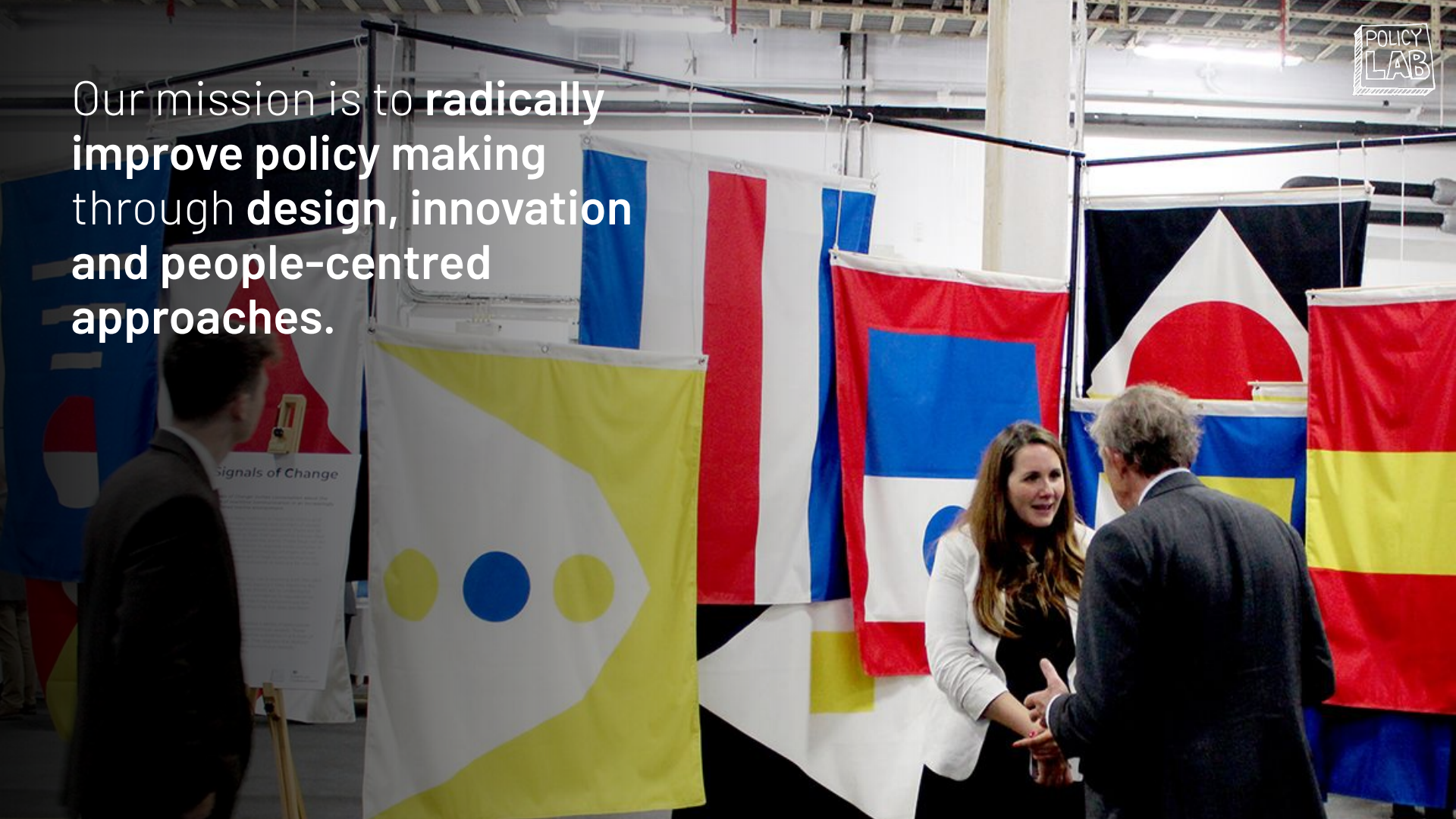




# Prospectus

Our work & offer, 2023-24

Our mission is to **radically improve policy making** through **design, innovation and people-centred approaches.**



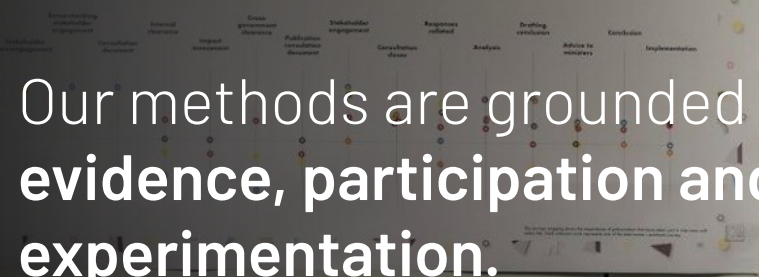


We bring **multidisciplinary expertise** to help teams understand the **present**, imagine the **future** and design ways to achieve the **policy impact** they intend.

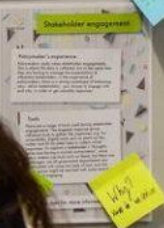
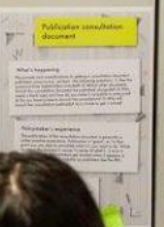
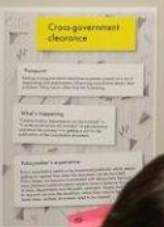
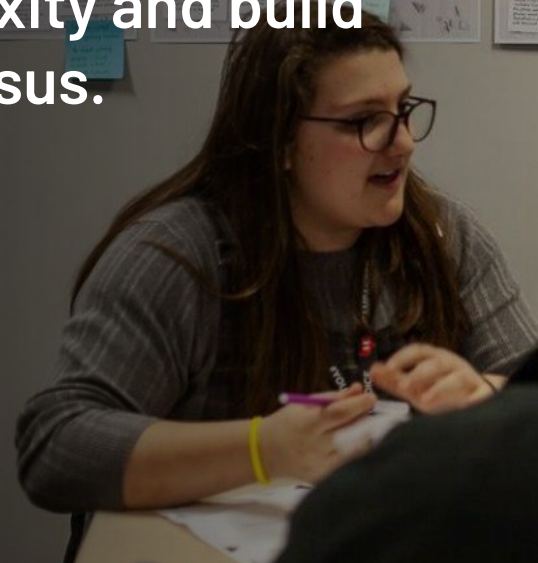
Our methods are grounded in **evidence, participation and experimentation.**

They draw on **diverse perspectives, tackle complexity and build consensus.**

### Government Consultation Journey

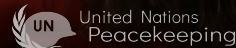
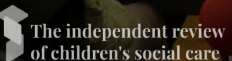
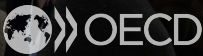
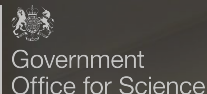


### Government Consultation Journey



# Our work with commissioners

Since 2014, we have partnered with more than **7,000 civil servants on over 180 policy development and innovation projects.** We work across central and local government departments and agencies, as well as with organisations outside of government and internationally.





## Our portfolio spans social, environmental, economic and technological policy

Some of the **180 projects** we have led, include:

- Engaging the public on social housing standards after the tragic Grenfell fire.
- Meeting the needs of parents and carers through early years support.
- Catalysing cross-government working on new insights from fast-emerging genomics science.
- Facilitating stakeholder participation and consensus on a platform for young people to engage in consultations.
- Instigating change in complex systems to improve outcomes for adults facing multiple disadvantage.

# Our methods

*Policy Lab draws on innovative practice from multidisciplinary fields, and adapts a range of methods for use in a policy context.*

# Methods we use

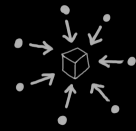
We combine different methods bringing an evidence-based, iterative approach to policy - from understanding the problem to delivering desired outcomes.

The nature of our work is experimental and we continue to seek out new methods for use in the policymaking process.

We can advise which methods are best suited to your policy area.



**Speculative Design**  
Imagining possible futures



**Co-design**  
Collaborative approaches to design new ideas

**Legislative Theatre**

Using the stage to explore new ideas and relationships

**Art in Policy**

Using multisensory approaches to create new visions

**Serious Games**

Experimenting with rules, objectives and relationships

**Moral Imaginations**

Creative approaches to imagine what could and should be done

**Collective Intelligence**

Diverse perspectives to identify priorities, challenges and ideas

foundational methods

experimental methods



**Prototyping**  
Quick, lo-fi designs to test new ideas



**Ethnography**  
Deep insights into users' lived experiences



**User Research**  
Learning from and testing with users



**Systems Mapping**  
Identifying key levers and stakeholders

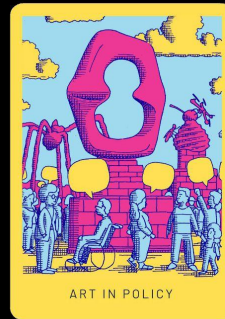
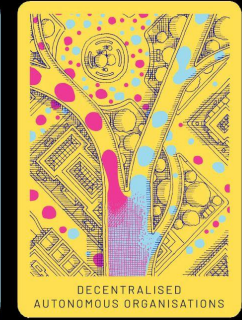
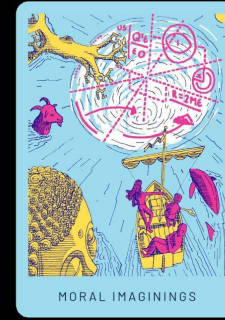
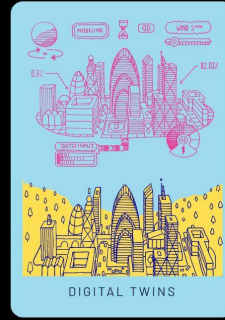
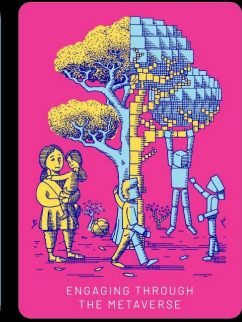
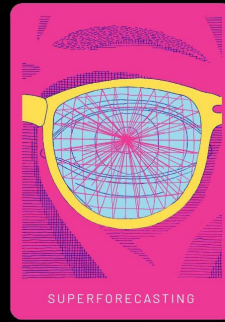


# Policy innovation

Having established the use of non-traditional methods like film ethnography and speculative design in policy development, in early 2022 we published a new [Innovation & Design Strategy](#), setting out 11 experimental policy methods.

Each method is depicted on a card encouraging practitioners to ask questions like: How could art help to bridge science and policy? How might the metaverse be used to engage with stakeholders? Could body storming lead to new, more empathetic ideas?

The last card is intentionally left blank as we discover and test more new methods.



# Our offer

*Policy Lab considers issues at multiple stages of the policy cycle, from defining a vision or strategy, developing and testing policy options, to dealing with delivery challenges.*

# Learning

Our **introduction to policy innovation session** demonstrates the innovation methods you can use in everyday work, as well as building a deeper understanding of when and how multidisciplinary specialists can help.

**Time:** 90 mins

Our **bespoke training sessions** support teams or cross-government groups to apply innovation methods to solving a real problem, while building knowledge that can be applied to other problems in future.

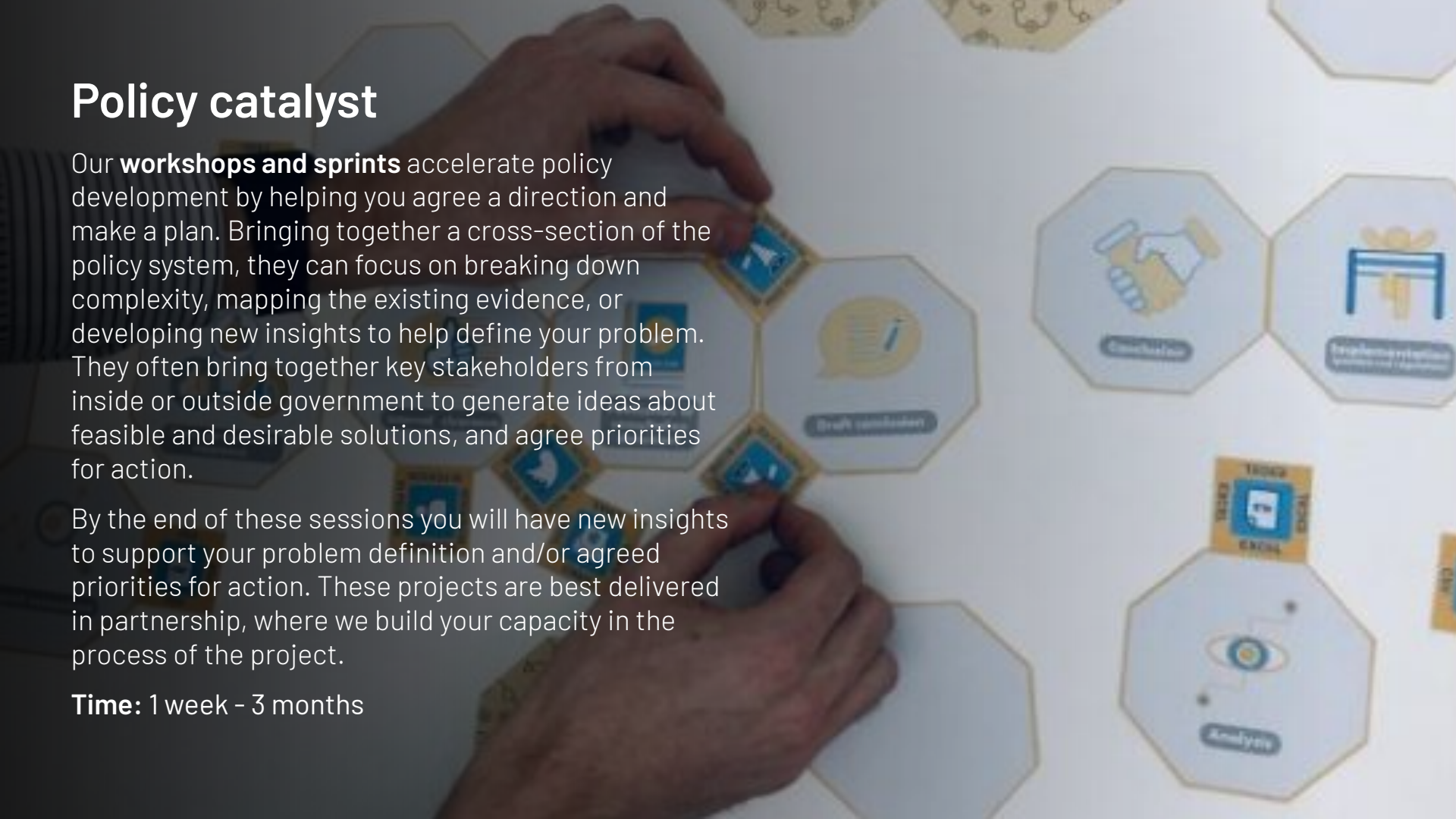
**Time:** 90 mins - half a day

# Policy catalyst

Our **workshops and sprints** accelerate policy development by helping you agree a direction and make a plan. Bringing together a cross-section of the policy system, they can focus on breaking down complexity, mapping the existing evidence, or developing new insights to help define your problem. They often bring together key stakeholders from inside or outside government to generate ideas about feasible and desirable solutions, and agree priorities for action.

By the end of these sessions you will have new insights to support your problem definition and/or agreed priorities for action. These projects are best delivered in partnership, where we build your capacity in the process of the project.

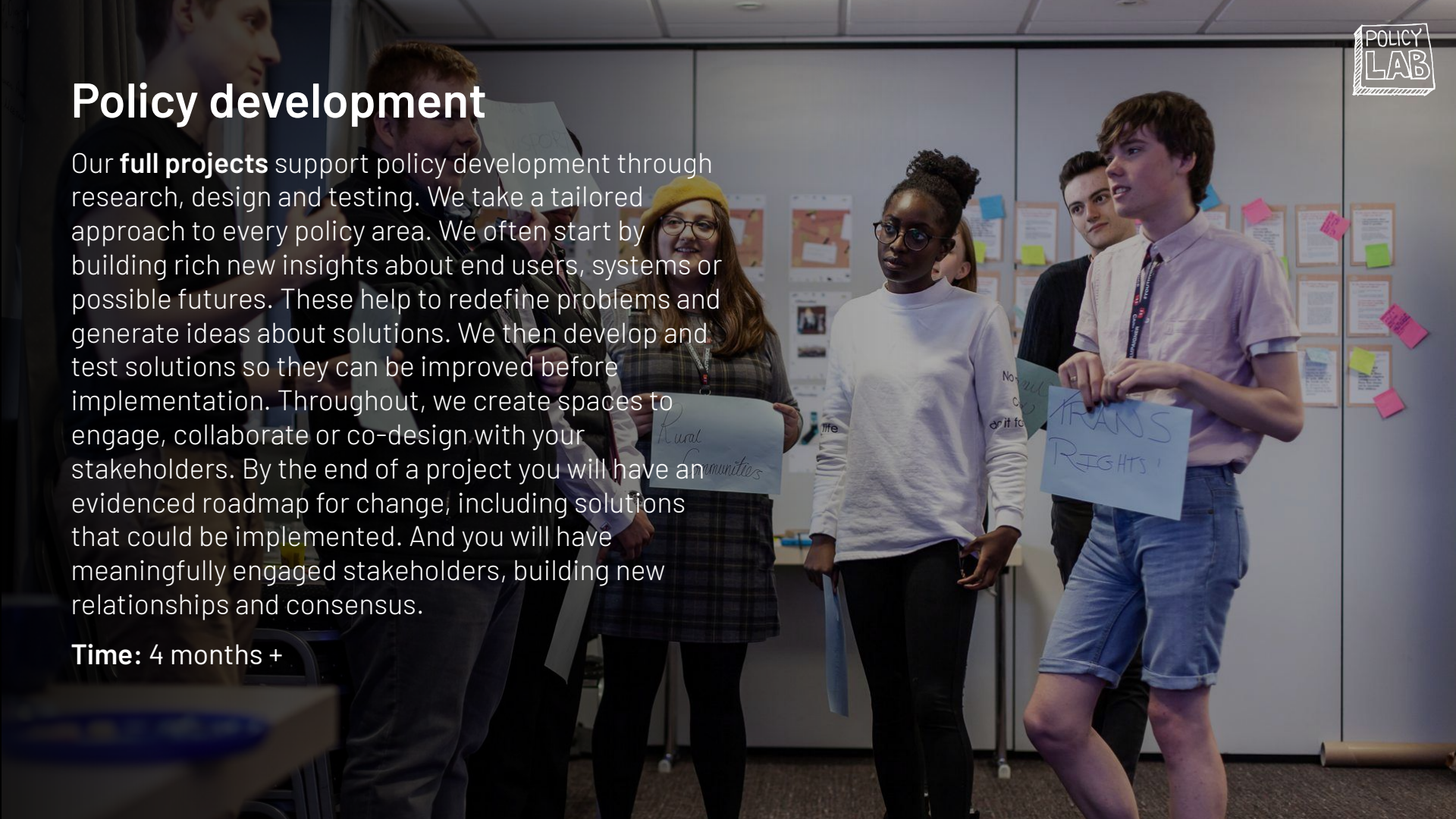
**Time:** 1 week - 3 months



# Policy development

Our **full projects** support policy development through research, design and testing. We take a tailored approach to every policy area. We often start by building rich new insights about end users, systems or possible futures. These help to redefine problems and generate ideas about solutions. We then develop and test solutions so they can be improved before implementation. Throughout, we create spaces to engage, collaborate or co-design with your stakeholders. By the end of a project you will have an evidenced roadmap for change, including solutions that could be implemented. And you will have meaningfully engaged stakeholders, building new relationships and consensus.

**Time:** 4 months +



# Speaking events

Policy and practice experts from the Policy Lab team can be booked for **external speaking events** on topics relating to our work, or our innovation function in government.

**Time:** agreed number of hours



# Partnerships

Policy Lab has always had one foot in and one foot outside of government, facilitating the exchange of learning and adapting innovation methods for a policy context.

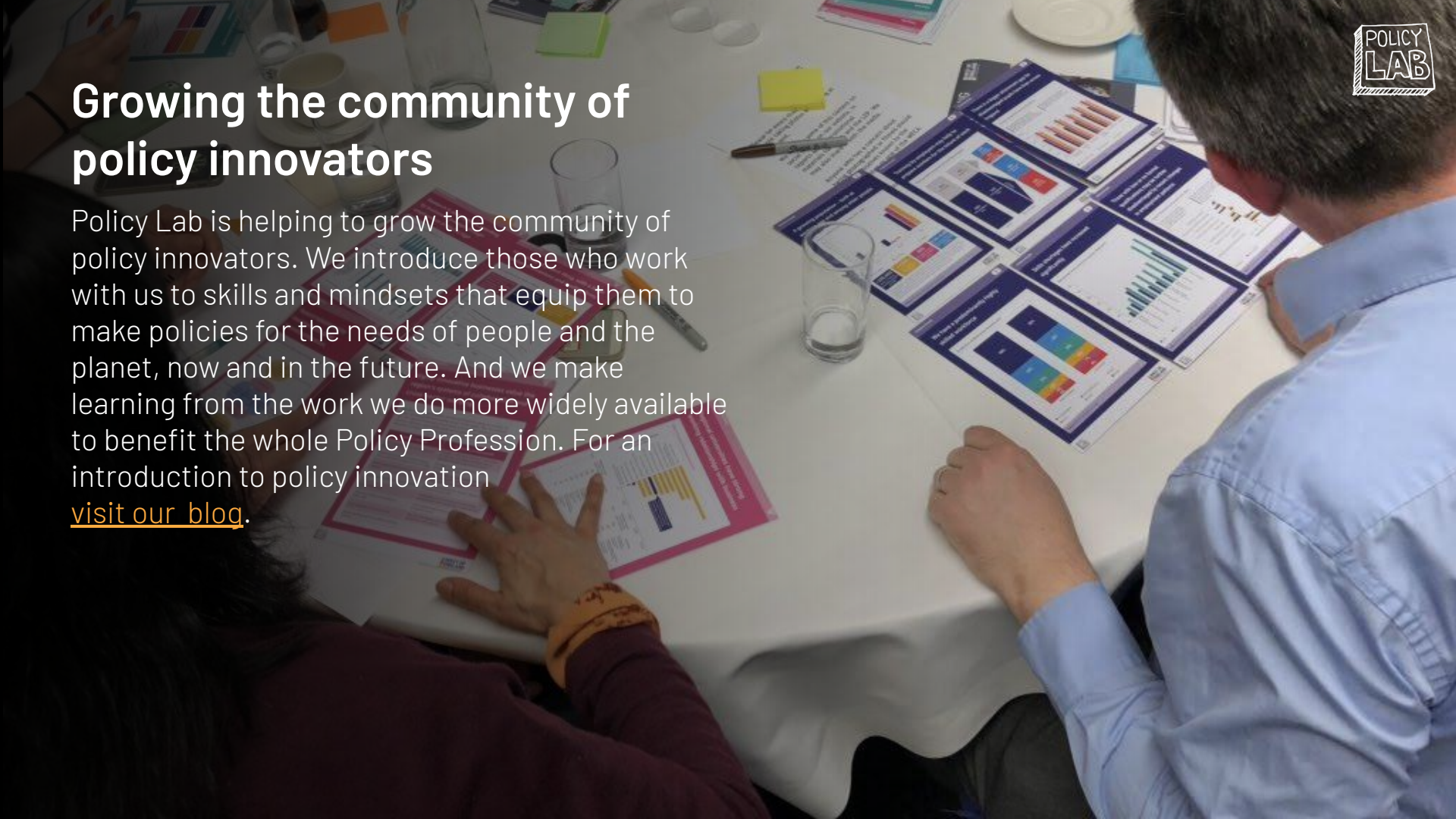
We are interested in **partnering on projects** that bring new voices into policymaking, create learning about applying new innovation methods in a policy context or that harness the power of innovation to tackle emerging policy issues.

If you are interested in partnering with us, please get in touch: **[team@policylab.gov.uk](mailto:team@policylab.gov.uk)**



# Growing the community of policy innovators

Policy Lab is helping to grow the community of policy innovators. We introduce those who work with us to skills and mindsets that equip them to make policies for the needs of people and the planet, now and in the future. And we make learning from the work we do more widely available to benefit the whole Policy Profession. For an introduction to policy innovation [visit our blog](#).

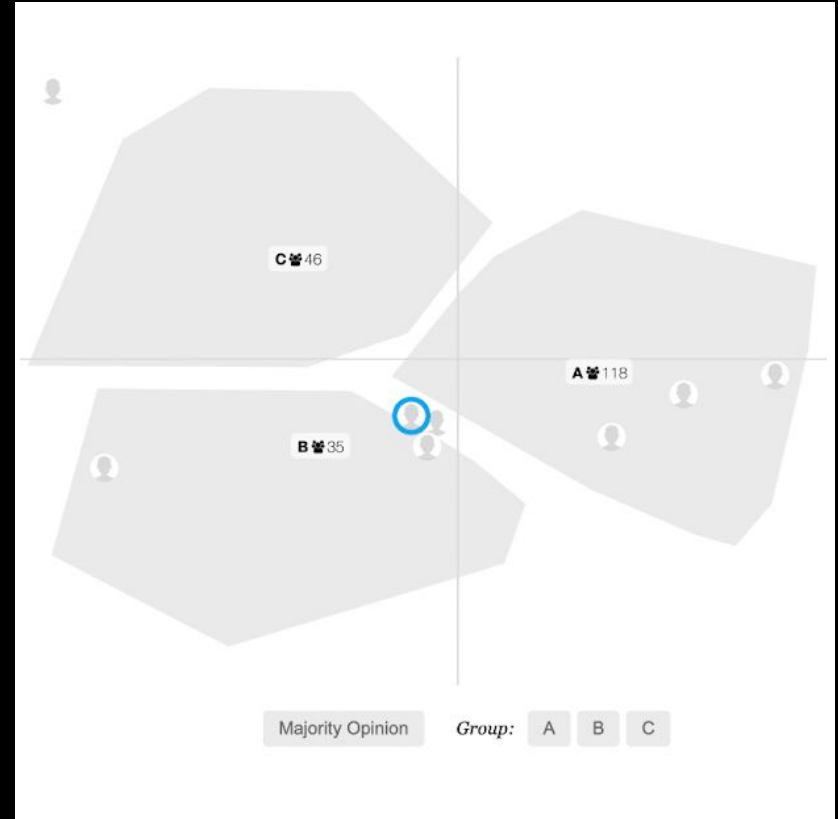




# Collective Intelligence Lab

Our [new Collective Intelligence Lab \(CILab\)](#), launched in November 2021 in a joint venture with the Policy Profession, aims to improve policy outcomes by tapping into collective intelligence - the intelligence which emerges from the diversity of thought and experience distributed across groups of people, from public servants and subject specialists to members of the public.

CILab has been [using an open source software tool, Pol.is](#), to capture diverse perspectives and new ideas, and has run collective intelligence debates on issues including Civil Service modernisation, fisheries management and national security.



*(RIGHT) Opinion groups generated by Pol.is, based on the way participants vote (agree, disagree, pass/unsure) on statements.*

# Case Studies

*We work on varied issues with policy teams inside the UK government, as well as other UK and international partners.*

**Evidence Discovery**

What is the new evidence? We've got a few starting points here, but we need your thoughts.

This evidence discovery presents insights and knowledge from the wider context of Genomics, drawing from opinion trackers to hypothetical applications.

Activities will set a foundation of understanding, dig deeper into animals and identify where there are gaps in our knowledge.

We've changed our evidence into five tracks:

- OPINION TRACKERS
- SCIENTIFIC AND SECTOR TRENDS
- HERITABILITY ESTIMATES AND DATA
- EMERGING APPLICATIONS
- HYPOTHETICAL APPLICATIONS

What do you need to do?

1. You've got a good chunk of time for this activity (30 minutes) so no need to rush. Read or watch content for each of your tabs up, and then comment, add, share.
2. The key activities: Absorb the information presented here. If you have any comments or thoughts that please add them with your notes. We encourage you to use your phone or computer to find other insights/inspiration. Consider the broader policy implications of these insights.

**LEADERBOARD TIP:**  
If you need to add characteristics/features you can do this by clicking on the star of these points/lines in the table of this slide (below the chart and map) or the grid.

3. As you read, reflect on the material and add 'stars' from the banks of dots below to the evidence cards:
  - What do you find interesting and you'd like to learn more about? (green dot)
  - What surprises you? (orange dot)
  - What concerns you? (red dot)
  - What are the gaps in the evidence, areas or things of people are discussing enough about? (add with your ID)
  - What's missing? (add with your ID)

By the end of the session, we will have a series of insights that are key to understanding the challenges and opportunities for policy that arise from the genomics report.

What do you find interesting and would like to learn more about? (green dot)

What surprises you? (orange dot)

What concerns you? (red dot)

OPINION TRACKERS
SCIENTIFIC AND SECTOR TRENDS
HERITABILITY ESTIMATES AND DATA

# CASE STUDY

## Genomics beyond Health

2-day remote, cross-government policy sprint

*How can we... prepare policy so it is ready for the impacts of fast-developing genomics science?*

In 2021, Policy Lab convened policy leads from different government departments to consider this question together. Introduced by Sir Patrick Vallance, Policy Lab facilitated an online design sprint. The process took participants from sharing their hopes and fears about what genomics could mean for policy, to exploring scenarios for the future. We mapped out levers that different parts of government have, before developing and prioritising tangible actions that could be taken now. The sprint created new connections between parts of government, and consensus around next steps.

*"Working with Policy Lab really helped us to bring a relatively unknown area of science and policy to life for our stakeholders. Their expertise in shaping and facilitating an exploratory conversation and using visual tools to help was extremely valuable",* Policy commissioner

## CASE STUDY

# National Food Strategy

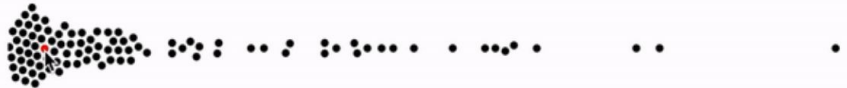
Public Dialogues, developing and testing a vision

*How can we... produce a compelling, inspiring, people-centred vision about the future of the food system which is evidence-based and includes outcomes, activities and characteristics?*

Policy Lab supported the Independent Review team for the National Food Strategy Public Dialogues to develop and test its vision for the future food system with industry, regulators, young people and a representative group of citizens. Policy Lab's innovative and accessible participation methods ensured that people could engage with and share nuanced perspectives on the complex concepts and trade-offs associated with the food system.

Insights from these workshops fed into [The Plan](#) (2021), which identifies priorities for a food system that is healthy for people and the planet.





Consensus statements

Divisive statements

STATEMENT	OVERALL	A 99	
86 There is no hard and fast line between engagement, policymaking and delivery. We need to see them as the same process.	 86% 4% 10% (50)	 86% 4% 8% (23)	 85% 3% 11% (27)

Screenshot of a Pol.is debate



## CASE STUDY

# Listening to the policy profession

Gathering diverse views and understanding people's priorities

**How can we... better understand the sense of identity, communities, and learning needs of Civil Service Policy Professionals?**

Policy Lab's [Collective Intelligence Lab](#) (CILab) worked with the Policy Profession Unit (PPU) to facilitate an online debate with policymakers across the Civil Service, using the open source software tool [Pol.is](#). CILab helped PPU draft initial statements around identity, community and learning to 'seed' the debate, and helped moderate new statements submitted by participants.

We then supported PPU to analyse the data, which revealed policymakers' perspectives on diverse issues they raised as a community. These included the importance of professional development, and unexpected insights such as an appetite to change how career progression works.

PPU found that collective intelligence was a really useful way to anonymously hear from their 'customers', in their own words. The findings are helping them shape the future of the profession.

## CASE STUDY

# Manual for Streets

A more-than-text experience of information, multisensory engagement

***How can we...improve uptake of design guidance for residential roads in Local Authorities and identify what content such design guidance needs to include?***

In 2019, Policy Lab worked with the Department for Transport to improve the use of guidance for street design. We brought together the intended users of the 'Manual for Streets' - street designers, planners, developers, council officials, highways authorities, elected local officials and consultants - for an event at the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT).

At the event we created 'experience stations' for attendees to engage with information relating to street design in different sensory formats. This included a wall of crowd-sourced photos showing well and poorly designed streets, a virtual reality (VR) station to discover international cities, and tactile woodcuts inspired by braille maps.

The event resulted in diverse and creative ideas about the future of the design guidance.



## CASE STUDY

# Windrush Lessons Learned Review

Film ethnography

***How can we... develop recommendations grounded in the lived experience of those of the Windrush generation who have faced difficulties in establishing their status under the immigration system?***

Wendy Williams, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and the Review Chair, commissioned Policy Lab to create thematic films about the experience of five individuals from the Windrush generation and an ethnographic report. These were included as case studies in the [Lessons Learned Review's report](#) and an [ethnographically-led film](#) communicating the experiences of those affected was published alongside the report. This work centred the experiences of these individuals and meant that their stories could be told in their own terms as part of the review process.

*"Your work with the Review has provided an object lesson in the impact ethnographic research can have in promoting changes to policy and, for that, you have my sincere thanks."* Wendy Williams



## CASE STUDY

# Ethnographic research on the future of disability policy

Film ethnography and video diaries

***How can we... gain deep insight about the lived experience of a broad range of disabled people?***

In 2019, Policy Lab was commissioned by the cross-government Disability Unit in the Cabinet Office to help them put the lived-experiences of disabled adults at the heart of future disability policy. We carried out film ethnography with disabled people across England.

During Covid-19, we were commissioned to work again with the original participants. We used remote video diaries and a speculative design exercise, to engage participants and build evidence about their experiences of Covid-19.

Ethnographic films from the project were [published on social media](#) and two [research reports](#) were published on Gov.UK. The research was also used by the [Office for National Statistics](#) as part of their data releases on disability and Covid-19. This work informed changes to government communications and policies on disability.





## CASE STUDY

# Maritime 2050 Strategy

Speculative design

*How can we... design a more meaningful consultation process with stakeholders to shape and test the future vision and **technology strategy for Maritime 2050**?*

Policy Lab supported the Department for Transport to convene over 70 industry stakeholders – including unions, shipping companies, insurers and regulators – to develop and test a shared vision of UK Smart Shipping in 2050. We developed a set of utopian and dystopian scenarios, based on trends and interviews, which were used to test recommendations, build engagement and chart a shared route map.

Policy Lab developed a table-top exercise as a co-design tool to use in workshops. A serious game enabled participants to explore how multiple variables might influence strategic direction and allowed the policy team to observe how different scenarios might play out.

The work helped refine 10 recommendations included in the strategy which was positively received by industry and wider stakeholders.



## CASE STUDY

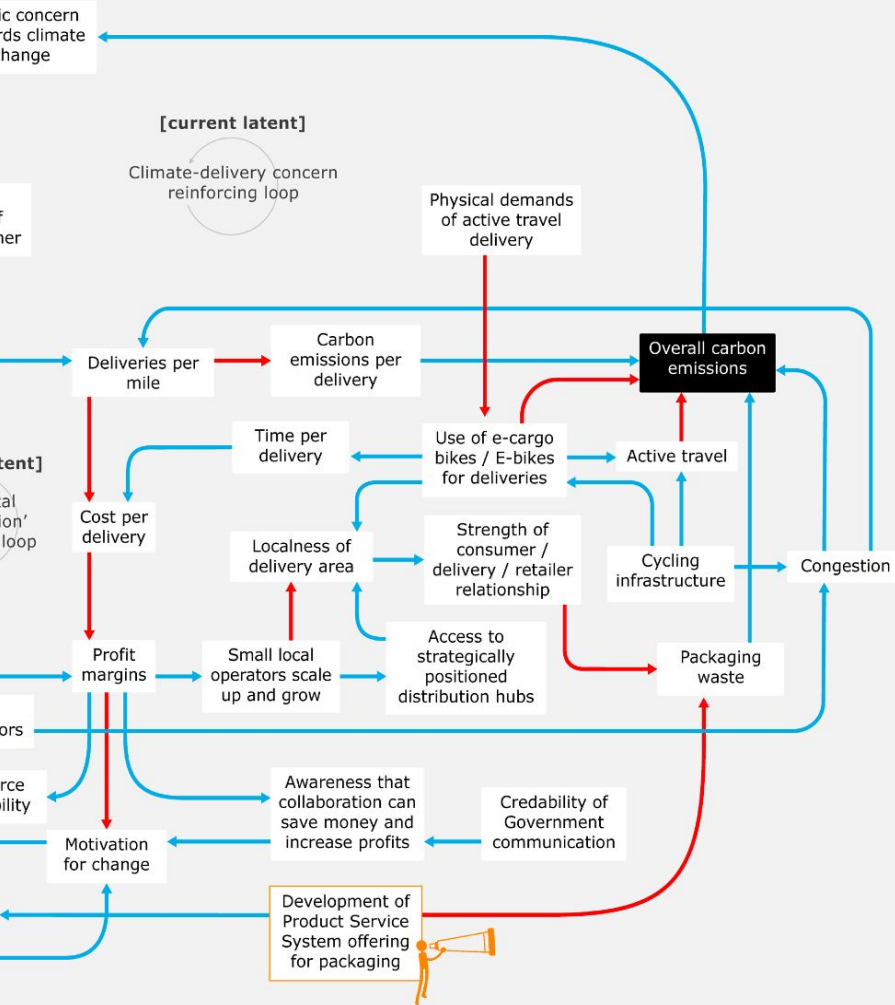
# Achieving Net Zero Last Mile Logistics

People-centred system thinking

**How can we... reduce negative impacts on the environment in last mile supply chain logistics?**

The Connected Places Catapult (CPC) commissioned Policy Lab to identify problems, opportunities, enablers and barriers in achieving Net Zero Last Mile Logistics (LML), from both a human and wider system perspectives, and shape these into challenge spaces to prioritise further investment and development.

By designing a delivery-object centred research process, we were able to build up a picture of the LML system from a micro to a macro level and highlight potential future challenges and opportunities without losing sight of the people involved.





**Email** [team@policylab.gov.uk](mailto:team@policylab.gov.uk)

**Twitter** [@PolicyLabUK](https://twitter.com/PolicyLabUK)

**Blog** [openpolicy.blog.gov.uk](http://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk)

**Slideshare** [slideshare.net/openpolicymaking](https://slideshare.net/openpolicymaking)

**Open Policy Making Toolkit** [gov.uk/guidance/open-policy-making-toolkit](http://gov.uk/guidance/open-policy-making-toolkit)