Commonplace case study
Waltham Forest Mini-Holland

Customer
London Borough of Waltham Forest

Partners
what if: projects and Project Centre

Engagement
Public realm and transport

Background
The London Borough of Waltham Forest secured £30m of investment in Mini-Holland, a programme to radically improve cycle routes and public spaces across the borough.

Challenges
Highly controversial programme meeting high opposition by drivers and lobbyist groups.

Delivering a borough wide programme in a timely manner, on budget, with a small engagement team.

Reaching beyond the vocal opposition.

Over 5% (15,000 residents) of the borough were engaged over an 18 month period, including large proportion of people aged under 40yrs.

The Waltham Forest Mini-Holland is the most advanced of the three awarded schemes in London.

Engagement upheld by courts following demonstrations and petitions.

Award winning. It has been awarded the Sustainable City Awards 2016 and London Cycling Award 2015.

For the extensive consultation required, Commonplace proved to be a hugely constructive tool in engaging residents and businesses, and easily understanding their need.

Iain Killingbeck, London Borough of Waltham Forest
15,000 residents engaged in 10 different locations over 18 months

Paving the way for big changes to the public realm
Traffic calming; blocking rat runs; improving conditions for walking and cycling - all require large-scale consensus-building. For each area Commonplace collected a clear evidence base to support change, and provided comparative data to inform strategy.

Respond in an informed manner to the public’s voices
By using Commonplace, Waltham Forest adopted a genuinely open approach - which encouraged broad engagement and let all residents see the diversity of views about the Mini-Holland schemes. This was beneficial because it prevented any campaigning group from gaining traction.

Commonplace enabled the Council’s leaders to understand the extent of support and objection, beyond headline-grabbing actions and petitions. This made it possible to fine-tune plans to meet specific local objections and observations, rather than getting swept into a war of attrition with vocal protest groups.

Lea Bridge Road is one of the 10 focus areas of the programme. The initial perception survey gathered 1,010 comments highlighting key concerns and ideas on what people would like to see improved.

57% of businesses thought that better car parking will improve access to their shop, this was not raised as a concern by the people visiting i.e. their customers.

An area where the new scheme has already been implemented has shown a reduction of 56% in traffic levels and increase in walking and cycling, benefitting businesses.

Evidence-based decisions

A strategic tool for senior decision makers
Not only did the project team use Commonplace, but senior decision-makers in the Council, including the deputy leader, also used the analytics to make strategic decisions.

Using Commonplace informs the design team about what the public needs in an area, and allows us to make informed decisions.

Amy Priestley, London Borough of Waltham Forest

Of respondents were either neutral or supported the proposals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Somewhat positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat negative</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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Top 6 Improvements
Respondents would like to see on roads.

- Forest Road
- Church Road
- Markhouse Road
- Lea Bridge Road

The lobbyist’s perspective
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Amy Priestley, London Borough of Waltham Forest

12%
Explain clearly and communicate often

Commonplace made it easy for the Waltham Forest Council to communicate effectively with residents, so that everyone could see what was planned and help to shape it.

The Commonplaces created a strong feedback loop between residents and the Council, informed by attractive infographics to communicate key points.

The amount of technical feedback from residents has been quite surprising! Details like the curb line and height of the curb. People really like to see positive change and that's what we are providing.

Amy Priestley, London Borough of Waltham Forest

Learn more about the scheme on Commonplace

Mini-Holland Commonplaces
https://miniholland.commonplace.is