-based techniques has largely arisen as a direct result of limitations placed on face-to-face interactions by the Covid pandemic. Other districts continue to be more reliant on local groups to spread awareness of consultations, and either lack sufficient budget, specialist consultation software, or remain reliant on systems that do not enable more innovative consultation techniques.

- **Outcomes:** *what did the project achieve? Summarise the main impacts in a few bullet points, a table, or other format. Note: there is a section dedicated to project outcomes further on in this report so only include a high-level*



summary here.

The PropTech project enabled the SW Herts authorities to:

- Devise a much wider ranging and inclusive engagement programme than would otherwise have been possible.
 - Build on the success of the 'Your Future' poll carried out in early 2020 and take forward the learning from this.
 - Create clear, modern branding and a suite of graphics for the JSP that can be used in all future engagement activity.
 - Develop approaches that ensure as many people as possible were aware of the consultation and could choose whether or not to engage with it through range of mechanisms.
 - Directly seek the views and inputs of a Youth Forum to test ideas and approaches which would assist in reaching the 18-25 year old demographic.
 - Target the social media poll at the 18-25 demographic – the most difficult and expensive group 'per click' to engage with.
 - Demonstrate the benefits of digital engagement techniques versus more traditional methods of consultation and the challenges / opportunities associated with running different approaches in tandem.
 - Underline the importance of trying to keep consultation material, imagery and associated questions as simple and accessible as possible (whilst still meeting regulatory requirements).
 - Ensure all consultation material was written in as simple language as possible, to make it accessible to non-planners.
 - Understand the benefits of establishing a multi-disciplinary team to manage the engagement – calling on skills of not just planners, but IT specialists, web designers, graphic designers and communications experts – and the importance of these individuals working as a team to deploy a successful engagement programme.
 - Enable responses to be reported for SW Herts area as a whole, but also broken down by district / borough, to allow similarities and differences in responses to be mapped and considered.
 - Continue to create an extensive, representative and up-to-date database of contacts who wish to be informed of future JSP activity.
- **Opportunities:** *what did the funding allow you to do that you wouldn't have been able to do otherwise?*

The funding enabled the JSP partnership to plan and deliver a much more wide-ranging and inclusive engagement programme than would otherwise have been possible. Without PropTech support the consultation would still have been web-based, but much more limited in scope and in line with the approach taken by many similar engagements, comprising:

- A PDF version of the R18 document hosted on the Bang the Table website, with an associated online survey for respondents to complete.
- Paper copy documents being made available for reference purposes



at libraries and council offices, accompanied by a paper copy of the survey.

- Posters sent to deposit points, libraries and leisure centres promoting the consultation.
- Some basic social media promotion, led by district- council communications officers, using graphics developed in-house.
- Online briefing sessions for town and parish council representatives.

The PropTech project enabled the following to also be delivered (*Note: the elements highlighted by an asterisk were in addition to what was included within the original PropTech bid*) – see appendix for copies of key material:

- A graphics / infographics-led consultation document that is both eye catching and easy to read.
 - A comprehensive set of social media assets, based on clear and consistent branding, deployed by district communications teams, but with additional ‘boosting’ of posts to widen their reach.
 - The distribution of a series of ‘business cards’ to schools / colleges, leisure centres, libraries and council offices in the area, with a QR code to enable quick and easy access to the consultation homepage.
 - Creation of an explainer video - one long and two shorter versions, for use when briefing town and parish councils and deployment on the consultation website and over social media.
 - An interactive version of the R18 document, linked to a series of survey questions, hosted on a specialist consultation platform.
 - A bespoke in-person, but interactive, event aimed at sixth form / college aged students to ensure the views of younger people are captured.* (*Note: This event was postponed but all the material has been prepared and it is hoped the event will take place shortly after the wider engagement closes*).
 - A ‘quick fire’ poll, based on a simplified version of the main consultation questions, supported by a social media marketing campaign using both eye catching short videos and static graphics.
 - A poster adverting campaign at selected local railway stations to raise the profile of the consultation with commuters and those on leisure trips. Based on an amended version of the business cards, with a QR code.*
 - Establishment of a Youth Forum with representation across the SW Herts area, to guide and inform the above consultation programme.
- **Funding review:** *we are working to help other LPAs budget in the future and understand where you encountered surprises. Please fill out the table below and include any additional reflections about the funding in the text box underneath the table. For example: was more/less funding needed than you expected and for what elements? With the benefit of hindsight, how would you re-do your budget if you were starting this project again?*

The table below sets out the amount bid for key elements of the project, versus estimated spend. Key points to note are:

- Precise spend is hard to establish in some areas, as elements of the consultation would have been carried out without the benefit of PropTech



support: the funding allowed for these elements to be extended and enhanced. Spend on many elements is also split across one or more consultants.

- It was a challenge trying to establish overall costings for a consultation programme that had not been finalised when the bid was submitted, and was drawn up by (planning) Officers with limited experience of conducting such a wide ranging and innovative consultation programme. The PropTech programme (both R1 and R2) should help provide a benchmark for councils seeking to cost similar consultation programmes in the future and assist with assessing costs versus benefits.
- The bid assumed that significant work would need to be undertaken by an IT specialist to develop the necessary API to allow the Built-ID poll to be embedded within the BTT website, to provide a seamless user experience. However, this element of the work proved far simpler and less technical than expected. After being given access to the website 'back office,' Built-ID were able to easily link the web platform with their poll platform. However, this interface was not ultimately required, as the decision was taken to host the social media poll on Built-ID's own Give My View site. This was to minimise confusion between the two feedback mechanisms and reduce the likelihood of double counting if respondents completed both surveys. The poll did however provide a clear link to the main JSP website, should respondees wish to find out further information or respond to the full survey. Conversely, the website referenced the Give My View poll, with direct links being provided on request.
- Overall project management of the project was undertaken by the JSP team. The JSP team did not keep a specific record of hours spent on this project versus other work, so staff costs are excluded, apart for those relating to the PT Coms Officer support provided by an Officer from Hertsmere. Project management of the interactive website element was carried out by Hyas Associates, whilst Icenii provided support regarding the Give My View poll.



	Amount Bid	Amount Spent
Supplementary engagement licence cost and initial setting up	£9,500	£9,000
Communications support to include digital content, messaging, videos, graphics and development	£25,000	£60,245 <i>(Comms / marketing costs merged as significant overlap between the two).</i>
Marketing and promotion (social media campaigns and local promotional activity)	£19,000	
Application Programming Interface (API) research and development.	£34,500	£5,000 <i>(Limited additional costs incurred by Built-ID before it was decided not to progress this element of the work - for reasons set out in report).</i>
Interactive PDF/HTML design and document creation	£15,000	£15,000
Project management support and backfilling of project team	£18,750	£16,000 <i>(Note, includes costs of part time Comms Officer support but not time costs associated with input from core JSP team)</i>
TOTAL	£121,750	£105,245



2.0 Lessons Learned

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

Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
<p>Getting started: Developing the business case/gaining organisational buy-in to apply for Round 2 funding.</p>	<p><i>E.g. the project team developed an internal business case that had to be approved by departmental Directors</i></p> <p>The R2 bid was prepared by the JSP team, with input from the Strategic Planning Officers Group (SPOG), which includes Policy Manager-level representation from each of the SW Herts authorities and the county council. It was then agreed through delegated authority by the JSP's Steering Group (SG) and Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG).</p> <p>In comparison, the R18 consultation to which the bid related, took several months to navigate the necessary (more formal) approvals processes – involving group and 121 Member briefings, informal Member panel meetings, Cabinets / Executives and in some instances Full Council ratification.</p>	<p>Gaining approval to consult on each stage of the Joint Strategic Plan is not a quick process: sufficient time needs to be built in to the programme to reflect the different requirements of each council's constitution regarding their individual approvals processes.</p> <p>In contrast, Members and Officers were very quick to embrace the idea of bidding for PropTech money to enable a more wide ranging an innovative R18 consultation than was originally planned. This was most probably because of the success of the previous 'Your Future' poll, which surpassed their expectations in terms of feedback and reach.</p>



<p>Procurement: developing supplier brief and project budget</p>	<p>This element of the process was relatively straightforward as all of the suppliers had previously undertaken work for the JSP, were very clear on the continued aims of the project and existing contracts and purchase orders could easily be extended.</p>	<p>Discuss procurement matters with the relevant Officer(s) as early on in the process as possible, to allow time for the necessary contract extensions, exemption certificates etc to be agreed.</p>
<p>Procurement: finding and appointing a supplier(s)</p>	<p>N/A as existing suppliers were re-appointed.</p>	
<p>Onboarding: PropTech suppliers, additional consultants, and internal teams</p>	<p>Due to the range of activities being undertaken, and the need for all elements to 'go live' on the 5th September, project management was key to the smooth running of the project.</p> <p>The JSP team drew up a detailed task list and ensured individual tasks were clearly allocated. This was supported and informed by a Communications and Engagement Strategy (see appendix). Progress updates were provided at a weekly team meeting and work reallocated as necessary.</p> <p>Regular meetings were held with the consultants regarding specific components of the project, with weekly progress updates provided via email as required.</p> <p>Regular meetings were also held to update SPOG and the districts / county communications officer leads, to ensure all were able to provide feedback on material at key stages and offer</p>	<p>Draw up a clear and comprehensive Communications and Engagement Strategy to guide activity and get buy-in from planning officers, communications officers and key Members at an early stage.</p> <p>Ensure there are regular meetings between all members of the project team so that work is not duplicated and it is clear who is delivering which elements of the consultation programme.</p> <p>Ensure relevant Officers at each district / borough council are kept updated and aware of their roles in supporting the consultation programme.</p> <p>Where key decision are being made i.e. on the final graphic design version of the R18 document and Communications and Engagement Strategy for the project, ensure (informal) approval is obtained from relevant</p>



	<p>advice and support as required. SG and SPMG were also asked to approve the final versions of the Communications and Engagement Strategy, R18 document and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report to ensure recommendations within Cabinet / Executive reports were complied with.</p>	<p>Members if required to comply with recommendations in approvals reports.</p>
<p>Campaign Development: developing marketing and engagement strategies. This might also include developing survey questions, platform content, or user research.</p>	<p>The initial R2 bid sought to achieve full integration between the two consultation platforms being deployed i.e. the Built-ID poll and the full R18 survey hosted on the BTT website. However as work progressed, it became clear that whilst it was technically possible to embed the poll within the BTT website, and the questions in the R18 document could be easily translated across into the BTT survey tool, these questions could not be directly transposed into the social media poll. This was due to the both how they were phrased and the number of characters per question: Built-ID polls only allow a maximum of 30 digits per question and rely heavily on multiple choice and 'slido' type questions, as these work best on hand held devices. Unfortunately, the Reg 18 questions could not be similarly simplified for the BTT survey as they had already been through a lengthy six authority Member approval process. As a result it was agreed that whilst the two parallel platforms could still be used, the results from the poll could not directly feed through into the BTT surveys and be reported as one, as the questions posed did not</p>	<p>Consider at the outset what consultation platforms will be used and factor this into how you structure and phrase the questions in your consultation document. Ideally also omit the precise question wording from the document that you take through the Member approvals process, and seek to agree this at a later stage through delegated authority, to give greater flexibility to how you carry out the consultation and frame the questions. Considering this issue at the outset should reduce the complexity of the consultation reporting stage.</p> <p>The successful deployment of a planning consultation shouldn't be left to planners. Planning Officers need the support of digital experts, graphic designers and communications specialists to bring the consultation to life and help ensure engagement with the widest possible audience. The creation of a small multi-disciplinary team, comprising of both local authority staff and consultants also</p>



	<p>precisely match. This has resulted in additional challenges for the reporting stage of the project.</p> <p>Through developing the project, the importance of good design and communications support became increasingly clear. Whilst communication officers from the six councils were involved from an early stage, they had limited capacity to work proactively on the campaign. The JSP team therefore worked closely with a local graphic design / marketing consultancy (Penknife), engagement specialists at Icen Projects and also benefited from an informal 'loan' agreement with Hertsmere Borough Council to have c1.5 days a week support from a senior communications officer who had a particular interest in planning. These additional skills brought a number of benefits, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing a comprehensive and coherent communication and engagement strategy. ● Providing advice and support re the establishment and operation of the Youth Forum (see appendix for terms of reference). ● Drawing up an approach and consultation materials for an in-person sixth form / college event. ● Creating a clear, non-technical set of explainer videos, suitable for deployment on different social media platforms (see links in appendix). 	<p>allows all to develop new skills which can be used on future projects.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creating a suite of social media assets and associated messaging for use by council communications officers (see appendix). ● Developing a bespoke marketing campaign with Built-ID to promote the social media polls – including short videos and messaging (see appendix) ● Providing a ‘plain English’ check on all consultation materials. ● Advising on setting up project QR codes for use on posters and business card (see appendix) and a project-specific consultation email address. 	
<p>Campaign launch and management: working with suppliers to ‘go live’, attending in person / hybrid events, troubleshooting tech issues</p>	<p>Two key challenges arose when moving towards the campaign launch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The biggest issue experienced when setting up the BTT survey tool was how to make the document visually appealing and embed the infographics and illustrations from the PDF R18 document that Members had approved (and saw as a key component of the project) into the online survey. <p>To overcome this issue Hyas, who set up the interactive R18 document and associated survey, liaised closely with the JSPs design consultants (Penknife), who had the in-house skills to translate content</p>	<p>Ensure that consultation documents are prepared in a format that can easily be transferred onto the chosen digital platforms.</p> <p>If working across authorities, take early legal advice regarding data sharing and databases. This includes ensuring that privacy policies – on both Council managed websites and those of third parties - are comprehensive and up-to-date and clearly reference the fact that you will share information from consultations with relevant local authority partners and other specified bodies. This will avoid potential GDPR breaches, allow the creation of robust contact database, and allow the results from joint strategic plan consultations to also be used to inform Local Plan</p>



	<p>into the required HTML format. Some support was also provided by BTT, who were asked to review the survey pages before they went live and advise of suggestions for improving the user experience.</p> <p>This enabled the design and feel of the approved R18 document to be maintained in the interactive survey version. Key elements such as the ‘growth type’ graphics were also carried across into the Built-ID poll.</p> <p>2. The second issue related to drawing up a comprehensive consultation database for the JSP. The initial intention was that the contact list held by each district for their Local Plan work would be used by the JSP team, to ensure that anyone who had expressed an interest in the future planning of their areas was informed of the consultation. However, advice from Dacorum’s Information and Security Team Leader was that this approach would not be GDPR compliant. As a result, the districts contacted their database contacts themselves in advance of the consultation launch and asked them to either (a) register direct on the JSP website or (b) email the JSP to ask to be added to the</p>	<p>preparation.</p> <p>Allowing a slightly longer engagement period than required to comply with the SCI is always prudent, to allow for any initial glitches when websites go live and notification emails are sent out, and allow a buffer for any other unforeseen circumstances.</p> <p>Social media polls allow the councils to keep an eye on trends regarding responses – both geographically and demographically. This enables you to target marketing to under-represented groups if considered appropriate.</p> <p>Not all age demographics can be specifically targeted by the same adverts and creative material. If the budget allows it would be better to create bespoke marketing campaigns that appeal to different age groups. This might be done through commissioning content creators to produce something bespoke that would differentiate the content for the target audience and platform i.e. a youth videographer based in Watford.</p> <p>As mentioned above, a dynamic approach to targeting is considered essential. It is important to react to the time and current</p>
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	<p>consultation list. Whilst this generated a significant number of additional contacts, these were held in two separate places – the BTT website and an excel spreadsheet managed by the JSP team. Further GDPR concerns have prevented the two from being merged – resulting in a more time consuming consultation notification process than originally envisioned.</p> <p>As a result of GDPR discussions, a privacy policy for the JSP programme was written (see South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan Privacy Policy (dacorum.gov.uk)) and the standard privacy policy on the BTT website extended to reflect the advice receive (see https://www.swhertsplan.com/privacy)</p> <p>Once the campaign was live, it became obvious that the key challenge was how to increase participation rates for the 18-25 age category in the social media poll, which was at quite a low level at the two week point. The decision was therefore taken to amend the marketing strategy at this point in the campaign to try to specifically target this group – with response rates increasing slightly. However targeting the marketing to this group for the last week of the poll may have affected overall poll response levels or within other demographics.</p>	<p>news – in this instance it was important to recognise that it was inappropriate to carry out marketing at the time of the Queen’s funeral. The communities being targeted are largely focused on other things at such times and trying to continue with marketing and communications could also have a detrimental effect on data capture.</p>
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	<p>It is worth noting that that the marketing campaign for the Give My View poll was paused between 17th and 19th September as a result of the Queens funeral. Similarly the council communications officers didn't carry out any social medial promotion of the wider consultation during the official period of mourning. As the JSP team had taken the decision at the outset to consult for a period of just over 8 weeks, rather than the six weeks required for compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement, there was no need to consider extending the consultation from its agreed closing date.</p> <p>The JSP programme explored the potential of getting a 'social influencer' on board to help promote the engagement to younger audiences, but this proved problematic. None of the Youth Forum were suitably active on social media and the main suggestion that was made could not be taken forward mainly because of the need for the consultation to remain politically neutral.</p>	
<p>Campaign wrap-up: Closing campaigns, running analysis, agreeing next steps</p>	<p>The 'Give My View' poll element of the consultation closed on 26th September 2022, so headline results have already been extracted by Built-ID and are attached to this report (see appendix). In summary it has been an extremely successful campaign, with 3,122 voters from across SW Herts, casting 24,734 individual votes.</p>	<p>This phase of activity has gathered a huge amount of data via Give My View. The number of voters is similar to the first phase of activity in 2020, but the total pieces of feedback and therefore number of answers per voter greatly increased.</p>



	<p>This initial report contains a high level analysis of responses and the location, age and gender of respondents, but does not include the significant number (almost 5,200 pieces) of free text also collected. This will be captured in a fuller report that is under preparation.</p> <p>Reporting has yet to begin on the full R18 engagement hosted on the BTT platform, as the consultation doesn't close until 4th November - after this report is submitted to DLUHC. However the JSP team and Hyas are already considering how best to utilise BTTs reporting tools to analyse comments received. This reporting process is slightly complicated by the fact that each section of the R18 document had to be set up on the BTT platform as a separate survey – so there will be the need to extract responses from each 'survey' and merge into a comprehensive report. Whilst the BTT reporting tools will enable the generation of pie charts etc to show the split between Yes / No answers and the breakdown for multiple choice answers, consideration will still need to be given how to summarise and report the significant number of free text responses received, where respondents have provided further explanation of their answers. Analysing this free text will enable a much more nuanced report of the results than recording Yes / No responses alone.</p> <p>The team are also considering how to integrate</p>	<p>This shows that despite the Covid pandemic and recent global events, the SW Herts community are still committed to giving their opinion of where they live and work. They can also stay engaged for longer than they were required to do in 2020.</p> <p>The huge increase in qualitative responses makes reporting a more manual process. While there are software programmes that can analyse written responses, they won't always be 100% accurate due to levels of nuance that a computer programme cannot perfectly read.</p>
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	<p>the results from the above two platforms with responses received by email and letter – many of which do not directly relate to the questions specifically posed through the consultation.</p> <p>The JSP has submitted a bid for PropTech R3 funding to consider how technology could combine together the disparate sources of feedback and pull it into a comprehensive and easily interrogated format that is accessible to all.</p> <p>In terms of next steps for the JSP programme as a whole, this will be discussed by the Steering Group and Strategic Planning Members Group in November – with the expectation that the programme is given approval to progress to the development of spatial options. This work will then inform a second R18 consultation (as envisioned in the agreed Statement of Common Ground for the JSP programme).</p>	
<p>Feedback loops: e.g. developing opportunities for ongoing feedback from the community, following up with people who responded to the consultation, sharing consultation insights with key stakeholders</p>	<p>As the full consultation does not finish until after this report has been submitted, this element of the project is ongoing and subject to further discussion.</p> <p>There will also need to be the discussion with the JSP Steering Group and Strategic Planning Members Group:</p> <p>(a) How they wish an overview of the consultation results to be presented to them.</p>	<p>Whilst the use of multiple consultation platforms and techniques is key to a successful consultation, it obviously creates a greater reporting challenge than a single platform engagement. With hindsight, the current consultation could perhaps have been structured in a slightly different way, and the questions asked in a different way, had reporting issues been fully considered at the outset, prior to Member engagement / approval of content. However, with any</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (b) When is it most appropriate to do that i.e. do they want an initial overview or wait until a more detailed report is available? (c) How and when to take forward key issues airing with relevant third party organisations. (d) How to disseminate the results of the consultation to those who responded. (e) How best to maintain momentum with the Youth Forum, and allow them to continue to inform the next stages of the plan programme. (f) How the results of this consultation could help support and progress the Local Plans being prepared at district / borough level. 	<p>planning engagement there will always be people who choose not to respond via a web-based survey(s), but to provide feedback via email, letter or even petitions. And it is important that everyone continues to be allowed to make their views known in whatever format they feel most comfortable using.</p> <p>As the JSP moves towards a second R18 stage, it would be helpful to have some guidance from PINS regarding how they expect consultations to be reported. For example, if there are any specifications they have regarding format, level of detail reported, whether or not the JSP will be expected to respond to all issues raised and say how they will be addressed etc. This would avoid either unnecessary work, or being asked to add further detail to consultation reports at submission stage.</p> <p>The JSP team is also very aware that if the JSP is to maintain momentum, the close of the consultation cannot mark the end of engagement and liaison with those who responded and other key consultees. Consideration will need to be given to whether short e-newsletters are prepared for those who have been asked to be kept informed. However the team is cognisant of</p>
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		feedback from the Youth Forum on this matter and their advice that any ongoing communication should be done on the basis that there is a substantive update to give, or request for feedback / engagement to make, rather than for the sake of maintaining contact.
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Final Reflections:

Most key reflections relating to this consultation programme have been set out in the table above. However further reflections on the specific question posed by DHLUC are set out below:

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

This project was intentionally designed as a web / social media based consultation. This was in part due to the limited staff capacity of the JSP team, but also because this approach to consultation has proved very successful for the SW Herts districts when seeking feedback on their current round of Local Plans. However the team was very aware that not everyone who may wish to respond is digitally enabled. For this reason town and parish councils were asked at the outset to help spread the word through their parish magazines and newsletters, and to put posters on local noticeboards. The JSP team issued a press release which was picked up by various local media outlets, including My Local News, a monthly free magazine delivered to households across SW Herts. A poster campaign was also run at selected rail and underground stations and on digital boards in Watford town centre and publicity material sent to local libraries, theatres and leisure centres to display in their reception areas. Hard copies of all consultation material – including paper copies of the feedback survey - were also provided to local libraries, town and parish councils and council receptions. An in-person ‘Urban Room’ session was planned in Watford town centre in late September, but unfortunately had to be cancelled due to low levels of interest. The other in-person element planned as part of the consultation programme was an event for sixth form / college age students, to be hosted by Kings Langley School, to which all state schools and further education colleges in SW Herts were invited. However, this has been postponed until after the close of the main R18 consultation, as it has proved much harder and more time consuming to generate interest than expected. This does not appear to be due to lack of interest from students – rather difficulties contacting the relevant teachers to disseminate information about the event and accompany the student representatives.

Key milestones for the overall project timeline were as follows:

26 th April	Strategic Planning Members Group endorse word version of R18 document
3 rd May	Youth Forum meeting
24 th May	Draft version of graphically designed R18 document received from Penknife
6 th June	Start of council approval process for R18 document
12 th July	End of council approval process for R18 document



	Strategic Planning Members Group and Steering Group asked to sign off minor amendments to R18 document
12 th July	Youth Forum meeting
28 th July	Strategic Planning Members Group and Steering Group asked to sign off Communications and Engagement Strategy and minor amendments to R18 document post-approvals process
2 nd September	Website and polls go live for final checking by Officers and consultants
5 th September	Consultation officially goes 'live' and notification emails and alerts sent out to everyone registered on website and on JSP database
5 th – 7 th September	Remote briefings for Town and Parish Councils (one per authority area)
26 th September	Give My View poll closes
18 th October	Planned in-person event at King Langley School for sixth form age students (<i>postponed</i>).
5 th November	Website survey closes

- 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?

See 'lessons learned' section of table above.

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

This project benefited from the fact that the team had already worked with several of the key consultants on earlier elements of the JSP programme and had established good working relationships with them. The suppliers also felt invested in the project and were keen to continue the work and ongoing learning. In particular Built-ID and IcenI had carried out the initial 'Your Future' poll in early 2020, and Hyas were assisting with setting up the BTT web platform to function as a JSP 'homepage' as well as a consultation portal. It was therefore possible under the JSP's host authority's procurement rules to extend previous contracts, rather than undertake new procurement exercises for all suppliers.

- Were there any wider surprises which surfaced through undertaking the project?

The following unexpected issues / lessons arose throughout the course of the consultation:



- The importance of paying to boost council-issued social media posts to extend their reach rather than relying on organic promotion. This does not need to be large amounts of money - £50 or £100 can make a real difference.
- The increase in the number of 55+ year olds who responded to the social media polls compared to the response rate for this group in the Your Future poll held pre-pandemic (early 2020). There are a number of things to bear in mind here though.
 - (a) In 2022, the age data was calculated from the Give My View demographic section. This comes at the end of the main survey. Younger voters are less likely to complete this section as experience shows they are less keen to give their personal data than older generations. They are also less willing to spend as much time responding.
 - (b) In 2020, ages were asked upfront. In 2022, it was the voter's location that was asked first, as this was a key piece of data to gather to segment the results by area.
- The need to allocate a specific marketing budget for promoting social media polls to 18-25 year olds. This is to maximise their engagement levels.
- The high response rate to the poll from those living or working in Watford, compared to the previous Your Future poll, and compared to relatively low levels of engagement on planning matters usually seen in this area compared to other parts of SW Herts.
- The amount of open feedback left in response to the poll questions, which was almost double that received via the 2020 Your Future poll.
- The higher ratio of females to males who responded to the poll (60% vs 40%) – although gender was not a compulsory question, so this could just reflect a person's willingness to provide this information.
- The constant evolution of social media platforms (particularly those used by younger people) and how future engagement campaigns may need to target (a) different platforms and (b) take a more bespoke approach to how to engage on each chosen platform.
- The low rate of responses received to-date via the web-based survey, compared to the number of website hits.
- The challenge of creating a representative Youth Forum. It proved difficult to translate initial interest in the JSP generated through the 2020 Your Future poll into participation in the Youth Forum, and also hard to ensure this group was geographically and demographically representative. All participants were either at university or had degrees and there were no representatives from local higher education or further education colleges – although all were contacted.



- The preference expressed by sixth form students to engage with the consultation through an in-person event, using low-tech means.
- The difficulties of arranging an in-person event with sixth form students from across SW Herts, due to email addresses only being available for school head teachers and/or admin teams, rather than geography teachers for whom the event would be more relevant.
- The amount of time the core JSP team (planners by profession) spend on non-planning work to support the engagement programme.

3.0 Pilot Outcomes

- **Proposed Outcomes:** *What outcomes were you aiming to achieve? To what extent were these achieved? What were the main outcomes (quantitative and qualitative) of your project? **(Please use the attached spreadsheet to detail this further).***

This project's two main objectives were:

1. **Help address the ongoing challenges of engaging** younger people and other harder to reach groups in planning consultations, by building on the positive start made in 2020 by the Your Future poll.
2. **Make it as easy as possible for those who wish to engage to do so.** Concerns have been raised about traditional third-party consultation portals which tend not to be user friendly and require complex registration processes. Previous feedback has indicated that people want easier and quicker ways to provide feedback.

In addition, the councils that make up the SW Herts partnership were all keen to:

- Extend and develop their digital engagement skills; and
- Help support continuing cross-authority dialogue and consensus on controversial issues such as housing growth/key infrastructure interventions.

The JSP team and its supporting consultants are happy with how well the objectives have been achieved to-date. The engagement process has been a very positive experience in terms of how much the team has learned and illustrates what an important opportunity the PropTech project has provided in terms of enabling the SW Herts JSP partnership to test innovative ways of consulting across a wide geography, comprising both urban and rural areas and with different political landscapes. The results from the poll element of the engagement are considered to be more representative of the SW Herts population as a whole, enabling the consultation to reflect a wider range of views than is likely to have been the case had the R18 consultation only employed more traditional engagement techniques.

- **Baseline data:** *what existing data did you use to compare your project's outcomes to? Did you review or change this approach at any point? How does*



your baseline data compare with the outcomes achieved in your Round 2 PropTech project?

This was the first formal R18 engagement undertaken for the JSP, so there is not any specific baseline information to compare this project against.

The best comparison available is the informal '[SW Herts-Your Future](#)' engagement in 2020. The project team did not expect to match this level of engagement with the 'Realising Our Potential' poll as the recent poll was longer and dealt with more complicated planning focussed issues. However, as the comparison table below shows, the results were extremely positive, with the actual amount of consultation feedback received even higher than for the 2020 poll:

	Your Future Poll 2020	Realising Our Potential Poll 2022
Total visits to poll	10,647	15,944
Total number of voters	3,291	3,122
Total number of questions answered	15,042	24,734
Pieces of free text feedback provided	2,082	5,198
Number of voters who left their email address to allow future contact	1,057	1,007

This comparison was even more positive when account is taken of the fact that the 2020 poll ran for twice as long, and marketing activity for the current poll was affected by a national period of mourning.

As noted above, the poll results also showed a marked increase in responses for older age groups than had been the case in 2020:

% Breakdown of voters by age	Your Future survey 2020	Realising Our Potential survey 2022
18-24	16%	4%
25-34	16%	9%
35-44	18%	14%
45-54	18%	14%
55-65	17%	22%



Over 65	15%	26%
75+	-	9%
Prefer not to say	-	2%

Built-ID have however looked at Google Analytics age data from visitors to the Give My View poll (see table below). This takes information for *all* visitors to the site, not just those respondents who volunteered a response the demographic question. Looking at this wider data shows a greater share of younger people visiting the site and potentially completing the poll. This confirms Built-IDs view that younger people are more averse to giving personal information voluntarily.

Age	2022 poll - % breakdown of voters by age who completed demographic question	2022 poll – % breakdown of ages of all visitors to the site from Google Analytics
18-24	4%	8%
25-34	9%	15%
35-44	14%	20%
45-54	14%	22%
55-65	22%	17%
Over 65	26%	18%
75+	9%	
Prefer not to say	2%	-

There were also differences in terms of the geographical location of respondents, with a much higher response rate from Watford than expected, and a much lower response rate for Hertsmere (compared to the 2020 poll). As the most populous borough, it was not unexpected that the highest response rate was from those who live or work in Dacorum:

% Breakdown of voters by district / borough	Your Future survey 2020	Realising Our Potential survey 2022
Dacorum	30%	28%
Hertsmere	27%	10%



St Albans	17%	23%
Watford	10%	25%
Three Rivers	10%	13%
I don't live/work around here	6%	2%

Other baseline data relates to the level of engagement achieved by the districts / boroughs in SW Herts on their Local Plan R18 Issues and Options document. Examples are as follows:

Council	Year	Number of respondents	Notes
Dacorum	2017	2,376	Included broad spatial options / sites, to which most comments related
Hertsmere	2017	350	
Three Rivers	2017	486	

As can be seen, response rates were very low apart from in Dacorum, where the consultation went beyond a 'traditional' issues and options document and also included consideration of some broad spatial options comprising promoted sites. This highlights the difficulties of engaging on more general (but critical) planning matters – such as the setting of a clear vision and objectives for a plan.

- **Measurement challenges:** *how did you measure the impact of your outcomes? Did you have any challenges assessing the impact of your project? If so, in what ways?*

It is hard to assess the wider impact of the consultation as the full engagement programme doesn't end until 4th November and experience shows that with consultations like this there is usually a last minute flurry of responses.

However, the tables above show how the poll element of the engagement programme compared well to a similar previous consultation – and better than the team expected considering it contained more questions (including open feedback questions), ran for a shorter time period, and the marketing campaign was paused for some of that period.



Comprehensively analysing the geographical distribution of those who responded to the consultation and their age profile will be complicated by the fact that the poll asked for age as a qualifying question, but postcode information was optional. Conversely, the online survey was set up to require a postcode, but other information such as age was not compulsory. With hindsight both platforms should have required the same qualifying information to allow a more consistent and comparable picture of the reach of the engagement – both geographically and demographically.

How far the project has met the objective of helping support continuing cross-authority dialogue and consensus on controversial issues such as housing growth/key infrastructure interventions will also be one that takes longer to assess. However initial feedback from senior Managers and Portfolio Holders on the Strategic Planning Members Group is that they are happy with how the consultation has gone to-date and wish to continue work on the JSP. Precise next steps and work programmes will be discussed at meetings scheduled for early to mid-November.

- **Demographics:** *(if applicable) how did you collect demographic data as part of your consultation? If so, please share any demographic breakdown of consultation respondents (e.g. age, gender etc). How does the demographic of your PropTech funded consultation compare with previous consultation responses?*

For the poll element of the engagement this was gathered through the demographic section of the Give My View platform. It is collected after the main body of survey questions, as it is essentially additional information. The data collected is shown in the table below. As noted above, the apparent higher proportion of female respondees was unexpected.

% Breakdown of voters by gender	Realising Our Potential survey 2022
Female	60%
Male	37%
Prefer not to say	3%
Gender fluid	.1%
Non binary	.1%
Third gender	.1%
Other	.1%

- **Cost effectiveness:** *did a digital engagement approach save time or resources compared with traditional engagement approaches? If so, how was this measured?*

This is hard to assess quantitatively, as 'Realising Your Potential' is the first full



(statutory) consultation carried out on the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan. However it is fair to assume that getting over 3,000 responses, including over 5,000 pieces of open comment feedback, across 5 local authority areas would have been very difficult using more traditional engagement techniques. It is also likely that the polls enabled responses from groups who would not normally engage with a strategic planning consultation exercise. The feedback will have an important role in helping shape the JSP and its continued development.

Looking qualitatively it is also clear that:

- A traditional approach to consultation – relying largely on in-person events - could not have been delivered, as for the duration of the consultation the JSP team comprised only 2 full time planners and one part time (1.5 day / week) communications officer. More face-to-face events would only have been possible with much greater input from district / borough planning teams, and this was not possible due to these teams already being stretched and needing to focus on progressing their Local Plan and other key projects.
- Without PropTech money, the R18 consultation would still have been web-based and compliant with the adopted SCI. However it would have been much more limited in scope and ambition, and as a result reached far fewer people and generated much lower levels of feedback.
- The use of digital marketing allowed the consultation to reach a huge number of people within SW Herts. Whilst there were 15,000+ visits to the Give My View poll, the adverts reached 229,186 people across the area.

4.0 Community Feedback

- **Summary of community consultation:** *what was the focus for engagement and what questions were asked? How were these questions decided? Were there any surprises (either in responses and/or who responded)?*

The full R18 document (with embedded questions), together with the stand-alone survey are appended to this report, together with the list of questions asked through the social media poll.

Challenges finalising the questions included:

- The need to keep the number of questions as low as possible, whilst still allowing feedback to help progress the JSP, to appeal to as wide an audience as possible.
- How to address the issues of the poll questions having to be a maximum of 30 digits, when the full survey questions were longer.
- How to get the right balance between simple Yes / No answers that are easy to report on, and allowing free text, which although it takes a lot longer to analyse allows for much more nuanced responses.



- Asking planning questions whilst using Plain English. This was particularly difficult for the questions relating to potential growth types.

In terms of who responded, as referenced earlier in this report, the number of over 55 year olds who responded to the social media poll element of the consultation was surprising, as it was significantly higher than for a similar poll carried out 2 years previously. Previous comments on the placement of this question should however be noted.

- **Summary of community responses:** *what were the key themes and learnings from the consultation?*

Whilst the wider web survey element of the consultation is still 'live,' it is interesting to see that, to-date, more people have responded to the questions relating to the 'here and now' and questions about infrastructure needs, than have completed the questions about the future vision and objectives for the plan and associated growth options. This could be explained by the fact the former questions come first in the survey and respondents have not continued on to later questions. Alternatively it could be because it is easier to comment factually on things that you like / dislike about your area now, rather than think more philosophically about how you would like things to be in the future? In terms of responses the top five questions responded to (in descending order) relate to:

- 1) Our world is changing
- 2) Planning for infrastructure
- 3) SW Herts today – living
- 4) Objective – building homes and places that people are proud of
- 5) SW Herts today – moving.

Very few survey responses have been received to questions relating to the economy or (more surprisingly) healthy communities and the environment.

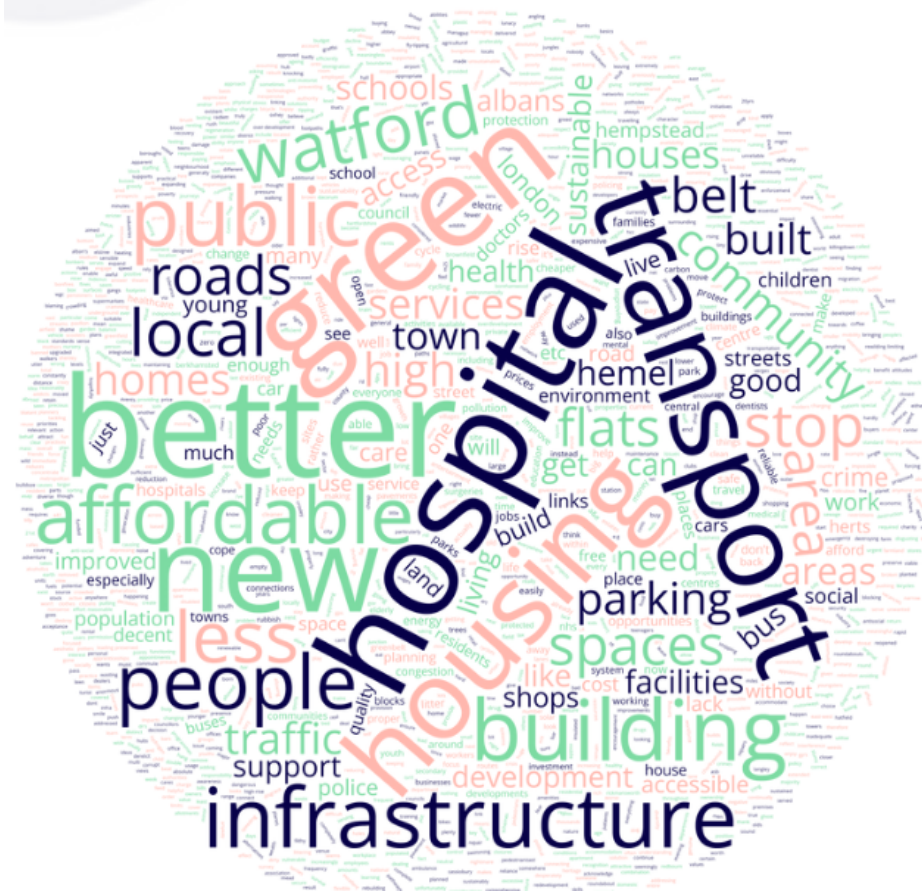
In terms of those who have replied by email to-date (only 29 as at 27/10), not all of the responses relate directly to the consultation material and many raise very specific issues that are unlikely to be able to be taken forward by a strategic level planning document. Examples include:

- The need for the plan to specifically commit the councils to stopping the use of amenity pesticides.
- The need for major changes to the structure of local government in SW Herts.
- A company promoting the implementation of its touch-free pedestrian crossing upgrade kits and other assistive technology.

Topline consensus from the Give My View poll shows that sustainable infrastructure and natural & green living are the biggest priorities for the people of SW Herts for the next 30 years. Both answers received over 50% of votes.

In relation to the qualitative question 'What is the one change that you would like to see?' healthcare facilities and transport were two key themes mentioned more than others.

The wordmap below shows the most common responses to the question 'What is the one change that you would like to see?'



- **Delivering on feedback:** *how has the community feedback shaped the project delivery plans? How has this validated, challenged, evolved key assumptions and potential project outcomes?*

The feedback and assessing comments element of the project has not yet fully commenced, as the consultation is still ongoing.

Observations so far are however:

- Before going live, feedback from the Youth Forum was very helpful in informing what questions to ask via the social media poll, how many questions to include and the most effective marketing techniques.
- Keeping a regular eye on how the poll was performing allowed the fact that there were relatively low number of respondents in the 18-25 category to be picked up and for Built-ID to slightly modify their social media marketing at the 2 week stage to try to increase response rates from this age group which worked and this is a key advantage of using the social media approach – the ability to geographically/



demographically focus the work.

- The need to think creatively around how to continue to generate a high and quality response rate as the work and consultation stages become more complex/ technical/ planning focussed. The need to continue harnessing the benefits of technology, whilst ensuring the feedback is robust/ able to stand up to future examination.
 - How to best take forward strategic issues and policies in SW Herts is a particular issue given the comments in section 4 above that indicates respondents provide feedback on the current situation much more readily than the longer term.
- **Community testimonials:** *If available, we would love to see any direct testimonials from community members about their experiences on the project in their own words. We would appreciate it if any testimonials could be attributed to specific individuals or local groups, but quotes can be kept anonymous if preferred (please state if this is the case).*

“Wanted to say thank you again for having us and giving us the opportunity, we really enjoyed being a part of it. Hope to continue to do more things like this.”

Feedback from Kings Langley School pupil after they attended the second Youth Forum meeting.

“Thank you so much for coming into school today We all really appreciate the fact that you are interested in our thoughts and opinions. The discussion we had was fabulous and I definitely felt like we could have all spoken for the whole day; having only scratched the surface, in terms of the potential we have to help make a difference in what SW Herts will look like in the future.

The Youth Forum Meeting was also really fantastic, so thank you very much for including us in that. I got a lot out of it: knowing that some much is being done to include our generation is really refreshing and I can't wait to see what the future will hold. I through the promotional video was excellent with all the recognizable, animated locations, which made it a lot more relatable than it would have been without them. So it will be great to see how that turns out.

Finally, like you said earlier today and at the end of the meeting, it would be great to maintain contactto see what we can do to raise awareness to young people so they can have their say in their future.

I can see how there is a lot of potential for us to help make change for the better, we look forward to collaborating with you to make SW Herts a place which everyone will benefit from.”

Email sent by Head Student of Kings Langley School after meeting JSP Director for an initial discussion and attending the second Youth Forum meeting.

“I thoroughly enjoyed the first (I hope of many) Youth Forum meetings. It was heartening to participate alongside young people from across SW Herts, and with decision-makers who showed genuine interest in what we had to say, so thank you!”

Email from participant in first Youth Forum meeting.



5.0 Conclusions and Policy Reflections

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

The project team don't have anything fundamental that they would change with the benefit of hindsight. The only things are potentially:

- Ensure consistent wording of questions between main web-based survey and social media poll.
- Have a specific marketing budget to target 18-25 year olds on social media to direct them to the poll.
- Design the consultation document around the BTT website, rather than prepare it as a PDF and then try to make the graphics work online.

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

This is still to be discussed with the wider JSP officer and Member groups, but initial thoughts are as follows:

- This engagement will help the JSP partnership (and district / borough councils in SW Herts) to choose the most appropriate digital techniques, depending upon the nature of the consultation material. For example, social media campaigns with 'quick-fire' polls lend themselves to the early stages of plan making when considering high level strategic issues. The approach doesn't easily translate to larger, more complex documents, so is unlikely to be practical for the later stages of plan making where respondents are required to read a lot of information and provide detailed responses in order to meet regulatory requirements. (i.e. R18 draft plans or R19 stage).
- The pilot has helped underline the fact that digital engagement delivers a much higher 'reach' than more a traditional in-person engagement campaign could ever achieve with the same staff resources.
- A recognition that planners need support from a range of other experts when drawing up a consultation campaign. This should be seen as a potential positive, as planners are a scarce resource in SW Herts and so it is sensible to consider how their skills are best used and how they can be supported by other practitioners in understaffed planning teams.
- Need to consider how to demonstrate that the information and feedback provided by respondents (especially the Youth Forum) is actively helping shape the JSP. Young people in particular will lose interest in the plan if they feel they have just been used as part of a 'tick box' exercise.
- How less technical / complex language can be used at later stages of the JSP plan-preparation process to make it accessible and relevant to the SW Herts community.



- 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?

Policy reflections:

- *Did any existing planning policies limit your ability to achieve your goals for this project?*
- *Are there any policies (national and local) you'd like to see changed in the future? If so, how?*
- *Where do you think further guidance is required, either for local authorities and the wider PropTech sector?*
- *How could DLUHC better support LPAs in the future with the further adoption of digital citizen engagement tools, best practice guidance, or other support?*
- *If additional funding was available - what do you think future PropTech Fund rounds should focus on delivering / achieving?*

This consultation didn't really flag any policy issues per se, but thinking ahead, the JSP team has some concerns regarding how digital engagement can be successfully applied to later stages of the plan making process: in particular the R19 stage where respondents need to base their comments around the tests of soundness.

DLUHC obviously have a key role to play in ensuring that regulations governing the plan-making processes are flexible enough to allow innovative ways of engagement to take place at all stages of plan production. They also have a key role to play in helping ensure planning departments are appropriately resourced and supported, and should continue to provide LPAs with good practice advice and support, whether directly or via the Planning Advisory Service (PAS).

It would also be helpful to have input and advice from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) regarding what they expect (and accept) by way of consultation responses when the plan reaches its more formal stages. For example can anonymous comments posted on social media be taken into account, or do all comments have to be attributable to an individual – and can this be an email or does it need to be a full address?

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

“To proactively deliver digital engagement, planning officers require technical and communications support as these are not necessarily skill sets available to planning teams. Planners rarely have the IT skills to create attractive and easy to use digital engagement documents and don't necessarily have the digital communications knowledge to effectively use social media as part of the engagement strategy. Planning consultations therefore need to



involve more than planners. The skills of designers, IT specialists and communications experts are key.'

Planning Policy Manager, Three Rivers District Council and former Senior Planner within JSP team.

“Working on the JSP, through a loan arrangement with my current employer, has provided invaluable experience and insight into the challenges and opportunities involved in engaging with residents and businesses on high-level, strategic planning documents, particularly young people and hard-to-reach demographic groups. It’s enabled me to learn from and inform the work of our external consultants and designers, and help build closer relationships with communication colleagues across the area. The experience will be particularly useful in helping to shape the communications approach and strategy for the next round of engagement for Hertsmere’s new Local Plan and other planning consultations moving forward.”

Senior Communication Officer from Hertsmere Borough Council, who has provided part time support to the JSP team since April 2022.

“It’s been excellent to see an increase in community engagement levels across SW Hertfordshire at the second time of asking. This comes after two years of pandemic and tumultuous summer of the Queen’s death and cost of living worries. However the community still wanted to give their thoughts on their priorities for the future of SW Herts. Voter numbers were similar but the increase of actual answers per voter indicated the Give My View software did its job in keeping people engaged for longer.

It’s been a pleasure working with the JSP team and Icen Projects, collaborating and problem solving.”

Project team supplier

“The benefits of thinking creatively, working collaboratively as part of a multi-skilled team, moving the conversation away from solely planning and towards issues that are relevant to people have been shown again to increase levels of engagement, both in terms of long-term strategic planning and with young people. It’s been fantastic to continue the work and learning from the earlier stages (SW Herts, Your Future), particularly moving into the statutory stages of consultation, continuing to test and push technology/ engagement as part of a JSP process.”

Project team supplier

6.0 Additional reflections and feedback for DLUHC (optional)

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

7.0 Appendices

See separate document attached to this report. This includes:

1. Full R18 document and associated survey
2. R18 Communications and Engagement Strategy



3. Social media schedule for districts / boroughs and county council
4. Youth Forum terms of reference
5. Youth Forum miro boards
6. Explainer Videos
7. Examples of social media assets
8. Business cards and promotional posters
9. 'Give My View' marketing screen shots and video links
10. Screenshots from Built-ID poll
11. Screenshots from Engagement HQ (BTT) R18 survey
12. 'Give My View' initial engagement results summary
13. Engagement HQ (BTT) dashboard (as at 26/9/22)