



Event takeaway: Digital Engagement

16.11.2022

- **“Be honest about what you want to get out of the engagement process.”** Meaningful stakeholder engagement is not merely about the quantity of responses, it’s about the representation of these viewpoints which are only revealed when appropriate methods are used to cultivate these responses – this often means a hybrid approach to engagement. Be really clear about what is needed. Check if the process addresses the ‘toddler and teen test’ – does it answer the ‘Why?’ and ‘So what?’ questions.
- **52% of citizens want to be more involved in local decision making.** Local communities should be given greater voice in local decision making – the demand is there. However, the means to engage is not always accessible to all. As built environment professionals, it is essential that we understand and explain to people that engaging with the planning process is a collaborative process. This takes time and money – government support is available through the DLUHC PropTech funding rounds.
- **Broadening representation within community engagement through digital tools.** Virtual engagement should be viewed as a means to increase representation particularly for young people, who are routinely under-represented within processes of local decision-making. Digital tools such as ‘virtual consultation rooms’, place-builder gaming and increasingly, social media are excellent tools to broaden the outreach of community engagement, especially for young people, although they need to be targeted and well designed to be successful. Work with young people to develop tools and to reach their peers.
- **“Make plan-making more fun!”** It is important to allow creativity within the engagement process through enabling local community members to exercise their creative freedoms through online activities and digital tools, but we must also see engagement as more than the immediate task – it is an opportunity to educate, develop skills, to research local community needs and aspirations and critically, to develop ongoing relationship and partnership with communities into the long term.
- **How do we encourage inter-generational conversation through community-led design?** We must consider the importance of play as a tool to activate inter-generational conversations in design and plan-making. Crucially, notice the range of perspectives of risk perception between generations and utilise this dynamic to create play places that deliver positively, safely and inclusively.

- **Use a mobile-first approach to bring the PDF to life.** Being true to the realities of everyday life, we must acknowledge the range of barriers which might prevent members of local communities from participating in active engagement. Crucially this means creating digital tools in mobile-first configuration which can be used by the widest audience.
- **Consider the relationship between virtual reality and experience of place.** We do not experience a place via 'flythrough' – instead, consider digital tools such as virtual reality to recreate meaningful and realistic experiences such as using active travel methods to experience place.
- **Writing an effective grant bid for funding.** Establish clear achievable aims that can be realised within a deadline – a Gantt chart of expected timelines is an effective tool. Speak to your suppliers from a procurement perspective to understand potential costings. Finally, show you are a competent team with the skills to support delivery – showcase your existing achievements!

Speakers:

Hana Loftus, Director, HAT Projects

Jess Williamson, PropTech Strategist, DLUHC

Katie Kerr, Associate, ARUP

Chris McKinney, Planning Policy Manager, Bolsover District Council

Sophia De Sousa, Chief Executive, The Glass-House Community Led Design

Louisa Facchino-Stack, Principal Urban Design Project Officer, LB Hounslow

Jack Curran, Visualisation Senior Specialist, Homes England

Chris Standish, Senior Community Engagement Manager, Homes England

Attendees: 70

Links

Miro link to Place Tech event series info board:

<https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVPbBM4kA=/>

PropTech Engagement Fund Round 1 Showcase – Youtube link [here](#)

Sign up to the PropTech Engagement Fund newsletter [here](#)