

PropTech Engagement Fund Round 2

Final Report

October 2022



Local Planning Authority	London Borough of Newham
Date Report Submitted	28 October 2022

2 Executive Summary

Region	London
LA Rural-Urban Classification Category	Major Urban
Project summary	<p>Beckton Riverside (BR) is Newham’s largest growth opportunity. Its ~8,000 new homes and new town centre are critical in delivering local housing need, unlocked by a new DLR extension to Thamesmead.</p> <p>Beckton Riverside is also a unique opportunity to deliver Newham’s commitment to Community Wealth Building and to meet the needs of residents. As a new neighbourhood without an existing community, the existing diverse communities of Newham will have the opportunity to set their vision for this future place. We propose to convene this conversation via our existing digital engagement platform, Newham Co-Create.</p> <p>Newham is committed to participatory decision-making, and our vision is to be the new centre of London’s data sector. This project will engage a more representative range of diverse voices, bringing young people, hard-to-reach groups but particularly the digitally excluded into the conversation through targeted support, building skills and confidence to support independent participation.</p>
Funding allocated	£125,000
Supplier(s) Appointed	<p>Citizenlab (Newham Co-Create, under existing contract)</p> <p>Soundings, Momentum, Expedition (Design and Engagement Services)</p>
Consultation Topic	Beckton Riverside Regeneration Vision
Consultation Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engagement has resulted in the identification of community priorities for Beckton Riverside, informing a community vision for new regeneration that can be incorporated as part of the site allocation for the Local

	<p>Plan and further developed and delivered in partnership with local landowners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The insight on digital engagement and Newham Co Create, the Council's current online engagement platform, supported a review confirming commitment to continue using Newham Co-Create as well as providing insight regarding future improvements both to the online platform to improve user experience, access and relevance to planning and regeneration projects• The approach to utilising Newham Co-Create as part of a targeted hybrid engagement programme with a focus on reaching communities across the borough has resulted in an increase in the representation of Newham's diverse ethnic minority population, its religious groups, its young population, as well as other demographic groups• The project has resulted in insight and recommendations around best practice to engagement to ensure the successful use of digital engagement alongside other methods to better hear from under-represented communities• The piloting of sessions incorporating training in digital skills and In the use of Newham Co-Create is informing the development of a new Council programme in digital inclusion including training, outreach and support for digitally excluded residents
Consultation dates	Engagement period: 16 August - 11 September 2022

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1.0 Project Summary

1.1 Context and objectives

The London Borough of Newham has set out to undertake a community visioning project for Beckton Riverside, which is the borough's largest strategic site allocation and forms the most significant long-term regeneration opportunity in East London.



The site has the potential to provide around 8,000 new homes and a new town centre as part of a sustainable new neighbourhood. This transformational change will be unlocked by an extension of the Docklands Light Railway to Thamesmead. Newham Council are working alongside TfL, GLA, Homes England and the landowners to take forwards a business case to fund the DLR extension. Across Beckton Riverside and Thamesmead, this has the potential to provide 25-30,000 new homes, 10,000 jobs and a new town centre as well as a new river crossing.

The site sits within the Mayor of London's Royal Docks and Beckton Riverside Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF).

The community vision aims to set out the principles for what residents and communities across Newham would like to see from this major regeneration opportunity. It goes alongside the work on the new Local Plan, which is under development, and intended to be shared for community consultation (Regulation 18 stage) in January 2023. Adoption is targeted for the end of 2024.



Beckton Riverside land area

1.2 How did your local authority approach engagement and consultation before you received PropTech funding?

Newham Council created up the Democracy and Civic Participation Commission in 2019 to review and set out new approaches for improving the democratic representation of residents in the borough, reflecting the Mayor's commitment to improving representation and co-creation with communities.

Newham does not have single one size fits all approach to community engagement and involvement.

Partly as a result of the diverse communities, and partly because of the different ways of working and requirements of engagement projects across different service areas, there is a multifaceted rather than a standard or single approach and the engagement of communities often requires an action learning process.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the majority of engagement carried out in the London Borough of Newham consisted of in person or analogue methods, including flyers, calling cards, and in-person events.

As Newham is digitally poor, a range of approaches are required to involve people depending on the project, communities and issues being addressed. Promotion and outreach often includes leaflets; face to face and phone conversations; utilising computer screens, digital screens and totems at libraries, using social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, twitter and Next-door.

Working directly with community groups including grassroots groups is important to build and maintain trust, particularly for Black and Asian minority groups and seldom heard communities. Methods tend to involve capacity building through a community development and engagement approach and bespoke community conversations around tensions in the community; for example youth crime concerns.

The Covid-19 pandemic required a rapid shift to digital engagement including for a series of programmes that were underway, including the High Streets Programme, the Stratford Vision, the Queens Market Good Growth Programme, and the Community Assemblies, the creation of which was a recommendation from the Democracy and Civic Participation Commission.

Newham therefore procured CitizenLab in April 2020 to build Newham Co-Create. Since April 2020, there has been considerable uptake in the use of Newham Co Create, with consultations hosted on the site from a number of departments including Community Wealth Building, Planning, Highways and Community Safety. Uptake has been strong, although the approaches to both digital and in-person engagement have varied considerably and been inconsistent across projects.

It has also highlighted some challenges in usability, and in reaching a wide or representative range of communities and users. With Newham being a digitally poor borough, and with a need for a range of engagement approaches to ensure that engagement reaches into communities, a number of challenges remained in terms of

how to effectively utilise Newham Co-Create as a digital tool as part of engagement programmes and how to ensure that it best reaches Newham's diverse communities.

Simultaneous to this project, a review has been undertaken on the usability of Newham Co-Create for residents and officers to identify improvements required to the platform. The questions and lines of enquiry have been reflected within this project to support an overall picture of how best Newham Co-Create can be included within future engagement projects and to inform what wider recommendations and improvements are needed to bring together digital engagement with a broader commitment to representative and democratic involvement of residents.

1.3 Project Objectives

The objectives of this project were:

- The co-creation by Newham residents of a vision and principles for a future town centre, neighbourhood and community at Beckton Riverside that sets out a positive vision and the key ingredients of a future place. It will set the strategic principles that the Local Plan, future planning applications, projects and interventions can develop and deliver locally.
- Engage a more representative range of citizens in decision-making. This vision will encapsulate the aspirations and views of a representative and [inclusive pool of Newham](#) residents. The vision will have received engagement input from a range of sources from digital engagement to more traditional forms.
- Improve the digital skills and confidence of residents and participants. The process will work alongside the Council's digital inclusion programme to provide a bridge and support for engagement for digitally excluded residents to enable them to participate meaningfully via Newham Co-Create.

The community vision developed through the community engagement will be used to inform the Newham Local Plan and future masterplanning work undertaken by the landowners.

1.4 Engagement Overview

The engagement period for the Beckton Riverside Regeneration Vision ran from 17 August to 11 September 2022. This was the first stage of engagement for this project, and aimed to gather ideas from the Newham community about what they would like to see in the Beckton Riverside area, both in the short-term and into the future.

Engagement Methodology

The engagement methodology was to hold a hybrid engagement, where feedback would be collected mostly through Newham's engagement platform Co-create (CitizenLab), but with outreach would be supported by a range of communications and in-person events to channel and support access and involvement that could be collected within a single platform.

Communications

The project information and digital engagement tools were all hosted via the Newham engagement platform, Newham Co-create. The project webpage included project information that was available at in-person events in a PDF format, the online survey embedded onto the page (via Microsoft Forms), and event and contact information.

The project page can be viewed at the following link: <https://newhamco.create.co.uk/en/projects/beckton-riverside-vision>

Flyers and posters were distributed to all Newham libraries and Council-run Youth Zones. Flyers were also handed out in person in busy places such as DLR stations. The project was also promoted on library computer screensavers.

Different communities were reached via the Neighbourhood Community Area Managers, who have ongoing relationships with residents in their respective parts of the borough. The managers then distributed posters to local noticeboards and emailed local community groups directly to get involved. This was discussed with all neighbourhood managers prior to the engagement period to decide the best methods of outreach.

Emails were also sent out to key stakeholders such as places of worship, schools, and community/cultural groups at the launch of the project to inform of the project engagement and events. The project information was also distributed via an independently organised community directory e-newsletter.

Newham social media (Twitter and Facebook) was used throughout the engagement period to inform the public of how to provide feedback, for those that are digitally engaged within Newham.

It is to be noted, that due to the mourning period following the death of HRM Queen Elizabeth II, no communications could be sent out for the last 4 days of the engagement period, or for the 8 days following the engagement closing.

All communications materials can be viewed in Appendix B.

Engagement and Events

The digital engagement was to be supported by a range of pop-up events. These aimed to reach those in the community who may not normally visit Co-create or participate in council consultations. The pop-up locations were decided by selecting different times and days of the week, and key areas within the community where we could capture people's feedback who may not go online independently.

These pop-up events did not rely on the communications for people to attend, but were targeted in high footfall areas to capture those passing by in each area. The pop-up locations were discussed and agreed with Newham staff prior to the engagement period.

The pop-ups held were:

- Saturday 20 August, 11am – 3pm: Gallions Reach Shopping Park E6 7ER •
- Thursday 25 August, 2pm – 5pm: High Street North, East Ham E6 1HZ •

Wednesday 31 August, 1pm – 4pm: Beckton Asda E6 5JP

• Friday 2 September, 1pm – 4pm: Queen’s Market, Green Street E13 9BA •

Saturday 3 September, 12pm – 5pm: Newham Unlocked Festival, Beckton Park E6 5QJ



i Pop-up events at East Ham (left) and Beckton Asda

In addition to these events, Newham resourced staff to take surveys on iPads at the other Newham Unlocked events:

- Saturday 20 August, 12pm – 5pm: Newham Unlocked Festival, Plashet Park E6 1DQ
- Saturday 27 August, 12pm – 5pm: Newham Unlocked Festival, Rathbone Market E16 1EH

Due to the mourning period following the death of HRM Queen Elizabeth II, the last two Newham Unlocked events were cancelled on the 10th and 17th of September.

The pop-up events were resourced and run by Soundings staff (3-4 staff members, plus 2 youth interns), and supported by a Newham staff member.

The pop-ups had an “information wall” with background information, iPads to fill out the survey, and a “What If” A0 Board (see figure v). The eye-catching A0 board provided a prompt for discussion, and drew people over to talk. Exemplar images got people thinking and talking about the possibilities for Beckton Riverside’s future.

Throughout the engagement period, it is estimated 250+ people engaged with the project.



ii "What If" A0 Board

Participants at the pop-ups could use their own phones or one of the iPads provided to fill out the survey online either at the stall or at home. Library staff were also informed of the survey to both promote and support the community in filling out the survey, and attended a briefing session with project information, events and contact information.

The incentive of entering a draw to win a £50 shopping voucher at their store of choice at Gallions Reach Shopping Park was offered for anyone completing the survey. 163 survey responses were submitted over the engagement period and a winner chosen at random and notified.

All engagement materials mentioned can be viewed in Appendix D.



iii Co-create workshop, Beckton Globe Library

In addition to the pop-up stalls, a Co-create workshop was held at Beckton Globe Library on 7 September 2022. This in-person session aimed to discuss the project, acquire new digital skills, and learn how to use Newham's engagement platform, Co create. Staff in attendance included digital skills staff, Co-create officers and Soundings facilitators; laptops and light refreshments were provided.

The session began by going through basic computer skills one-on-one with those who required it. A short presentation was given on what co-create does, followed by a tutorial on how to access the page, register and fill out the survey, through which participants could follow along on the provided laptops. Five people attended.

Youth Interns

Two youth interns were hired to work alongside engagement consultants Soundings as part of the social value offer of the project. Applicants had to be aged between 16 and 21 years old and ideally be Newham residents.

The two selected youth interns assisted in flyering, helped prepare materials for events and joined the team on site at the pop-up stalls talking to. Members of the community preparation. They developed some social media content and a video which summarises the engagement, to be used for the project going forwards. The interns also provided local knowledge and insights, which was valuable in the project's outreach to younger demographics in the community.





Newham Youth interns Zaid and Rahna at our pop-up events

1.5 Summary of key outcomes

This summarises the key findings and recommendations that have emerged from the project to further improve and embed digital engagement as a successful part of improving representation in engagement:

Recommendation 1: To continue using and expand the use of Newham Co Create

Respondents were positive about their experience using Newham Co-Create. When asked in the survey how easy they found it to use the platform, respondents rated using co-create an average score of 3.78 out of 5.

Participants at in-person events were happy to use iPads to fill in surveys digitally. While hard copy surveys were printed out as an option for the pop-up stalls, there were no requests for these, with either staff helping fill surveys out, or residents doing this independently. This cut out the time that would have been required to input paper responses.

This provides good feedback on the usability of Newham Co-Create, particularly from a range of residents not previously familiar with the tool and supports the principle of continuing to use and develop it in the future.

However in order to evolve and improve the usability of the platform, additional features that participants requested included:

- A combined events calendar of engagement /consultation events on Co-create (30% respondents to the Co-Create survey)
- More project information and details available online (15%)

These features would provide more to attract users to the site and offer more insight into the projects, generating greater buy-in and ownership of regeneration in the borough.

Recommendation 2: To develop and extend publicity and awareness of Co Create

Most participants (78%) were previously unfamiliar with Co-Create, and respondents

suggested that raising awareness of the platform generally (34%), would help them to engage via Co-Create in future.

An advertising campaign and/or communications approach to raising awareness of Newham Co-Create would help participants to engage. Suggestions from participants about effective mechanisms were to advertise via email (14%) and printed communications (11%).

Recommendation 3: To be locally-focussed when communicating about engagement projects via Newham Co-Create

Participants were most interested in what is happening in their immediate area, and less interested in parts of the borough further from where they live or already visit regularly.

Rather than just listing all engagement events, Newham Co-Create could highlight current consultation and engagement activities relating to or taking place in their local area.

Email notifications could also identify local projects and events, in order to improve participation.

Recommendation 4: To provide dedicated support and training for residents on Newham Co-Create

While all participants were able to use Newham Co-Create to provide their responses without any requests for paper surveys, confidence and awareness of how to use the platform differed and the digital skills workshop identified the need and benefit for more dedicated support for residents on how to use Newham Co Create.

This should include how-to videos and skills sessions to improve user experience of the platform; and should include support from Newham frontline staff to guide participants and also fill in online survey responses in conversation with residents, either at dedicated events, or available at libraries.

This would also help develop wider digital skills and confidence amongst Newham residents who need support.

Further skills and training for both Newham staff is also recommended to facilitate this.

Recommendation 5: To improve and provide internet access for residents

Many people we spoke to at the events did not have a smart phone; some did not have an email address that they used themselves, but had one managed by a relative; and many had pay-as-you-go contracts rather than unlimited data. This reflects what we already know about digital exclusion in the borough and makes it difficult for many residents to actively participate in engagement projects.

This could be by:

- Promoting the availability of digital services available in libraries and other

community spaces

- Providing iPads and internet access at engagement events

Recommendation 6: To make surveys short and easy to complete

Some people (mainly at the Newham Unlocked festival events) said they found the survey too long.

Surveys should be kept short (to under 5 minutes) if used at in-person events, or a shortened version made available.

Where appropriate, surveys can also be simplified by using multiple-choice questions and also having a series of images to tick, rather than words.

This should be appropriate to the type of project, and more open response and alternative engagement tools are needed to complement this when more detailed feedback and more nuanced information is needed from the community.

Participants were also less concerned by the length of the survey when they were filling out in conversation with a staff member (rather than filling in themselves). Even when data is collected digitally, face-to-face conversations about the project and the survey provides a richer experience that will keep people engaged for longer than if they are filling in the survey alone.

Recommendation 7: Offer incentives for participation

Participants appreciated being acknowledged for giving their time through the offer of winning a shopping voucher. Localised incentives including shopping vouchers that offer choice of how to spend them are popular and can also support local businesses.

Recommendation 8: Use in-person engagement to complement digital tools

The in-person events were critical in extending the reach of engagement further than online and printed communications alone. By hosting pop-up stalls on busy high streets and at festivals, and by visiting the Beckton Youth Zone, we were able to talk to people who had not heard of Newham Co-Create, as well as people who did not have digital access.

Recommendation 9: Go to places where people already are

Visiting busy high streets and festivals with pop-up stalls enabled us to engage people who are typically harder to reach in planning consultations due to factors such as lack of digital access, lack of awareness of, understanding of or interest in planning matters.

Many people we spoke to were unaware of the Local Plan. We were able to speak to people who were in these public spaces already, rather than asking them to go out of their way to a specific planning event. It gave participants access to the Co-create platform via our iPads or by showing them how to use it. And it allowed us answer questions and to build local knowledge about the site and the Local Plan. It also enabled us to offer the technology (iPads) and access to the website (our data allowance) to people who did not have smart phones or data.

In order to better reach underrepresented communities, complement digital engagement by going to places people already are, rather than asking them to come to you. This could be:

- Street pop-up stalls
- Stalls at existing festivals and events (where appropriate)
- Drop-ins at groups already taking place (eg youth groups, faith groups)

Recommendation 10: Involve front-facing resident engagement staff in planning and regeneration projects

The involvement, support and advice from Resident Engagement and Participation staff including library staff within this project was instrumental in providing detailed insight into the requirements of different communities, where to carry out targeted participation, and to provide language and translation skills to support engagement. This resource should be used as standard practice to provide support to the planning and delivery of engagement projects.

Recommendation 11: Make local and young people part of the team

Working with interns who live in Newham as part of the project gave us a greater insight into the borough. made the team more approachable on the street. The interns were able to recommend times and places that would be busy, and to publicise the project across their own networks of young residents. At the end of the process they also said they had learnt a lot about how regeneration happens and felt more empowered to get involved in the future.

Working with young local residents eg as interns or through focus groups, is recommended to help reach a wider range of the population and empower younger residents. Interns should be paid at least the London Living Wage and time should be taken to teach them something about the planning process.

Recommendation 12: Consider targeted translation and language support

There are more than 240 languages and dialects spoken in Newham. Its diverse population makes reaching communities through translation challenging, and as not all residents are literate in their spoken language, it is difficult to offer a bespoke translated survey for everyone.

Although the online survey could be translated into different languages via the Google Translate feature, this was not used by respondents.

Both online and in-person, further consideration should be given to how to cater for the broad range of languages spoken in Newham, perhaps allocating budget to translated versions of engagement materials / Co-create pages and communications materials in a selection of key languages.

Staff at pop-up stalls (including consultants, interns and Council officers) were able to talk people through the survey in languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, capturing voices that may have been missed by a survey in English.

Recommendation 13: Keep engagements open for longer and into term time

The tight deadlines of the project determined the possible timing and length of the engagement in this case. Unfortunately, this meant that the engagement period fell largely within the school holidays when many residents and officers were away, and when the Youth Zones were too busy to accommodate engagement workshops. The mourning period for the Queen at the end of the engagement period meant that events and publicity had to be cut short.

- Allow enough time in the programme to publicise events and set up holiday activities
- Keep the online survey open for a month-six weeks. (Appropriate timescale will depend on the project.)
- Have enough flexibility in the programme to be able to extend the engagement period if necessary
 - If taking place during school holidays, allow enough overlap to continue well into the new term to catch people who have returned from holiday.

1.6 Opportunities: what did the funding allow you to do that you wouldn't have been able to do otherwise?

As a result of this funding, we were able to:

- Undertake community-led visioning work that ensures local communities' voices are at the heart of strategic planning and regeneration for Beckton Riverside from the beginning
- Test Newham's digital engagement platform Newham Co-Create with residents as a part of an engagement
- Test new approaches to widening access and representation to digital engagement through hybrid engagement processes and facilitate insight and recommendations that can inform and improve future engagement programmes
- Test new opportunities for joint service working between various service areas in Newham (working collaboratively between Community Wealth Building, Planning and Development, Digital and Resident Engagement and Participation)

1.7 Funding Review

	Amount Bid	Amount Spent
Staff resource for a Regeneration Manager to take forwards the project as Project Manager and support from Project Lead	£30,000	£34,616

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<p>Appointment of an experienced engagement and design consultancy to develop and deliver engagement via Co-Create, including developing appropriate marketing and communications through digital, social and print media, including translation services, and design services to develop visual and design materials for Newham Co-Create and shaping the options and final preferred vision and principles.</p>	<p>£50,000</p>	<p>£89,612</p>
<p>Staff resource for library staff and digital team in providing dedicated digital inclusion support, supporting provision of laptops and iPads to help participants get online, and event costs to enable participation</p>	<p>£15,000</p>	<p>£772</p>
<p>While the use of Newham Co-Create is already paid for through an existing license, this will enable CitizenLab to pilot tools in representative engagement alongside Newham Council</p>	<p>£30,000</p>	<p>£0</p>
<p>TOTAL</p>	<p>£125,000</p>	<p>£125,000</p>

2.0 Lessons Learned

2.1 Approach and lessons learned

Having undertaken one stage of engagement for the Beckton Riverside Regeneration Vision, it is important to evaluate the approach as part of the consultation, and the lessons learned as a result. Lessons learned from these approach can help to develop guidance for best practice.

Project stage or milestone	Approach - what process was undertaken?	Lessons Learned
<p>Getting started:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for funding bid identified by senior planning colleagues. • Developed a short business case setting out how funding could align with existing recognised need to undertake work on placemaking and visioning in Beckton Riverside and potential alignment with other service priorities on digital skills and review and development of Newham Co-create. • Discussions with the Director of CWB and Director of Planning agreeing support in principal. • Input of officers from other service areas involved in delivery to development (digital inclusion / resident engagement; digital services) of project approach and bid, and review by colleagues working on related projects to ensure alignment. 	<p>⇒ Flexibility is key: limited time at bid-stage meant that some of the initial assumptions or expectations about what the project could achieve (e.g. being able to undertake software development as part of the project, being able to develop the digital inclusion programme) weren't fully tested and needed to be revised once the project commenced and the details developed.</p> <p>⇒ Maintaining commitment is challenging especially across service areas: the funding allocation was split according to original bid, across different service areas but delivery by service areas other than Planning and Community Wealth Building were not prioritised and there was insufficient commitment to follow-through on delivery and provision of input to ensure that the project was succeeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A working/advisory/project group with senior buy-in and regular attendees to be part of the bid stage that is specific to the delivery of the project should be established with representatives from service areas or bid partners. ○ This group could review the bid and project objectives at regular intervals and ensure that the buy-in from bid application to completion of the pilot project is continuous with full partners involved.

Beckton Riverside Regeneration Vision



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signing non-key decision form.• Mayoral briefing and discussion on project and proposed approach.	<p>⇒ Senior political and officer support supports buy-in: Achieved early support from Corporate Director and Mayor via Mayoral briefing, indicated support for getting more insight into Newham Co-Crete and aligning with wider work around Beckton Riverside.</p> <p>⇒ Could have been more local ward Cllr involvement so that they are aware of the engagement and opportunities. This will be a focus into the next stage of engagement.</p>
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<p>Procurement:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertook soft market testing with a range of potential suppliers to identify the required scope. • Undertook discussions with CitizenLab and Newham Digital Team on current functionality of Newham Co-Crete and future potential improvements to understand potential scope for change 	<p>⇒ Newham Co-Crete capability: The more detailed discussions at this stage around scope for expanding / developing Newham Co-Crete indicated that for various reasons (software development lead-in times, level of insight as to the challenges and barriers to be overcome) the developments couldn't take place and required a shift towards this as a pilot / insight process rather than opportunity to actively develop new software.</p> <p>⇒ Soft market testing: helped understand the potential pitfalls / issues that needed to be raised and we sought to incorporate input from politicians regarding seeking smaller, more local consultancies to work on approach, although soft market testing indicated limited consultancies existed with the relevant combination of skills who were willing to take on the commission. A successful approach could include a partnership submission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We encouraged partners to incorporate working with local communities as part of their submission and Soundings ultimately incorporated a youth internship which worked with two local young people to support development of creative input. <p>⇒ Local opportunity: This is good for local opportunities but in terms of creative input more experienced input from local communities would enable this to be a more core part of delivery rather than just an add-on.</p>
<p>Procurement: Onboarding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invited tender process • 3 weeks to submit response • Inception meeting with consultants • Direct meetings between consultants and other internal teams 	<p>⇒ Liaison with procurement particularly around issuing the tender documents and answering clarification questions was challenging which slowed the process down. This took much longer than initially intended which means that we weren't able to onboard the suppliers until early July – a lot of time lost in going through procurement</p> <p>⇒ Limited time meant that there was little time to discuss and review the background to the project before commencing work. However if more dedicated time had been given to onboarding and testing the brief and ensuring shared understanding of the objectives, this would have sped up the process and improved the outcomes later on</p>

		<p>⇒ There were at times disjoint between project objectives / intentions set out in the bid, and the practical delivery e.g., how this was realised through the engagement plan. Further time to develop and test the engagement plan against the project objectives and ensure that all were aligned on objectives would have improved this.</p>
<p>Campaign Development:</p>	<p>The approach was to have a hybrid engagement approach. This included having largely digital engagement tools to capture information, with some hard copy materials still available to prompt discussion. These engagement tools were supported by in-person pop-up events, to ensure the catchment was not just those who could be reached via online marketing, but also harder to hear groups who may not normally participate in council engagement or using online feedback tools or platforms.</p> <p>Survey questions aimed to receive feedback on the Beckton Riverside Regeneration Vision, digital inclusion and Newham Co-create and demographic questions. This was also drafted keeping in mind the previous digital inclusion studies undertaken by Newham Council, which specified that multiple choice responses were viewed more favourable, particularly for those with lower technology skills.</p>	<p>⇒ Initial discussions with community neighbourhood managers informed the engagement team that knowledge of co-create was relatively good within the community, whereas Resident Engagement and Participation officers said the skills workshop would be beneficial.</p> <p>⇒ Hybrid engagement approaches are still valuable, with in-person events still able to capture feedback from under-represented or digitally excluded groups.</p> <p>⇒ Newham social media has a large following and a good way of reaching those already online.</p> <p>⇒ More careful design of the online survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The survey was long, and while almost all respondents completed the survey in full, feedback received was that it took too long to complete. Completion rate of all questions is likely a result of the survey being online only, where participants had to go to the last page to submit the survey. This is usually lower when both online and hard copy surveys are available. ○ While it was important to have the project questions and demographics questions, in future questions about digital inclusion could be linked to another survey on co-create for those that have time to fill this out. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider the balance of direct questions and open ended questions. Further key insights might have been gained through more direct use of scenarios / broader range of questions in survey. ○ Advantages and disadvantages of TypeForm vs Microsoft

		<p>teams: we used Microsoft forms which allowed residents to not have to register on co-create platform, therefore missing some key insight</p> <p>⇒ Sign-off process: There were some delays in gaining approvals internally around communications materials and other content. ⇒ In the beginning the signposting to other services could have worked better. There were issues with number of flyers produced, with the libraries only receiving 100 flyers but significantly more required for 12 libraries and around 12 community centres directly run by the council. ⇒ Reaching out to Youth Zones leaders was challenging particularly during school holidays.</p> <p>⇒ The outreach stalls helped promote the project and stalls onto existing events that are happening across the borough eg Newham Unlocked, to take advantage of the natural footfall.</p>
<p>Campaign launch and management:</p>	<p>The engagement process was largely managed by Soundings, who developed the engagement plan (Appendix A) and programme. Newham supported in areas such as liaising with key programme components to ensure the “go-live” went smoothly, including Community Neighbourhood Area Managers (key stakeholders to reach the community), Newham libraries (key resource for digital engagement and inclusion) and Newham Digital Team (assistance in setting up project page, and presenting the co-create skills workshop).</p> <p>Newham also provided resourcing to attend 5 pop-up events, as well as having resourcing and surveys available for the series of Newham Unlocked events (a community festival running throughout the borough during the engagement period), to increase outreach.</p> <p>A co-create workshop was held at Beckton</p>	<p>⇒ Co-create does not allow third parties (e.g. consultants) to use Typeform Pro, which is included with the platform. This meant a free survey platform that could be embedded into the webpage had to be used (Microsoft Forms) which did not provide the same level of demographic and analytical data.</p> <p>⇒ While printed surveys were available, no participants asked for one. Participants were happy to be talked through the survey with a staff member helping fill in on an iPad. This encourages those who may not normally use or have access to technology at home to feel comfortable using it when it is provided and there is support available.</p> <p>⇒ Awareness of the Co-create platform was low (78% of respondents said they had never used it before). Further Co-create skills sessions including series of in-person and online “how-to” sessions on how to use the platform and different engagement tools available could both raise awareness and teach people how to use the platform.</p> <p>⇒ The Co-Create training session struggled to attract participants, so future training sessions should involve careful consideration around how to target residents and make this attractive. However insight</p>

	<p>Globe Library, to provide a skills workshop for those after basic skills or how to specifically use co-create.</p> <p>Youth interns were recruited through a transparent process. The job was advertised via social media and Newham youth groups. Each young person was required to submit an application, a shortlisting and interview process was included. 'Our Newham work' were involved in supporting and identifying talented young people.</p>	<p>from these did demonstrate the benefit and need for further community skills sessions, to be made available in libraries and community centres where IT is available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ Participants at in-person events were happy to use iPads, while hard copy surveys were printed out just in case, there were no requests for these, with either staff helping fill surveys out, or residents doing this independently.⇒ There is demand for a centralised function that shows all upcoming consultation events in one location. Responses show that people are more interested in what is happening in their immediate area, and notification by email of local projects and consultation events would improve participation.⇒ Some respondents said the survey was very long, however nearly all participants filled out the survey in full.⇒ Upon recommendation from previous Digital Inclusion studies undertaken by Newham, most questions in the survey were multiple choice questions. While this was recommended for a first stage of engagement where the project objectives are quite broad, this should not be the approach to all surveys.⇒ In addition to questions relating to the emerging vision, an additional set of questions was added asking people about their experience of using Co-create. This added to the length of the survey. In future, surveys should be kept to 5 minutes if these will be taken at in-person events. In this case, the recommendation would have been to separate project questions and demographics from the digital inclusion questions about co-create in order to make the survey shorter.
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		<p>⇒ There was a difference in feedback on the dedicated pop-up events and where volunteers were attending events to promote the surveys and capture feedback. The dedicated pop-ups included a “What If” board to make the events more interactive. Volunteer staff received feedback that the survey was too long, and while it is acknowledged the survey was lengthy, this supports that in-person, interactive engagement events and conversations alongside the online surveys encourage people to stay longer and provide their feedback.</p> <p>⇒ Particular success in working with frontline services (resident engagement and participation / library staff) to benefit from their direct insight and experience in working with communities. The service has expertise in engaging with residents and directing unrepresented communities to the Co- Create Platform / language skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A briefing training session was held for the outreach stalls at Newham Unlocked on Teams and was recorded. Further training and briefing is critical for good outcomes.○ Future engagement projects should seek to work with frontline services in the council, to support promotion of engagement and also to allow for the shaping of strategies that reach communities effectively. <p>⇒ Consultation Fatigue and visualisation: it makes it harder to engage residents when we are consulting on a place that does not exist and does not have residents within the site. This was mitigated with the “What If” Board which provided visual prompts for people, and the multiple choice options on the survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ While this was suitable for a first stage of engagement, a second stage should not have as many prompts, but should use the emerging vision to gather more targeted and detailed feedback from the community (i.e. workshops, business engagement, open response questions). <p>⇒ There is a need for more incentives, prize draws, or focus groups and perhaps a voucher offer for attendance to workshops. Positive feedback</p>
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		<p>was received regarding the incentive at in-person events.</p> <p>⇒ In-person engagement events were successful in taking place in areas of high footfall, and this has supported the engagement work and number of people of positively engaged with the project.</p> <p>⇒ In-person events were particularly helpful in engaging underrepresented communities and communities who would not normally get involved. They would have language barriers and have no access to digital processes. In-person events were therefore necessary to support the digital engagement tools, as well as training and skills sessions to involve those who do not know how to use co-create.</p> <p>⇒ The recruitment of youth interns brought representation of the communities we were trying to reach in Newham into the project team and brought a new creative vision. They offered advice on how to reach younger people (such as making Instagram posts and TikTok videos). They attended all the engagement events and offered local insight into their own neighbourhoods, as well as being able to speak to people in a range of locally-spoken languages e.g. Punjabi and Urdu.</p> <p>The feedback from youth interns has been that they enjoyed the experience and it helped their professional development. From the perspective of empowering them to be involved in the planning process, they said they learnt a lot about how new developments get designed and how they/the community can be involved in the process. It is recommended that local youth interns or other local representatives are also recruited for subsequent phases of engagement.</p>
<p>Campaign wrap-up:</p>	<p>All surveys being completed online meant that data analysis could commence as soon as the survey closed. Other engagement tools used at events were</p>	<p>⇒ All surveys being completed online resulted in reduced analysis time. When hard copies are made available during an engagement, it is time consuming to input all handwritten responses onto an online survey.</p>

	<p>input into spreadsheets to contribute to the broader data analysis.</p> <p>A post-engagement period meeting to decide on next steps, data analysis and reporting timeframes.</p> <p>Update to the project webpage on co-create.</p> <p>Participation incentive voucher to be randomly selected, and participant to be notified.</p>	<p>⇒ There were some delays both to begin with and to wrap up. A faster response would have helped to focus discussions on the report drafts and commentary.</p>
<p>Feedback loops:</p>	<p>As per the engagement strategy, an email has been sent out to all those who had participated and subscribed to the mailing list. This email closes the feedback loop with interested parties, and will continue to update on future steps and project updates. Between now and the next stage of engagement, the email address and phone number will remain contactable.</p>	<p>⇒ Feedback Loop: As this project has no previous mailing list to email directly, closing the feedback loop was important to ensure those who participated receive future project updates, and are encouraged to participate in other projects.</p> <p>⇒ Ongoing communications: It is important to keep the mailing list updated and involved, so interest doesn't wane between the first and second stages of engagement. Future engagement should aim to build on feedback with those that participates in the first stage, as well as other people in the community where gaps are identified ahead of the next stage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Queen's passing resulted in a close-down of all communications in the last week of the engagement period, and into the first week after the engagement period had closed. The final outreach phase and sessions were cancelled. <p>⇒ To take learning and insight forward, the learning from the pilot should be shared with services across the Council undertaking engagement projects to inform insight into further projects and approaches.</p> <p>⇒ There is a need for an ongoing thread for underrepresented communities and the barriers to engaging in digital processes. This requires further investigation beyond the pilot for the council's digital service as part of the learning process and reducing the gap.</p>

2.3 Final Reflections

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?

In our case, it was not technical support that we required help with, but broader support in how to strategically bring together the methods available via Newham Co-Create to deliver an ambitious community visioning exercise on a significant and complex site.

Further time would have been of significant help in being able to carefully consider and develop the engagement approach and communications.

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

We were working with the existing contract for Newham Co-Create, Citizenlab, in order to further develop and inform how best to utilise Newham Co-Create going forwards in future borough engagement.

We appointed Soundings on the basis of their track record in community visioning and involvement in complex and relevant regeneration projects, with experience in delivering similar projects through digital engagement approaches.

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

There were a number of elements of this project which were new approaches for Newham Council, including undertaking a community visioning exercise for a place that does not yet exist and on a long timeline. This presents a particular challenge in engaging residents into this process, exacerbated by the challenges in reaching out to participants with language barriers. Having the time and resources to be able to carefully consider how best to respond to this challenge through Newham Co-Create and digital and other hybrid engagement approaches was a significant challenge.

3.0 Pilot Outcomes

3.1 Proposed outcomes

Our three project objectives at the outset were:

- The co-creation by Newham residents of a vision and principles for a future town centre, neighbourhood and community at Beckton Riverside that sets out a positive vision and the key ingredients of a future place. It will set the strategic principles that the Local Plan, future planning applications, projects and interventions can develop and deliver locally.
- Engage a more representative range of citizens in decision-making. This vision will encapsulate the aspirations and views of a representative and [inclusive pool of Newham](#) residents. The vision will have received engagement input from a range of sources from digital engagement to more traditional forms.
- Improve the digital skills and confidence of residents and participants. The process will work alongside the Council's digital inclusion programme to provide a bridge and support for engagement for digitally excluded residents to enable them to participate meaningfully via Newham Co-Create.

Please also refer to the attached spreadsheet for the measurable outcomes.

No single set of baseline data was available that was directly comparable to the scope of this project. This was the first time that survey questions asking specifically about people's use of the Co-create platform had been part of community engagement for a regeneration project. The existing user data on Newham Co-Create includes data on age, gender and location in the borough, but does not offer any more detailed demographic breakdown of the user base. We are therefore starting from a limited existing data set and with no obvious comparable baseline.

The Local Plan Issues and Options also provides valuable insight into a comparison against another recent hybrid engagement project in the borough and demonstrates measurable improvements in the reach of different demographic groups, although the precise figures are not available at present so are more indicative in the response.

The following sources have been referred to as baseline for determining outcomes:

- Newham Co-Create registered users: all data
- Newham Demographics as of 2022, from newham.info (2020 population estimates and 2011 census data)
- Community Assemblies Evaluation Report 2021_22
- Newham Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation, 2021 (engagement undertaken 18 October – 17 December 2021). We note that at the time of writing, the consultation outcomes have not yet been finalised and are subject to sign-off.

Did adopting digital citizen engagement tools/processes lead to:

1. ...an increase in number of people who engage?

Within this engagement project, 163 survey responses were received,

estimated 250 people engaged through discussions at events. This compares to 386 representations that were received through the Local Plan consultation, though it should be noted that the number of representations on the Local Plan also includes statutory consultees and officials as well as members of the public, and the engagement period was longer (8 weeks compared to just over 4).

The chief aim of this engagement was not to hear from as many people as possible, but to hear from a broad range of Newham residents and gather a level of detail in the feedback that would help shape a draft community vision for the site.

As this engagement strategy interwove digital and in-person engagement, it is not possible to use participation figures to draw conclusions about whether and increases / decreases in participation can be attributed to the adoption of digital citizen engagement tools / processes. What we can say is:

This project added 23 new subscribers to Newham Co-create and brought 115 to the project mailing list. Prior to the start of this project, according to the Community Assemblies Evaluation Report 2021_22, numbers of new people using Co-create had plateaued.

2. ...an increase in demographics / diversity of people who engage?

Improving the demographic representation of Newham residents was a primary objective in this project.

Compared to the Local Plan (2021) consultation, this engagement saw an increase in the proportion of young people; non-binary people; Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people; and Muslim respondents.

While there is still further to go, this presents a measurable improvement in demographic representation that brings us much closer to the Newham demographic breakdown. We understand this to be primarily because of the complementing of digital engagement tools with direct, on-street engagement.

- **ETHNICITY:** Based on baseline data from Co-create average demographics, engagement for the Newham Local Plan – Issues and Options stage (2021) and Newham wide demographics (2020), this engagement had a good reach among harder to reach communities, such as Black Asian minority communities, younger participants, and those with a disability. In this survey, the largest ethnic group was White British at 23%, with Asian (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, India) and Black (African) at nearly 9%. In all 54% of participants were from non-white backgrounds. This is less than the percentage of the Newham population as a whole (72.2%) but a rise from the Local Plan (2021) consultation in which less than half were non-white, and white

British was by far the largest group.

- Data held on the wider Newham population lists the ethnic or cultural background of residents as: White British 13.1%, White Irish 0.8%, Other White 13.8%, Mixed White & Black Caribbean 1.1%, Mixed White & Black African 1.1%, Mixed White & Asian 1.2%, Other Mixed 1.7%. Asian Indian 14.8%, Asian Pakistani 9.7%, Asian Bangladeshi 12.4% Asian Chinese 1.7%, Other Asian 6.6%, Black African 11.1%, Black Caribbean 4.0%, Other Black 2.6%, Arab 1.3%, Other Ethnic Group 2.9%
- AGE: 17% of respondents to this survey were under the age of 24. This is a rise on the previous percentage of 9% of existing Newham Co-Create subscribers (9%) and engagement carried out for the Local Plan – Issues and options (less than 10%). However, this still falls short of the Newham demographic of 34%; the next stage of engagement will carry out specific workshops with younger people to address this.
- GENDER: In this survey, 48% of respondents identified as female, 47 % as male, and 4% as non-binary (with the remainder preferring not to say). This is on a par with the Local Plan consultation (just over 50% female, and the rest male or prefer not to say). 53% of Newham’s population are male and 47% female (mid-2020 ONS MYE). Reaching non-binary residents represents an improvement on previous engagements, as far as we are aware.
- DISABILITY: 11% of participants said they had a disability, compared with 14% of Newham residents have a disability (2011 Census). While these figures are close, we acknowledge that further targeted outreach could be done with this demographic to better understand aspects of the vision relating to movement and accessibility.
- RELIGION: Representation from borough’s significant Muslim population has grown compared to the Local Plan consultation, where it was significantly underrepresented (amongst those who stated their religion) and religious reach now seems commensurate with that of the borough as a whole.

In this survey, 28% of respondents identified as Christian, and 26% as Muslim, whereas the Local Plan consultation saw less than a third as many Muslim respondents as Christian. This compares to Newham borough demographics: 40% of residents are Christian, 32% Muslim, 8.8% Hindu, 2.1% Sikh, 1.2% part of another religious group, 9.5% were not religious and 6.4% did not state their religion (2011).

Note: as it was not compulsory to give demographic information in either this engagement or that of the Local Plan – Issues and Options, demographic data collected does not necessarily show the whole picture.

3. ... a reduction in officer time / resources required?

Detailed timesheets are not available for direct comparisons with previous engagement projects. However a few comments can be made.

There was a significant decrease in response processing time as a result of mainly multiple choice questions and all surveys being completed online (rather than input from paper versions).

The need to still do face-to-face engagement to complement the digital survey still required officer time and project resources. And in many cases, officers / facilitators spent time inputting survey answers with the respondents.

The digital skills-building library session showing people how to use Co-create / the internet required additional resource, including library staff.

Using Co-create, emails and social media to reach people digitally allowed greater geographic reach and saved time that would have been spent travelling to more parts of the borough.

4. ...an increased awareness of the digital engagement platforms available?

Yes - 78% of participants said they had not (before this project) used Newham's engagement platform, Co-create. This is the first time we've collected insight onto whether participants of a project have used co-create before.

4.0 Community Feedback

4.1 Summary of community consultation

- **Engagement period: 17 August - 11 September 2022**
- **163 surveys completed, all via Newham Co-create**
- **5 pop-up events (including the Newham Unlocked Festival at Beckton Park)**

- **Project survey also represented at 2 other Newham Unlocked Festival events on 20 and 27 August**
- **Over 250 participants engaged with the project during the engagement period.**
- **5 attendees to the Newham Co-Create skills workshop at Beckton Globe Library**
- **Surveys completed at Beckton Globe Youth Zone**

The aim of the project was to help Newham develop the vision that the community has for the Beckton Riverside area. The area is a key opportunity and growth area. It aims to create this emerging vision for the area, in the short term, and the long term.

The survey aimed to prompt the community to think about what they think makes a great town centre, what they currently do in their local town centre, and what is missing from their local town centre. The questions also aimed to find out what the current understanding is of the Beckton Riverside area, any preconceptions, and any ideas for what they think this area could be in the future.

The survey also asked a range of questions about how easy people found it to access and use Co-Create, and how it could be improved.

Outreach aimed to target different demographics within the community, particularly those that are under-represented or digitally excluded, as the survey was solely online. This included:

- A range of on-street pop-ups targeted high footfall areas, including a stall at the Newham Unlocked Festival at Beckton Park to target families and Beckton locals, - Youth Zones to target younger age groups,
- Libraries to target those that are digitally excluded who may use the library for access to internet or computers, as well as a co-create skills workshop.
- Communications sent out via Neighbourhood Area Managers, to reach residents via those they have an existing/ongoing relationship with.

For further details on the consultation methodology, refer to Appendix D.

4.2 Summary of consultation responses

From the consultation, below shows the key responses for what people

want to see in the Beckton Riverside area:

- The key things missing from people's local town centres around Newham are evening entertainment (11%), waterside space (10%), and green space (10%).
- Participants believe green spaces (13%), public transport connections (12%), and spaces to rest (11%) were considered priorities when it comes to what makes a great town centre.
- Things such as public transport connections, not enough to do, and safety concerns would stop people from going to a new town centre at Beckton Riverside.
- Travel options participants wanted most to be available at Beckton Riverside was the DLR and bus services.
- In the short term, participants would like to have access to green spaces, entertainments, food/drink, youth activities and recreation at Beckton Riverside.
- 65% of participants said they would consider living at Beckton Riverside, with reasons such as green space, new housing, modern buildings and the location by the water. The 35% that said no, were mainly due to liking where they currently live, already living close by to Beckton Riverside, or due to the proximity to the sewerage treatment works.
- Participants would generally like to change the Beckton Riverside area with more to do for families and young people, riverside access, the smell (from the sewerage treatment works) and better public transport connections.

A report on the emerging vision has been prepared separately (see Appendix E).

Participants were also asked questions regarding digital inclusion, specifically regarding the Newham engagement platform, co-create, which hosted the project information and online survey. Key findings from this included:

- 78% of participants hadn't used co-create before this project
- Going forwards, participants would like more awareness around the platform (both by email and printed communications), and specifically like to know about projects that are local to them. Many participants would also like to see all consultation events in one calendar on the platform, as the platform only has event information on each project page. There were also suggestions of how-to videos being available on co create, or skills and training sessions to be made available (as was done at Beckton Globe in this project).

As a result of the consultation, five key insights have emerged as part of the developing vision for the area:

- 1) Waterfront, green spaces and nature: Access to the waterfront and to new green spaces is a very attractive proposition for participants. These are also things that could happen in the shorter-term, and don't rely on other development or the proposed DLR extension.

- 2) Things to do, in the daytime and in the evening: Participants are optimistic about the Beckton Riverside area, however it is clear that the area needs to provide a draw for people to live or visit there, that may not be available in other areas of Newham. Participants said evening entertainment was generally what they were missing most in their local town centres, so Beckton Riverside would need to provide things such as food/drink, leisure and recreation and community facilities to encourage people to travel there.
- 3) Spaces for the community: Participants would like the area to provide new spaces for the community, particularly spaces for children, teenagers and families. This included flexible, accessible spaces that could be shared across the community, as well as mention of skills and training spaces to be provided. This is also something that could be provided in the short-term.
- 4) Transport connections – for access and leisure: public transport connections are valued highly by participants; however this seems particularly important for connections into the Beckton Riverside area, which area currently quite poor. Participants would like to see DLR and bus connections into the area, and safe and pleasant cycle and walking routes throughout the area for both transport and leisure connections.
- 5) Changing the negative perceptions of the area – smell, safety and noise: There seems to be a strong association between the area and negative perceptions within the community. This mainly related to the smell from the sewage treatment works, safety concerns, and noise issues relating to City Airport. This indicates that Beckton Riverside needs to appeal to people in a positive way, in order for people to change their mind about these preconceptions of the area.

For further details on the consultation responses and emerging vision, refer to Appendix D.

4.3 Delivering on feedback

The feedback received from the community achieved its initial purpose at shaping the emerging vision, but also provided the insight that more work can be done with the community. Now that the high level of detail has been gathered and formed an emerging vision, but the community are now aware of the potential for the Beckton Riverside area, and have shown interest in the future of the area, there is a basis that a next stage of the project can be planned, to take this initial feedback and delve into a deeper level of detail with the community.

This is an essential process in engagement, as while the first phase gathers interest, and prompts people to start thinking about a vision for the area, a second stage of engagement can re-engage the community, develop further principles, and aid participants in understanding the potential outcomes and trade-offs through development of the area.

The engagement process undertaken and the feedback received has developed the evolved the vision for Beckton Riverside. The feedback from the community resulted in quite clear principles for what people want from the area, and has successfully engaged with people who may not have been aware that the area is an identified opportunity area as part of the Local Plan, thus successfully including the wider community in the future development of this area.

Following the end of the stage 1 engagement, further engagement could be undertaken on the following topics, which require more dissection and workshopping to uncover community ideas and feedback:

- Sustainability (in construction and design)
- Housing typology
- Character areas
- Town centre uses
- Community Wealth Building

4.4 Community testimonials

When participants were asked how the council could support them in the future when engaging through websites such as co-create, responses were mainly about awareness and reminders of events:

“Public awareness of the website needs to be promoted”

“Better links to council website, e.g. this consultation was not listed on council consultations page.”

“Promote the website via letters and leaflets.”

“You have done very well recently. They are far more engaging, and some of the Planning jargon is stripped out.”

5. Conclusions and Policy Reflections

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

The initial approach to this project was highly ambitious, incorporating new approaches to digital inclusion, a review of existing digital engagement tools, and the delivery of a significant community visioning exercise. As these were all operating on different timescales, this project has therefore come ahead of some of the other related projects and has not been able to incorporate all the originally planned approaches. Were we to start again, we would have taken forwards a more slimmed down project and ensured greater confidence in any other dependent projects that they could be taken forwards, particularly where they were reliant on other funding or resource.

All engagement projects and communities are unique, and this project potentially more complex than most, necessarily requiring a bespoke rather than an ‘off the shelf’ approach. This requires all partners,

suppliers and stakeholders to lean into doing things differently, and within tight timescales, this is more challenging. Setting the scene early on for the need to take a new approach to engaging communities through digital means may have helped in navigating a complex environment.

We would want to spend more time on developing the initial engagement plan, ensuring that activities and methods are carefully chosen to reach communities.

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?

We expect this pilot to support the review of the future of Newham Co-Create and how it is developed and expanded. It has already supported a series of recommendations for improvements to Newham Co-Create which will be taken forwards once funding is available to do so.

The recommendations within this report will be shared and discussed by service areas across the Council for take-up in other engagement projects and to inform future approaches. Challenges to uptake may include limited funding or resource and alignment between service areas.

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?**

As this project is focussed on the regeneration vision, and outputs of this work aim to be part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, we were not limited by requirements such as statutory consultation time period of requirements.

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

An off-the-shelf solution, product or approach to engagement will never be flexible enough to respond appropriately to the specific needs of different places and communities, especially when we are piloting new approaches.

More support in doing things differently and a push away from standardisation is critical in enabling local authorities to respond to the problems and challenges in front of them, rather than trying to fit a pre-designed engagement approach or tool to that challenge.

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

The support given in facilitating connections between other projects and access to best practice was invaluable in informing the detailed approaches.

DLUHC could support local authorities by providing further support on the developing of the initial engagement plan and in defining objectives and shaping responses that are appropriate to the context.

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

PropTech Rounds 1 and 2 have put focus on the technical solutions or products themselves. The challenges we are now experiencing are around the wider application of these products: how to communicate, encourage uptake, support digital access, and enable culture change within local authorities and communities to adopt digital engagement.

'The Co-create platform was a useful tool for collecting and processing responses, and allowed a broad geographical reach across the borough that would have been hard to obtain in person. However complementing it with in-person pop-up events was essential for gaining a broader socio-economic and cultural reach. In person conversations and visits to different Newham communities also gave the consultant team a deeper understanding of the place and its people.'

Associate, Soundings (engagement consultants)

'As someone who has always been interested in the built environment industry I never realised the role of community engagement and how long the process of construction is.'

Age 18, Stratford resident, prospective engineering student

'In this project, we wanted to let Newham's residents speak in setting the principles of a major new regeneration project. In a borough as diverse as Newham and on such a large and complex project, that's no small challenge, but as a pilot project, this work gives us confidence that we can use digital participation platforms as a critical part of a broader approach that helps people engage online and at every stage of the design and planning process.'

Project Lead, Newham Council