



User Research Lunch and Learn

Hannah Jackson

November 2023

nomensa

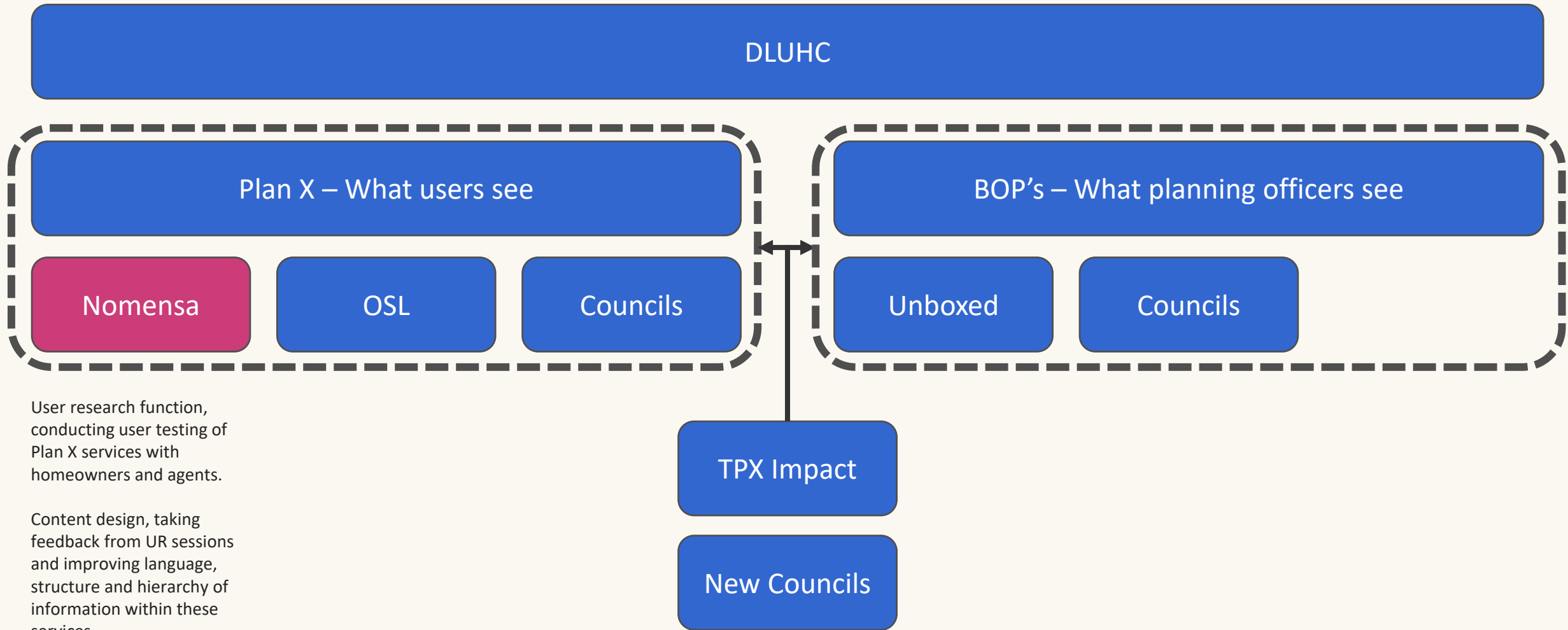
Humanising Technology

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Nomensa

Who is Nomensa?



We're an experience design agency
specialising in evidence-led design,
delivering solutions for clients that
make a measurable and sustainable
difference.



The Nomensa team



Hannah Atkinson
Principal Content Designer

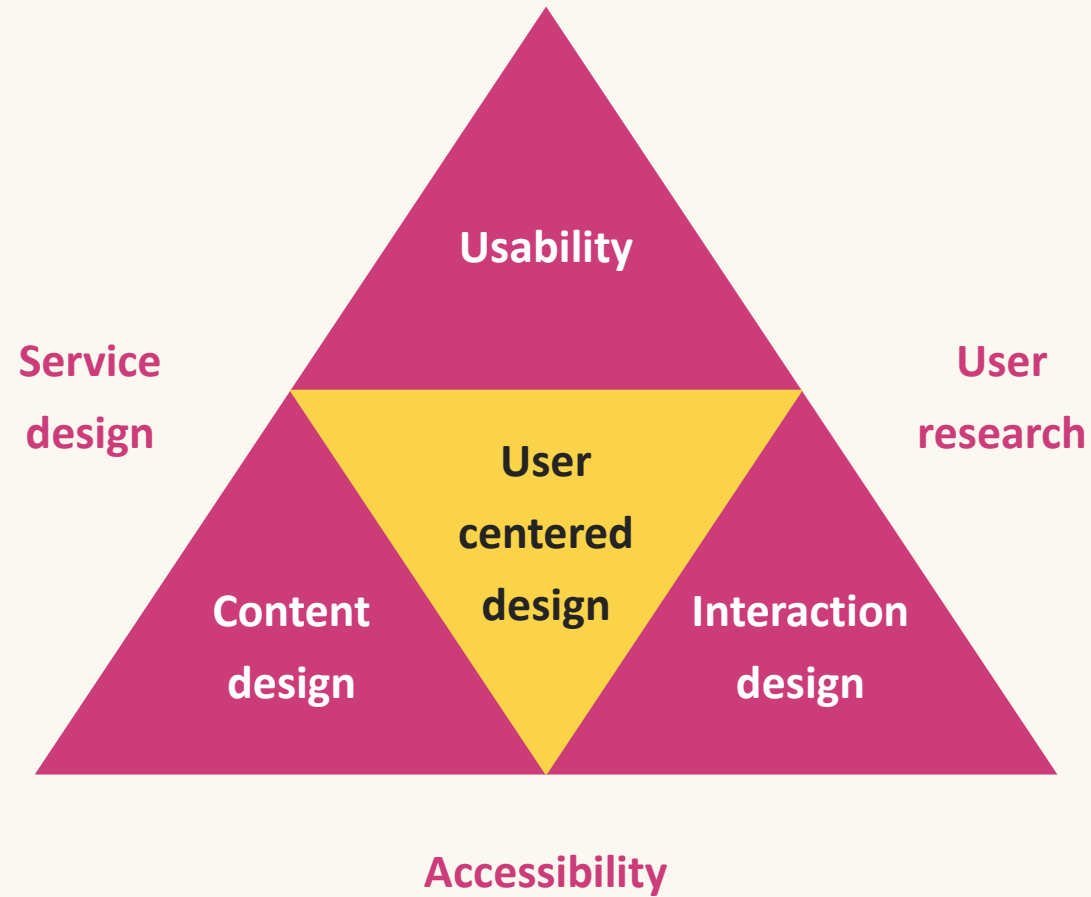


Hannah Jackson
Senior UX Consultant



Giulia Cavallo
Senior UX Consultant

Research informed Design



User Experience (UX) is an end-user's interactions with an organisation's products and services.

User Research focuses on understanding user behaviours, needs and motivations through mixed methodologies.

Methodologies

- Navigation testing
- Information Architecture
- Usability testing
- User interviews
- Quantitative analysis
- Focus groups
- Diary studies
- Guerilla testing
- Expert/competitor review
- Surveys

Moderated vs unmoderated research

Moderated – research conducted with a facilitator present

Pro's

- Probe deeper into user motivations and reasons for their behaviours.
- Allows us to steer users back onto the task at hand if they have veered off course.

Con's

- Moderated research can be more costly, needing to pay larger incentives to participants giving up their time.
- Participants can be more conscious there is a facilitator present and be pushed into unnatural behaviours.

Unmoderated – research conducted where a facilitator is not present, and the participant is interacting with a service/product without prompting.

Pro's

- Can mean we get participants more authentic responses without hesitation.
- Good for collecting data quickly on smaller design changes that don't require further digging into.

Con's

- Does not allow us to understand motivations behind decisions or establish how participants may have interpreted information.
- Participants may not read instructions or rush through.

Do's and don'ts of User testing

Use complicated language

Make the participant feel comfortable

Interrupt

Sit comfortably in silence

Ask leading questions

Remain neutral

Make reasonable adjustments

Take long pauses

Talk quickly

Ask lots of questions at the same time

Give your opinion

Be disrespectful

Do's and don'ts of User testing

Do's

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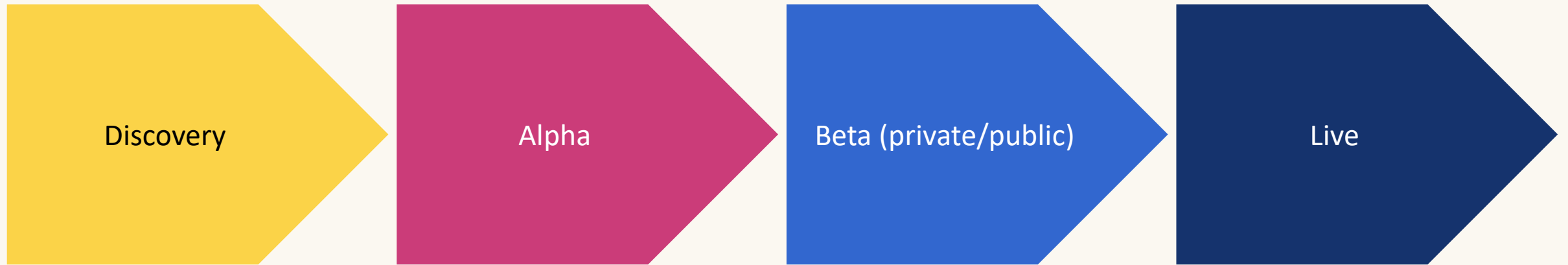
Use complicated language

Goals

UR allows us to:

- Understand users and their needs
- Solve problems for users
- Provide a joined-up experience
- Make services easy to find and simple to use
- Establish whether design solutions will meet user needs

GDS Service manual – Agile delivery



Discovery

Discovery is where you learn about your user's needs and their problems to be solved before committing to building a service.

It is an opportunity to learn about:

- What your users are trying to achieve.
- Any constraints you'd face making changes to how the service is run - for example because of technology or legislation.
- Opportunities to improve things.
- The underlying policy intent you've been set up to address.

Alpha

This is where we test out our riskiest assumptions through testing solutions to problems identified in discovery.

- Alpha is a chance to explore new approaches.
- Often it makes sense just to focus on the areas you think will be most challenging.
- Alpha services should not be available for the public to use.
- By the end of alpha, you should be able to decide which of the ideas you've tested are worth taking forward to beta.

Beta (Private/Public)



This is where you take your best idea from alpha and start building it for real. You will be thinking about how your service will integrate with (or start to replace) existing services and preparing for the transition to live.

- You'll start out in 'private beta'. This involves inviting a limited number of people to use your service so you can get feedback and improve it.
- Once you've improved the service and are confident you can run it at scale, you take an assessment to move into 'public beta'. This involves opening-up your service to anyone who needs it.

The live phase is about supporting the service in a sustainable way and continuing to iterate and make improvements.

You'll also:

- Continue to address any constraints you have identified at Beta.
- Continue to develop the service and work with other organisations providing services that are part of the same journey, so that you are iterating towards solving a whole problem for users.
- Transition or integrate any existing transactions that meet a similar need to yours.

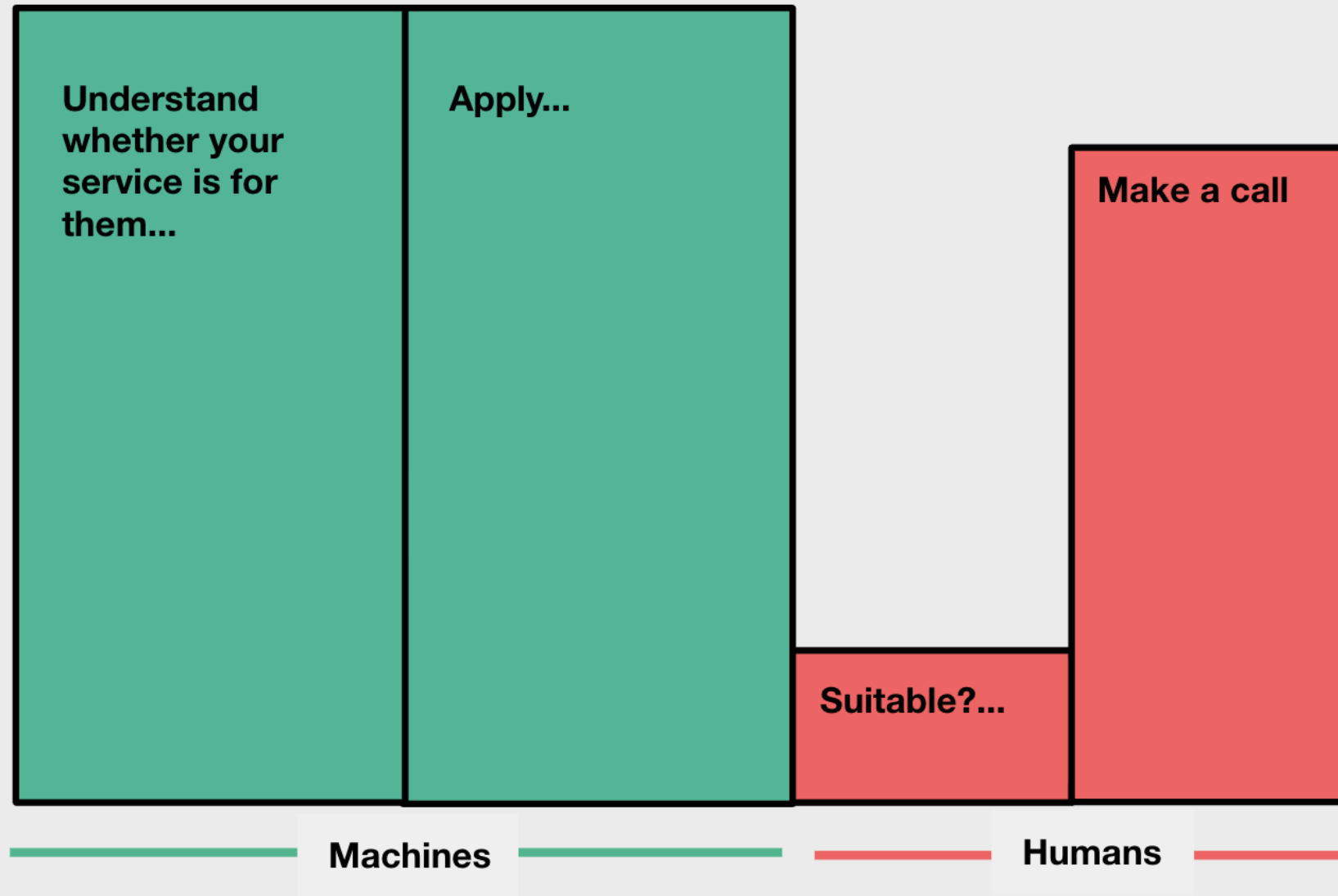
Service Design

**Service Design to users, is simple.
It's something that helps a user to
do something else.**

Designing good services

“A good service helps a user achieve what they need to do” – Lou Downe

- That something is often straightforward (e.g. learn to drive, buy a car, pay a gas bill).
- We don't decide what that service is, our user does.
- It's about working with users and delivering services.

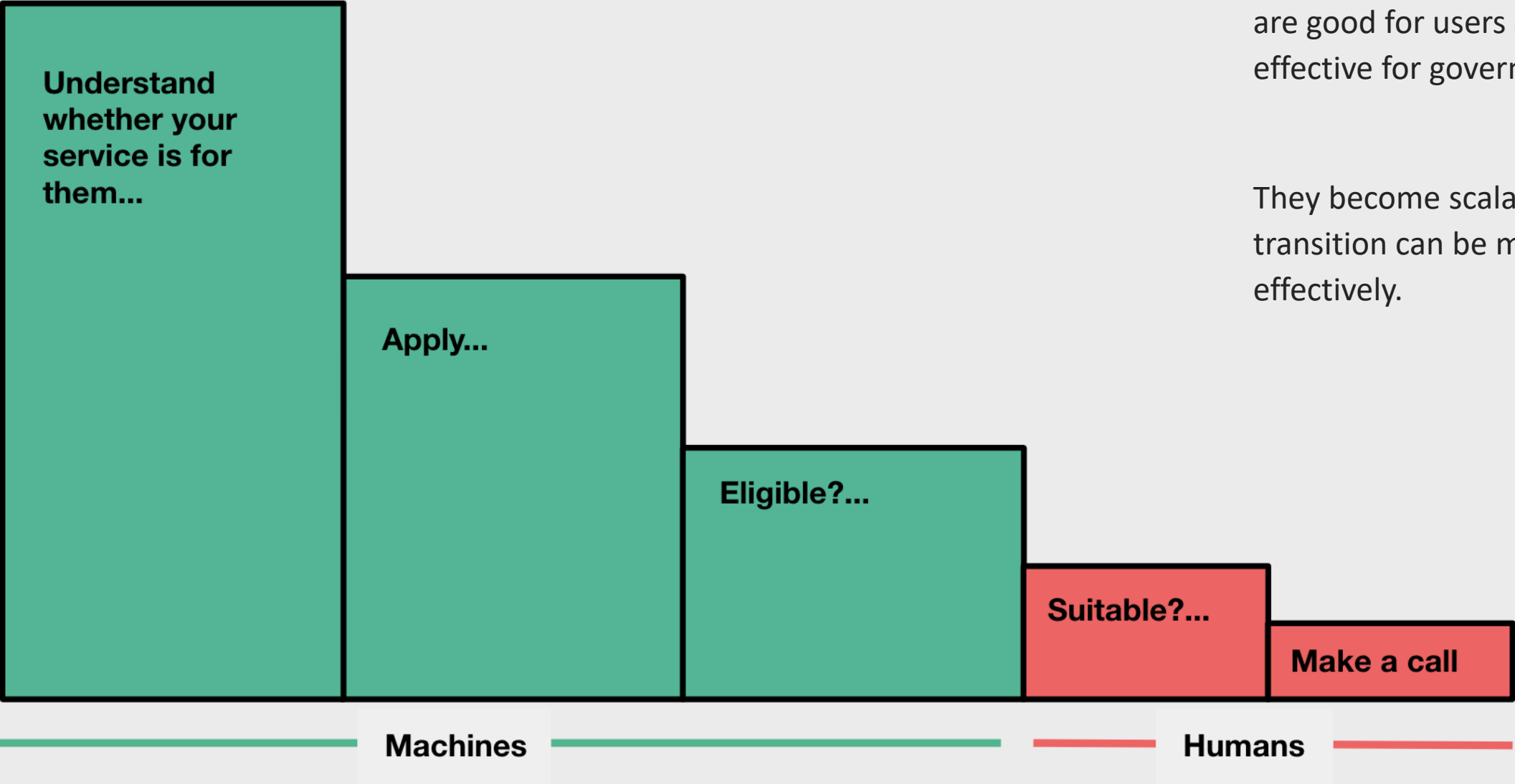


When services are not understood by users a lot of applications are inaccurate, incomplete or invalid.

This will have cost implications and will kill uptake of the service.

Effective digital services
are good for users *and* cost
effective for government.

They become scalable, and
transition can be managed
effectively.



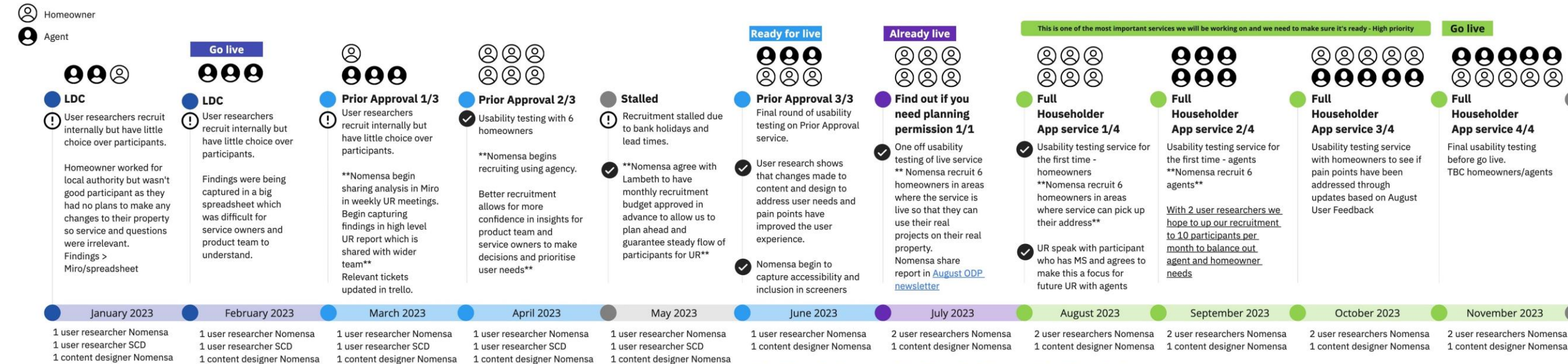
Plan X and UR

Plan X services

- Apply for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) – Public Beta
- Apply for planning permission
- Apply for prior approval – Public Beta
- Find out if you need planning permission – Public Beta
- Report a breach

Timeline of user recruitment

Open Digital Planning/Nomensa User Research



Our process



Plan

- Based on the roadmap and the overarching goals in each phase we plan out research activities that allow us to focus on user needs and service priorities.
- Features within each service are interrogated to ensure they align with user stories, identified in the quarterly road mapping sessions.



As a user using 'Find Out If..' I want to know how much the planning applications I need to submit will cost and what documents will be needed so I can be prepared

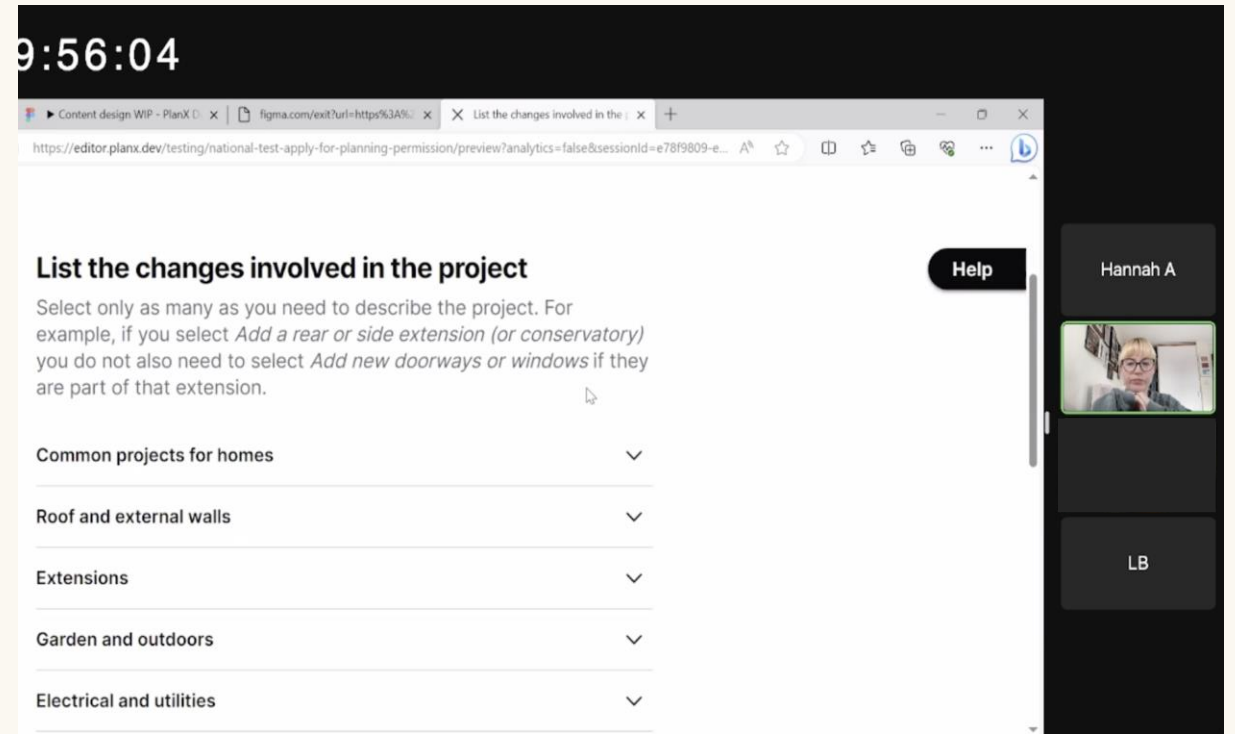
Recruit

- We agree a brief with our recruitment partner based on target users of each service.
- We aim to speak with 5 homeowners and 5 agents per month to represent both target user groups when considering design solutions.



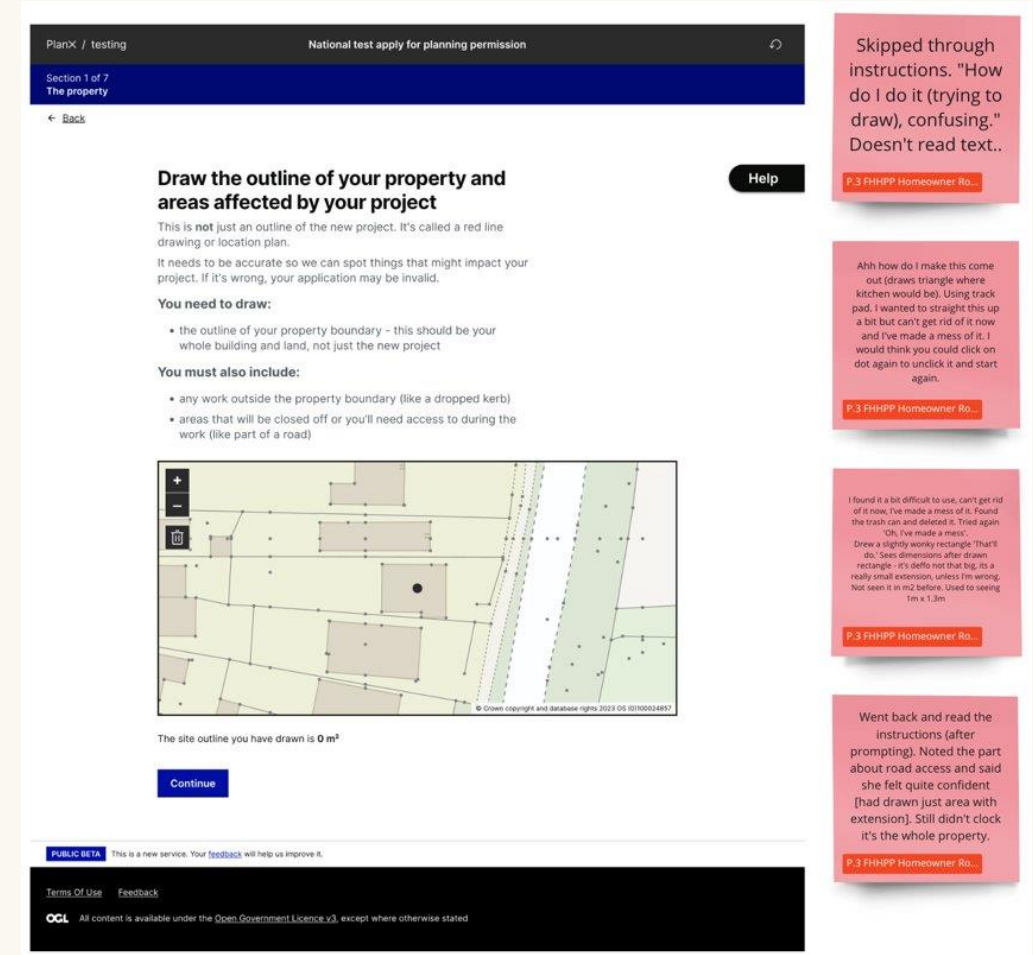
Run sessions

- During these sessions we observe participants using the services while interrogating how useful they find the information on screen; whether the service meets their expectations, can the user navigate through the questions without needing intervention from the facilitator, would they leave the service at any point?



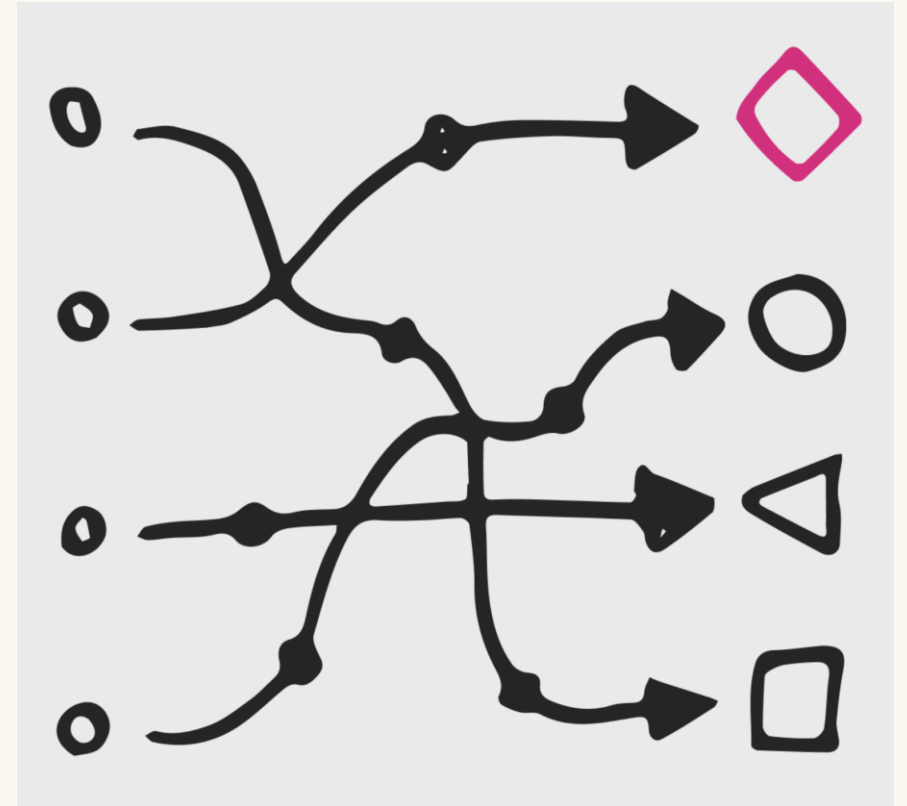
Analyse

- Thematic analysis of feedback and observations across user journeys is done in a shared board.
- We group insights together based on positive responses/common issues with components nested in each service.



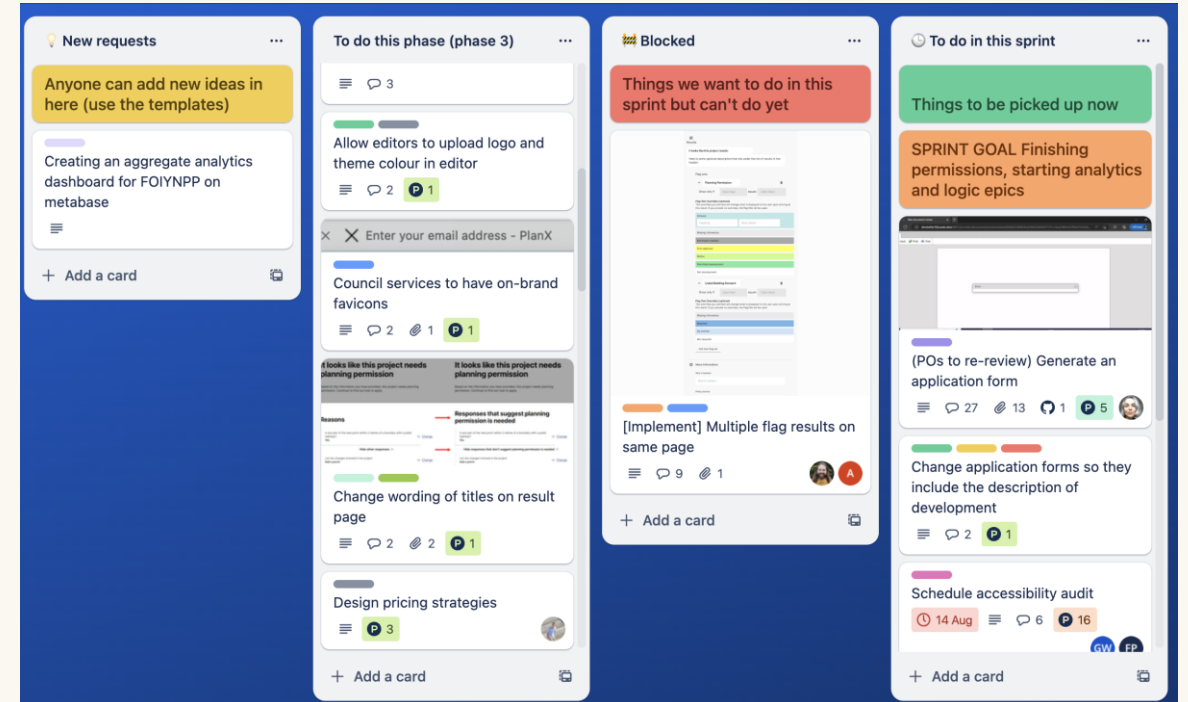
Playback

- We pull all these high-level themes and insights into a report which shows how users move through the service and where they get stuck.
- We include actionable recommendations.
- We then present this back to our core design and development teams, including key decision makers at local councils to discuss usability issues and next steps.



Prioritise

- After we have discussed the outputs from the research we begin to prioritise recommendations, requests for new features and content updates.



Impact of UR on the project

- Advocating for user needs and reflecting these in the product roadmap.
- Sharing user insights from usability testing on PlanX services in the ODP newsletter.
- User insights reflected in sprint planning and design iterations of PlanX services.
- Accessibility considerations across services.
- Identifying opportunities to market PlanX services and promote uptake of new planning applications through behavioural intervention.

Next steps

More Usability testing!

- Next round takes place on the 28th and 29th November with homeowners using the apply for planning permission service.
- Agent testing takes place on 12th and 13th December.
- Look out for our next report in the newsletter and there are opportunities to observe live sessions. Get in touch to find out more!

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Our service capabilities

Strategy

Brand experience strategy
Social strategy

Accessibility

Digital inclusion strategy
Auditing and Testing
Training & Empathy labs

Product Delivery

Agile delivery
Capability building
Leadership & Culture change

User Research

Qualitative & Quantitative
Expert evaluation
Usability testing

Design

Digital brand experience
Product and service design
Content design

Technology

Mobile, Full stack
Solutions architecture
Hosting and support

Data and Performance

Data architecture
Social Media Monitoring
SEO performance
Data analytics

Our experience we provide from across sectors



Thank you

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