



**European Union**

European Regional  
Development Fund



# BETTER

## Interreg Europe

Driving Digital Innovation  
in Public Services



**European Union**  
European Regional  
Development Fund



# ***BETTER helps Public Authorities to stimulate regional innovation chains using eGovernment solutions***

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# Aim

Encourage Public Authorities to develop Regional Innovation Strategies in which eGovernment solutions can stimulate Regional Innovation chains (as well as improving their services)

- Improve 'e' government services
- Cut costs
- Stimulate regional innovation chains

# Interreg NW Europe: Benefits for Birmingham

## Better: Stimulating Regional Innovation through Better e-Government Services

The project aims to foster a policy environment for Birmingham that will provide:

- Better support for **SMEs** by connecting them with innovation and digital solutions
- Better **health** for the city and region through improved use of big data to tackle city health challenges
- Better **data management** capability through platform tools
- Better **air quality/transport** in the city and region through improved infrastructure and enabling technologies.

# Local stakeholders



## Initial Themes

10% increase  
in innovation  
in the region



Better health



Air quality and  
transport



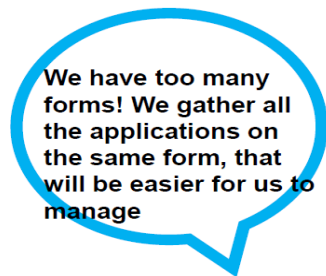
Better support for  
SMES

# “€1.5 million savings for Gavle Council”

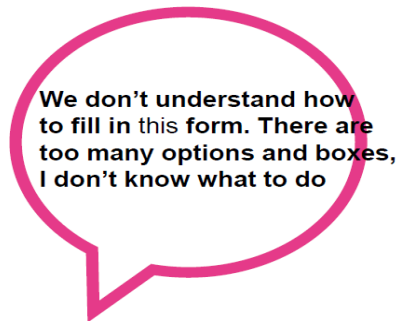
## Digital Renewal Programme

- *Innovationsguiden* (service design) methodology
- Try, fail, learn... try, succeed approach

### Assumptions

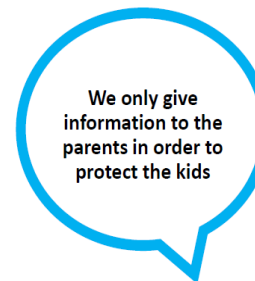


Business perspective

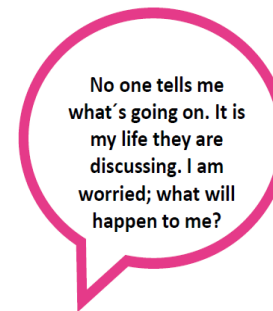


End user/customer perspective

### Assumptions

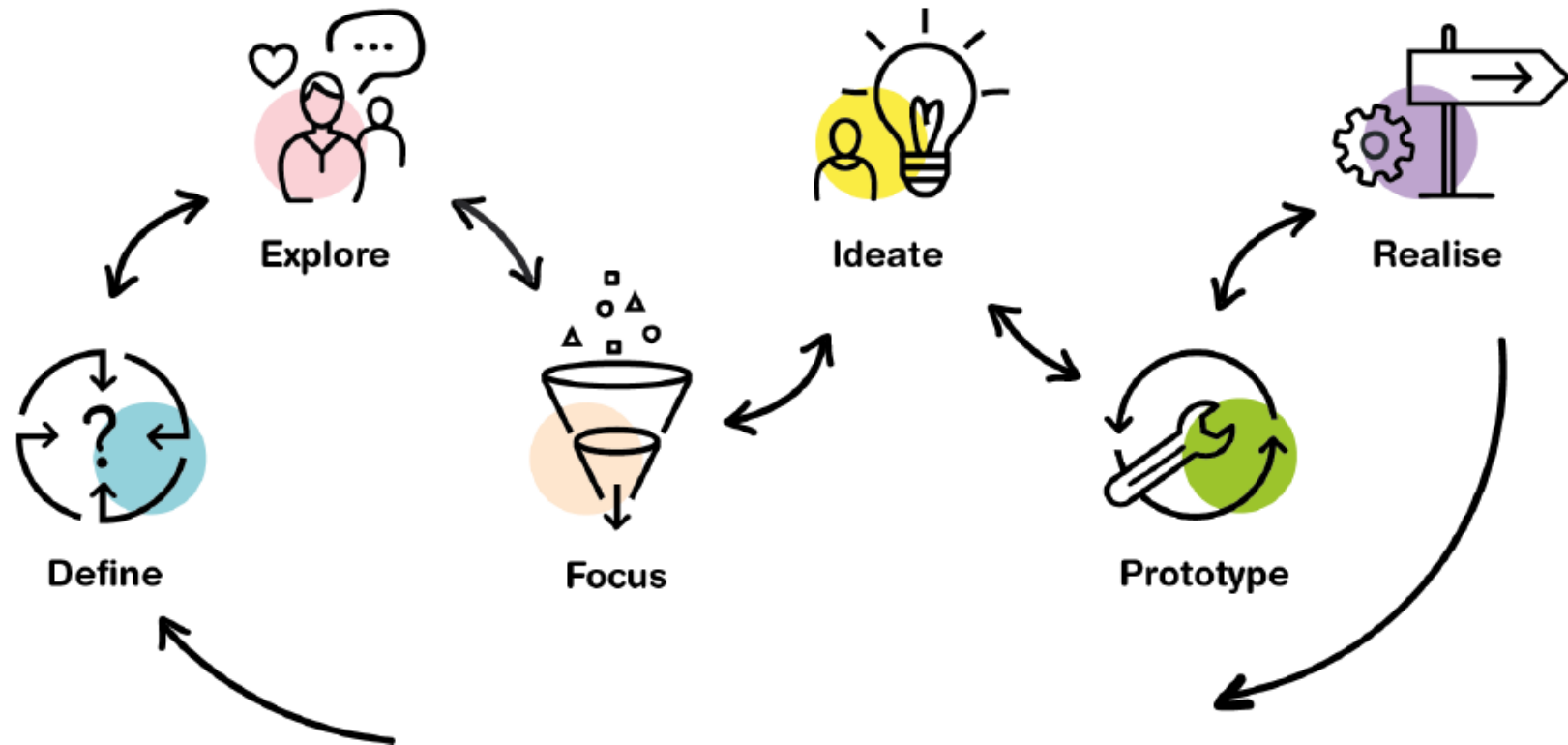


Business perspective



End users perspective

# Digital Renewal Programme





# BETTER PROJECT ACTION PLAN



# Regional Action Plan overview – An iterative process

- The ***Policy focus***, WM Industrial Strategy
- WM Innovation Programme - Combined Authority
- ***How*** to learn from others – BETTER examples
- Improving public services utilising digital tech
- Private sector engagement including SMEs
- ***Procurement*** as a focus - Aliciyo Report (2020)
- City Challenges
- Design Thinking
- STEAMhouse at BCU and Bruntwood
- Digital Innovation in Public Services (DIPS) proposal as a **pilot** to test ideas – cited in Birmingham's ICTD Strategy

# DIGITAL INNOVATION IN PUBLIC SERVICES

**West Midlands Innovation Fund**





**WHY?**

# The Challenge

- It is well recognised that for the public sector to successfully deliver and meet the increasing demands on its services, it requires access to innovative products and services.
- This includes the ability to procure emerging technologies, goods and services from the private sector.
- Public sector budget cuts\* and a global pandemic have stretched public resources and damaged private sector markets.

\*As reported by the National Audit Office as part of the 2019 spending review, Government funding for local authorities has fallen by an estimated 49.1% in real terms from 2010-11 to 2017-18.



# IAWM Scoping Study

- As part of a scoping study, funded through WMCA and IAWM, innovative businesses in the West Midlands cite procurement into the public sector as being one of the largest hurdles they encounter.
- Public procurement is then seen as the process which hinders or halts the successful adoption and scale of their innovation.





# The Opportunity

- During the pandemic we have already seen pockets of innovative procurement which proves that many of the necessary policies and practices do exist or have been modified; it has taken a crisis to create the impetus to adopt innovation-friendly policies and practices.
- Therefore, an opportunity has arisen to better understand what can be learned and promoted to support Local Authorities to adopt innovative procurement practices and for businesses to understand what is required of them, in order that they can access public sector markets.



**WHO?**



# Who are the project partners?

**Lead:** Innovation Birmingham Ltd



**Delivery Partner:** STEAMhouse (BCU)



**Local Authority:** Birmingham City Council





**HOW?**

# Project Funding

**Overall project cost:** £89,000

**Breakdown:**

- WMIP funding required: £80,000
- Leveraged Funds:
  - BETTER (EU Interreg): £9,000





**WHAT?**

# Project Objectives

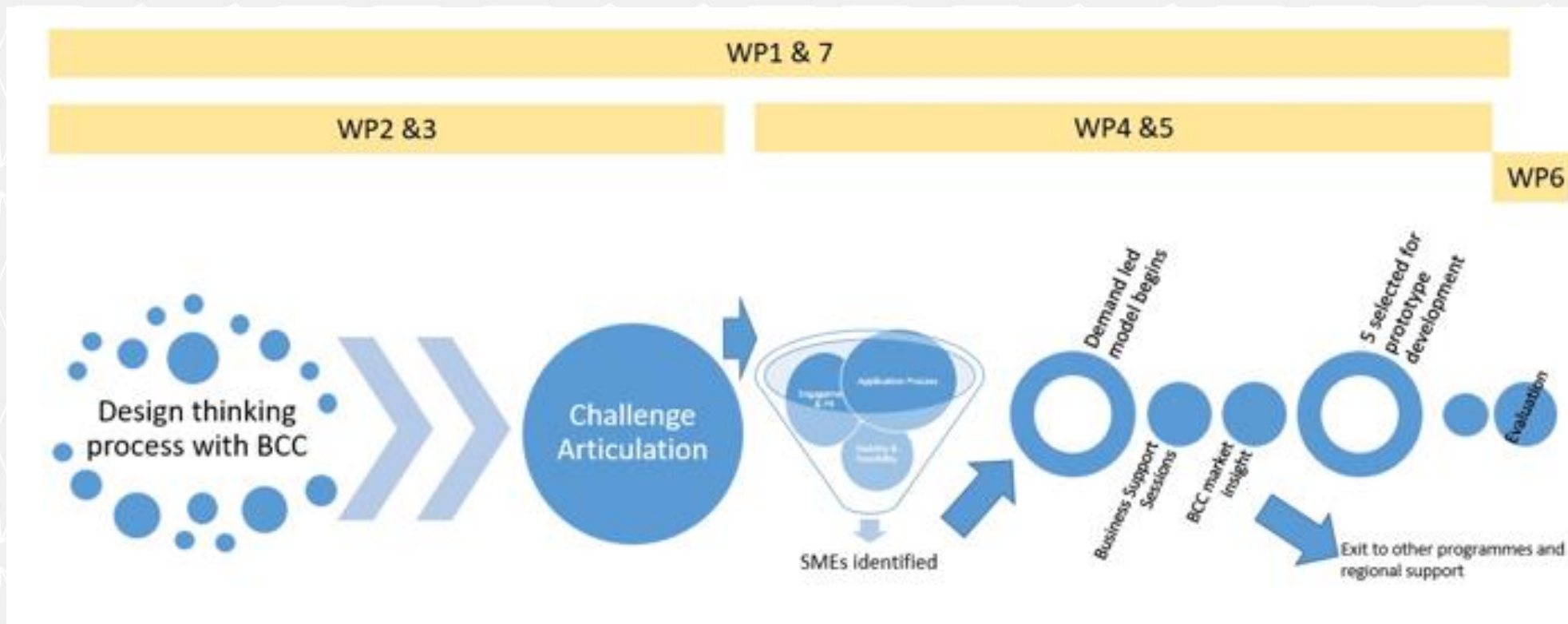
1. Closing the gap on local authority procurement as a barrier to innovation and economic growth.
2. Enable economic recovery for both public and private sector partners by identifying innovative, cost effective solutions to city challenges and opening new markets to regional SMEs.
3. Provide a roll-out ready model to be proposed to wider local authorities both regionally and nationally.

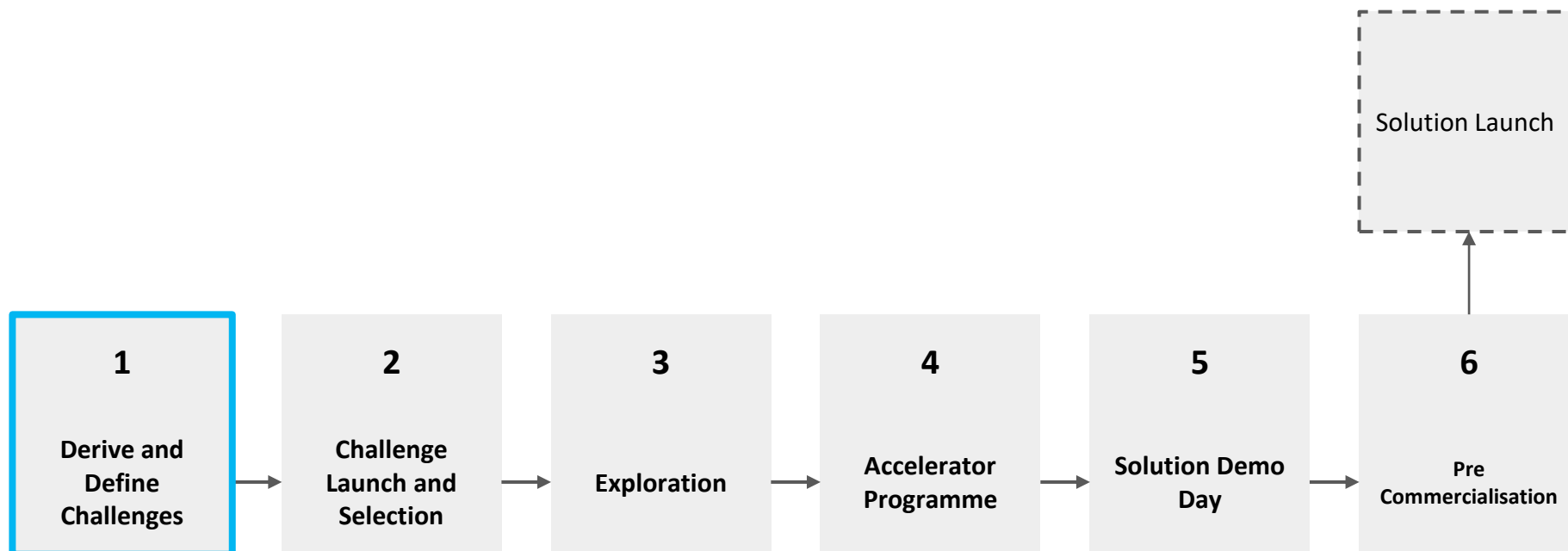




# DIPS DELIVERY PROCESS

# Project Delivery





Powered by  
**BIRMINGHAM CITY**  
University

**bruntwood**  
SciTech

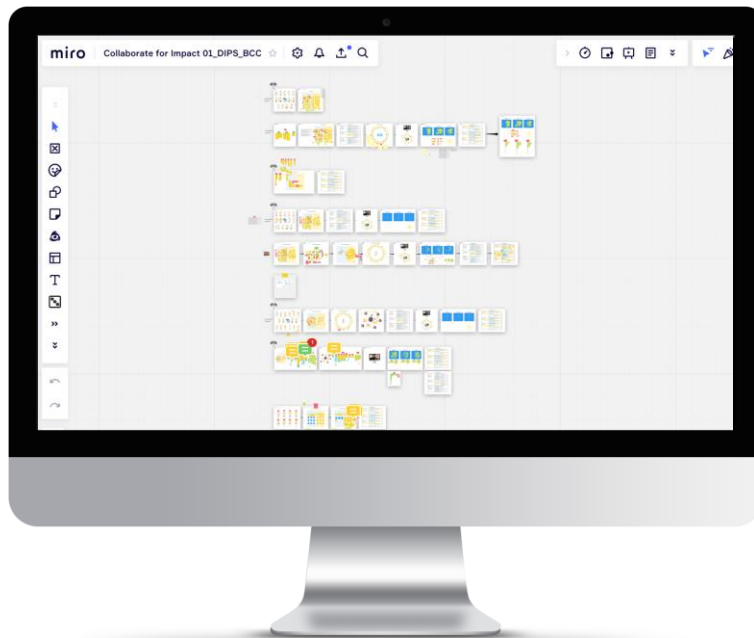




# Our approach

**Capacity Building  
Human-centred  
Collaborative  
Commercially Strategic**

# Workshops



**2 x 2hr Workshops per Directorate - 16 x Participants - 2 x Facilitators**

# What worked?

**Passionate participants**  
**Knowledgeable participants**  
**Mapping & understanding**  
**Access**  
**Conversation**  
**Sandpit**

# What didn't?

**Timeline**  
**Retention**  
**Budget uncertainty**  
**Data and evidence**  
**Executive-level participation**

# Challenges

***How can technology transform public consultation to increase citizen engagement, improve quality, and enable meaningful dialogue?***

Planning & Development

***How can technology directly connect regional food producers with urban demand, and transport goods between them in a reliable, affordable, and sustainable way?***

Public Health - Food

# Challenges

***How can technology enable citizens to access engaging and inclusive Adult Social Care service information quickly and efficiently?***

Adult Social Care

***How can technology enable citizens with learning disabilities to access, and be in control of, suitable transport services that increase confidence and independence?***


Adult Social Care

# Challenges

***How can technology  
support the  
transformation of Mobility  
Hubs into places of  
community and business  
activity that drives active  
transport use in the city?***

Transport for West Midlands

# Sample Brief

 <p><b>Birmingham City Council</b> <b>Planning and Consultation</b></p> <p><i>A draft Challenge Brief for Digital Innovation in Public Services (DIPS)</i> 20/07/2022</p> <p><small>Prepared by Patrick Bek Head of Service Innovation and Experimentation STEAMhouse, BCU</small></p> <p><b>The Challenge Question</b></p> <p><i>How can technology transform public consultation to increase citizen engagement, improve quality, and enable meaningful dialogue?</i></p> <p><b>The Challenge Summary</b></p> <p>After a local planning authority has received a planning application, it will undertake a period of public consultation where views on the proposed development can be expressed by citizens. There is typically a formal consultation period when the local planning authority will identify and consult a number of different groups.</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Following the initial period of consultation, it may be that further additional consultation on changes submitted by an applicant, prior to any decision being made, is considered necessary. Finally, once the consultation has concluded, the local planning authority will consider the representations made by consultees, and proceed to decide the application.</p> <p>Our current consultation process is not well equipped to engage in a useful dialogue with citizens because consultation contracts are typically framed as activities designed to inform, not listen to citizens. However, our complementary digital platform, 'Be Heard' only allows for two types of responses: "I am in favour of the proposed solution" or "I am against the proposed solution".</p> <p>Current processes are failing to engage a broad range of citizens that are representative of their neighbourhoods, which means the local authority is continually asked for their views. As a result, voluntary and community sectors can be deluged with consultations from many local stakeholders which causes feelings of consultation fatigue. However, while there is little evidence the general public are overly concerned about consultation fatigue, no one complains if the consultation is meaningful, they can see it will make a difference and will lead to real change. What stops people's having their time taken on consultations which they think lack credibility: being going through the motions, not listening to the views of a lot of people, promote an image of a variance with people's values, and not be followed up by satisfactory feedback – either of the output or the outcome.</p> <p>In recent years citizens have turned to platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to have their opinions heard, tagging local councillors and politicians directly. The Local Authority is unable to ensure the monitoring of comments provided through these channels, or make timely responses. This can create a situation where misinformation can easily be spread before the correct information responding to a post is provided, and where politicians are being asked to make comments on subjects that they are not able to respond to given the sometimes technical knowledge required. This can lead to diverging narratives being created about what is happening and could have a negative reputational impact. Not being able to respond to comments cohesively and in a timely manner has the potential to damage residents in the development process and thus an opportunity for them to potentially influence the design of a scheme will be lost.</p> <p><b>Why does this challenge need to be solved?</b></p> <p>There is an urgent need to increase public trust and turn the tide of disengagement. Public consultations are where residents are most likely to be able to affect change; however, the current solution is transactional and formal which limits the possibility of engaging in meaningful, sustained dialogue with a broad spectrum of citizens. Closing the feedback loop is one of the most important aspects of public consultation, ensuring that residents</p> <p>2</p>	<p>feel heard and that they can see the effect of their participation. That's currently missing. There is an opportunity to strengthen relationships between the local authority and citizens to support our ambition to become equal partners in the co-design of our city.</p> <p><b>Who are the end-users of the solution likely to be?</b></p> <p><b>External Users</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools</li> <li>Community Organisations</li> <li>Any Organisations</li> <li>Developers</li> <li>All Citizens within the Bordesley Green area (both border area taking into account external influences)</li> <li>Groups in a geographic context</li> <li>Health providers (NHS and social prescribing)</li> <li>Further education</li> <li>Higher education</li> </ul> <p><b>Internal Users</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Management</li> <li>Planning</li> <li>Police</li> <li>Transport (Active Travel)</li> <li>GP/PH</li> <li>Adult social care</li> <li>Adult Education</li> <li>Employment and skills</li> <li>Public Health</li> </ul> <p><b>How will we know when the challenge has been solved?</b></p> <p>Public consultation processes will be transformed to meaningfully engage with citizens who are representative of Birmingham's diverse and vibrant neighbourhoods. We'll enable ongoing, informal dialogue between citizens and the local authority and be able to evidence significant improvements in the quality of consultation across the following measures:</p> <p><b>Demographic reach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of responses</li> <li>Quantitative and qualitative data capture</li> <li>Dialogue and intention</li> <li>Frequency of engagement</li> <li>User experience</li> <li>Citizen satisfaction</li> </ul> <p>3</p>	<p><b>What's the policy background to the challenge?</b></p> <p>The idea of public consultation is not new but has taken a new focus in recent years, emerging initially as part of a plan for Civil Service reform by the Coalition Government in June 2012. The plan sought to establish a 'new relationship' with the public aiming to identify problems, discover new thinking and propose solutions, as well as address consistently declining trust with politicians and political institutions.</p> <p>This ambition, coupled with the current political and economic climate raises some important questions for local authorities that want to involve communities. How do we deliver authentic co-production? How can we unlock the power of public institutions to realise their local economic and social potential? How do we encourage local entrepreneurship? How do we engage communities in their own future? How do we increase trust in government decision-making?</p> <p><b>Have you attempted to solve this problem before?</b></p> <p>We have experimented with a number of consultation methods and tools, some are integrated, others are siloed activities. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Google Forms</li> <li>Survey Monkey</li> <li>'Be Heard'</li> <li>Birmingham Property Services' website</li> <li>Face-to-face informal consultations with groups and individuals</li> <li>Mailshots/newsletters</li> <li>Drop-in consultation sessions at community spaces</li> <li>Drop-in consultation sessions on Teams/Zoom</li> <li>Themed Q&amp;As with keynote speakers</li> <li>Webinars with representatives of community organisations, arts organisations and experts</li> <li>Printed consultation materials</li> <li>Participatory Planning Portal – digital engagement process centred on a 3-D model of local areas</li> </ul> <p><b>Are interdependencies or blockers?</b></p> <p>All Birmingham City Council service areas will need to be engaged to ensure the solution is widely used across districts, meaning data is accessible, understandable and shareable.</p> <p>4</p>	<p>The solution will need to understand and design for a level of dialogue with citizens that improves consultation quality but doesn't unnecessarily burden already stretched resources at the local authority.</p> <p>The solution should enable and enrich face-to-face consultation, not transfer it to solely digital interactions.</p> <p><b>Are there any technologies you wish to explore or avoid?</b></p> <p>We are particularly interested in mobile technologies focused on user experience, augmented reality (AR), mapping and visualisation, education, and dialogue/conversation.</p> <p><b>What is the commercial opportunity beyond a BCC contract?</b></p> <p>The public consultation solution is likely to be applicable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Health</li> <li>Policy Development</li> <li>Commercial property</li> <li>Research</li> <li>Education</li> <li>Social sciences</li> </ul> <p><b>Will the solution need to integrate with any existing systems or equipment?</b></p> <p>Software – BCC's consultation hub ABC GIS – mapping and analytics platform <i>Any to add more?</i></p> <p>5</p>
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# Process Flow

## Showcase Pathway (PILOT MODEL)

### DESIGN THINKING

Local Authority (LA) directorate engagement and design thinking process.

### CHALLENGE ARTICULATION & RELEASE

Challenges boiled down and released to SME community / wider innovation ecosystem in a format they can respond to.

### SMEs IDENTIFIED

SMEs identified with ideas that are already developed and commercialised but could be re-shaped to respond to challenges.

### BUSINESS SUPPORT DELIVERY

Businesses are supported with the space, expertise and facilitated engagement with LA challenge owners to develop their ideas to the quality required to showcase prototypes.

### SELECTED PROTOTYPES SHOWCASED

Showcase to LA (and wider LA stakeholders) on potential solutions developed (and be able to give an indication of the cost for deployment).

### BUSINESS CASE FOR FUNDING

If the LA feels there is a strong enough solution, they can create a business case for funding.

**INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS  
PROCUREMENT MODEL ACTIVATED**

## Direct Pathway

### BUSINESS CASE FOR FUNDING

The LA has already identified funding to address directorate challenges but has not put a tender out.

### DESIGN THINKING

Challenges boiled down and released to SME community / wider innovation ecosystem in a format they can respond to.

### CHALLENGE ARTICULATION

SMEs identified with ideas that are already developed and commercialised but could be re-shaped to respond to challenges.

**INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS  
PROCUREMENT MODEL ACTIVATED**

## Results of DIPS

- 528 companies via Bruntwood targeted LinkedIn campaign over Christmas
- 21 challenge applications (not spread evenly across the challenges)
- Cohort workshops & one to ones will be supported by Turnkey
- Cohort launch day - 24th January
- 3 businesses were matched against each challenge
- 1 business identified per challenge
- Programme showcase day - 27th March
- None procured as yet, planning tool is currently a strong front runner for MVP/procurement

# What is next?

## BCC City As A Platform DIATOMIC

# Project Outputs

1. Provide a structured challenge-based - data rich ecosystem as a means of addressing Public Sector and citizen centric innovation requirements.
2. Stimulate intrapreneurship within Public Sector employees - enthused by engaging with entrepreneurs promoting utilisation of public sector talent to the benefit of Birmingham and beyond.
3. Provide a new mechanism to drive innovation in public sector procurement through the early engagement with innovative start-ups and SMEs developing products that deliver to specific Public Sector requirements.

