Podcast Episode

Season 2, Episode 6: Bridget Wilkins, Head of Digital Citizen Engagement, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (UK)
From the ULI's New Real Estate Vanguard

Date: March 25, 2025

00:00:02 --> 00:00:03:	Hello and welcome.
00:00:03 --> 00:00:05:	My name is Robin Marit of Property EU and I'm
00:00:06 --> 00:00:09:	delighted to be hosting this second edition of the Urban
00:00:09 --> 00:00:12:	Land Institute's Vanguard podcast series.
00:00:13 --> 00:00:15:	Now EU and I brings together real estate and land
00:00:15 --> 00:00:18:	use experts from around the world with a clear mission
00:00:18 --> 00:00:21:	to shape the built environment and have a transformative impact
00:00:21 --> 00:00:23:	on neighborhoods and cities and communities.
00:00:23 --> 00:00:28:	And this podcast focuses on that future and that transformative
00:00:28 --> 00:00:28:	impact.
00:00:29 --> 00:00:32:	Now, the You Allies Young Leaders Group recently selected 10
00:00:33 --> 00:00:37:	outstanding young professionals already making waves in the industry, calling
00:00:37 --> 00:00:39:	them the new Real Estate Vanguard.
00:00:39 --> 00:00:42:	And I'm delighted to welcome one of them today, Bridget
00:00:42 --> 00:00:45:	Wilkins, who actually has a very long title, Bridget.
00:00:45 --> 00:00:47:	So I'm going to ask you to say it this
00:00:47 --> 00:00:47:	time, OK?
00:00:48 --> 00:00:49:	Fantastic.
00:00:50 --> 00:00:52:	Great to join this discussion, Robin.
00:00:52 --> 00:00:55:	My name is Bridget Wilkins, official title Head of Digital
00:00:55 --> 00:00:58:	Citizen Engagement at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
00:00:58 --> 00:00:59:	Communities.
00:00:59 --> 00:01:00:	There we go, We've got it in.
00:01:00 --> 00:01:01:	Which is well done.
00:01:01 --> 00:01:02:	Which is quite the mouthful.

00:01:02 --> 00:01:05:	Now, of course, we're gonna come in this discussion to
00:01:05 --> 00:01:07:	what that actually means, what your job entails.
00:01:07 --> 00:01:10:	I know you have some some things to say, some
00:01:10 --> 00:01:14:	very important things to say about digital engagement, citizen engagement
00:01:14 --> 00:01:16:	and how that also effects ESG outcomes.
00:01:17 --> 00:01:20:	For example, you have things to say about getting a
00:01:20 --> 00:01:23:	more diverse skill set into the real estate industry and
00:01:23 --> 00:01:26:	also the role of the UK and Europe when it
00:01:26 --> 00:01:27:	comes to proptech.
00:01:27 --> 00:01:30:	Proptech So before we get into that though, Bridget, seeing
00:01:31 --> 00:01:34:	as you're working in the government, what a year, Let's
00:01:34 --> 00:01:37:	let's be honest, what's a year we've had of complete
00:01:37 --> 00:01:38:	and utter change?
00:01:39 --> 00:01:41:	I mean, I would love to hear, you know, your
00:01:41 --> 00:01:43:	perspective on things as they've unfolded so far.
00:01:43 --> 00:01:46:	I think it's a very good question.
00:01:46 --> 00:01:48:	And I think what what I can say is that
00:01:48 --> 00:01:50:	you're right, it has been a huge year of change,
00:01:50 --> 00:01:51:	but also opportunity.
00:01:52 --> 00:01:54:	And I think both in a government perspective, but also
00:01:54 --> 00:01:58:	across the sector, we're seeing an unprecedented level of change,
00:01:58 --> 00:02:02:	particularly different driven by digital transformation, prop tech and I
00:02:02 --> 00:02:04:	think the evolving skills of the industry.
00:02:05 --> 00:02:07:	Change has almost been the one constant in my career.
00:02:08 --> 00:02:10:	When I we might, we might get to this later.
00:02:10 --> 00:02:12:	But when I actually moved to the UK six years
00:02:13 --> 00:02:15:	ago on a one way ticket to work at CBRE
00:02:15 --> 00:02:19:	in the development advisory team, I arrived here two days
00:02:19 --> 00:02:22:	after Brexit and my job was to essentially convince real
00:02:22 --> 00:02:27:	estate developers to build speculative real estate based on assumptions
00:02:27 --> 00:02:27:	around growth.
00:02:28 --> 00:02:30:	And of course, they all completely dissolved in the first
00:02:30 --> 00:02:32:	couple of weeks that I was here.
00:02:32 --> 00:02:34:	So that kind of set the tone for me many
00:02:34 --> 00:02:37:	years ago around how to operate and still make decisions
00:02:37 --> 00:02:41:	and I suppose adapt in an increasingly changing and volatile
00:02:41 --> 00:02:44:	environment, whether it's politically or across the sector.
00:02:44 --> 00:02:47:	And I think we're only going to see that continue
00:02:47 --> 00:02:49:	to to grow as we look at how technology plays

Time	Text
00:02:49 --> 00:02:53:	an increasing role across the built environment and wider sector.
00:02:53 --> 00:02:54:	Exactly.
00:02:54 --> 00:02:58:	Now I'm sure listeners can already pick up, there's surely
00:02:58 --> 00:03:00:	a twang of an Australian accent in there.
00:03:00 --> 00:03:02:	Could you just tell us about your where you come
00:03:02 --> 00:03:02:	from?
00:03:03 --> 00:03:05:	Of course a little bit about your upbringing would be
00:03:05 --> 00:03:06:	great.
00:03:06 --> 00:03:07:	Great to know.
00:03:08 --> 00:03:09:	I do have a twang.
00:03:09 --> 00:03:11:	I've tried to soften it over the years, but I'm
00:03:11 --> 00:03:13:	still holding on after after being here for six years
00:03:13 --> 00:03:14:	or so.
00:03:14 --> 00:03:16:	So I grew up in Brisbane and I grew up
00:03:16 --> 00:03:17:	in real estate.
00:03:17 --> 00:03:21:	It's a family business, quite calm, all beginning beginnings and
00:03:21 --> 00:03:24:	of course, spending many years as a young child in
00:03:24 --> 00:03:29:	real estate offices and businesses and stamping envelopes and handing
00:03:29 --> 00:03:30:	out keys and answering phones.
00:03:31 --> 00:03:33:	I've vowed never to go into it as a career.
00:03:33 --> 00:03:34:	It was all we ever did.
00:03:35 --> 00:03:36:	And I was going to go change the world.
00:03:36 --> 00:03:38:	I was going to stand in front of bulldozers, in
00:03:38 --> 00:03:40:	front of the rainforest and be the first female Prime
00:03:40 --> 00:03:42:	Minister of Australia and, you know, take on the take
00:03:42 --> 00:03:44:	on the industries and corporations.
00:03:44 --> 00:03:47:	And then I realized actually that real estate does offer
00:03:47 --> 00:03:48:	a chance to do some of that.
00:03:48 --> 00:03:51:	But also it really is, in my opinion, the early
00:03:51 --> 00:03:55:	sector where you can drive real change for people and
00:03:55 --> 00:03:57:	communities at scale and at pace.
00:03:57 --> 00:04:00:	You know, the provision of housing is the fundamental element
00:04:00 --> 00:04:04:	of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, and it's fundamentally what
00:04:04 --> 00:04:07:	many cultures and civilizations see is that key principle for
00:04:07 --> 00:04:09:	community and for social sustainability.
00:04:09 --> 00:04:12:	And so I recognize that actually there's a huge opportunity
00:04:13 --> 00:04:15:	in real estate and, and I should pursue it as
00:04:15 --> 00:04:16:	a career.

00:04:16 --> 00:04:18:	So I went and started the university.
00:04:18 --> 00:04:20:	I really didn't like it at the start.
00:04:21 --> 00:04:24:	I studied a Bachelor of Urban Development, property economics, and
00:04:24 --> 00:04:28:	it really focused on construction and project management and town
00:04:28 --> 00:04:28:	planning.
00:04:28 --> 00:04:31:	And I just wanted to talk to people and that
00:04:31 --> 00:04:33:	was kind of how I, how I grew up.
00:04:33 --> 00:04:34:	And, and so I thought that was, you know, that's
00:04:34 --> 00:04:35:	where I wanted to get back to.
00:04:35 --> 00:04:39:	But I recognize that, you know, there's things like planning
00:04:39 --> 00:04:42:	law and legal law and commercial realities, and I probably
00:04:42 --> 00:04:44:	should learn those things if I want to see how
00:04:44 --> 00:04:46:	far I'm like, I can go.
00:04:46 --> 00:04:48:	And so I took that and I, I sort of
00:04:48 --> 00:04:52:	secured my first role working in evaluation and advisory team
00:04:52 --> 00:04:56:	doing a lot of specialist evaluations around land, around resumption
00:04:56 --> 00:05:00:	CP OS as they're called here, around retail leasing and
00:05:00 --> 00:05:04:	sort of mediations with, with governments and developers.
00:05:04 --> 00:05:07:	And then after a few years sort of learning the
00:05:07 --> 00:05:10:	fundamentals of, of that, I wanted to run, run with
00:05:10 --> 00:05:11:	the wolves, as I say.
00:05:11 --> 00:05:13:	And so I joined the capital markets team at CBRE
00:05:13 --> 00:05:14:	in Australia.
00:05:15 --> 00:05:17:	And we'll probably touch on this later on a point
00:05:17 --> 00:05:18:	around diversity.
00:05:18 --> 00:05:20:	You know, I was one of only a few women
00:05:20 --> 00:05:22:	across all the firms at that in those days.
00:05:22 --> 00:05:25:	That was certainly a, a learning experience and a huge
00:05:25 --> 00:05:26:	opportunity for me.
00:05:26 --> 00:05:28:	And you know, during that time I, I worked hard
00:05:28 --> 00:05:31:	and I, and I was involved in a number of
00:05:31 --> 00:05:35:	major transactions of sort of commercial buildings and, and development
00:05:35 --> 00:05:36:	sites, which was fantastic.
00:05:36 --> 00:05:38:	And again, a huge learning opportunity.
00:05:38 --> 00:05:42:	And then I kind of started to hit whatever we
00:05:42 --> 00:05:45:	want to call it, glass ceilings, brick walls, I'm sure
00:05:45 --> 00:05:49:	we all define it differently and thought it's time to
00:05:49 --> 00:05:50:	jump off a Cliff.
00:05:50 --> 00:05:52:	And so I quit my job, bought a one way

00:05:52 --> 00:05:53:	ticket.
00:05:53 --> 00:05:56:	Somehow I got a job in London, CBR here and
00:05:56 --> 00:05:59:	as I mentioned, I, you know, arrived here in in
00:05:59 --> 00:06:00:	July 2016.
00:06:01 --> 00:06:04:	I might stop there 'cause there's another chapter which we
00:06:04 --> 00:06:06:	can go to maybe later on around how that led
00:06:06 --> 00:06:07:	me to technology.
00:06:07 --> 00:06:07:	Or if you want, I can.
00:06:08 --> 00:06:10:	I'm loving it.
00:06:10 --> 00:06:11:	I'm loving the detail.
00:06:11 --> 00:06:13:	There's just one thing that you, I know that you
00:06:13 --> 00:06:16:	mentioned to me before we, you know, started recording this
00:06:16 --> 00:06:19:	podcast, but you seem like a very commutative, talkative person.
00:06:19 --> 00:06:22:	Well, perhaps this is in the blood because you mentioned
00:06:22 --> 00:06:24:	your father, although he's in real estate, you said at
00:06:24 --> 00:06:27:	the same time he does something else which might actually
00:06:27 --> 00:06:27:	explain.
00:06:28 --> 00:06:30:	He's yeah, he he also does community radio.
00:06:30 --> 00:06:32:	So both my parents have been in real estate.
00:06:32 --> 00:06:33:	They met in real estate.
00:06:35 --> 00:06:37:	And so yeah, that's kind of in my blood.
00:06:37 --> 00:06:40:	I'm talking to people and, and, and I listening to
00:06:40 --> 00:06:41:	people's stories.
00:06:41 --> 00:06:42:	That's really what we always say.
00:06:42 --> 00:06:44:	It's about, you know, people have a problem with housing
00:06:44 --> 00:06:45:	and housing need.
00:06:45 --> 00:06:47:	And if we understand what those problems are, we can
00:06:47 --> 00:06:47:	solve it.
00:06:47 --> 00:06:50:	And yeah, we, when I was growing up, we used
00:06:50 --> 00:06:54:	to literally do dialogue of like contract negotiations and answering
00:06:54 --> 00:06:57:	phone calls and by a negotiations and tactics.
00:06:57 --> 00:07:00:	So like I really got the full spectrum of, of,
00:07:00 --> 00:07:04:	you know, sort of living and breathing it for many
00:07:04 --> 00:07:07:	years, hence why I didn't want to go into it,
00:07:07 --> 00:07:08:	but but it's great.
00:07:08 --> 00:07:10:	And my, my mom and dad both have had very
00:07:10 --> 00:07:14:	different careers in real estate and I think it's definitely
00:07:14 --> 00:07:14:	influenced.
00:07:15 --> 00:07:17:	So do I think the role that that we can
00:07:17 --> 00:07:20:	all have in, you know, enabling the provision of housing
00:07:20 --> 00:07:22:	and just hit, I think bringing that human element to

00:07:22 --> 00:07:22:	it.
00:07:23 --> 00:07:26:	I think, you know, working in London and across Europe,
00:07:26 --> 00:07:29:	for many of us, we have such a unique opportunity
00:07:29 --> 00:07:32:	to work at an amazing level of scale.
00:07:33 --> 00:07:35:	And that's obviously brings some great opportunities.
00:07:35 --> 00:07:37:	But I think sometimes we might forget that sort of
00:07:37 --> 00:07:40:	intrinsic human experience and element of real estate.
00:07:40 --> 00:07:42:	You know, the first time you have the keys and
00:07:42 --> 00:07:45:	you walk into your own flat, the first time you
00:07:45 --> 00:07:48:	get onto the property ladder, being able to downsize and
00:07:48 --> 00:07:51:	move into retirement, being able to, you know, upsize when
00:07:51 --> 00:07:52:	you're growing a family.
00:07:52 --> 00:07:55:	These are all so many key moments in our life
00:07:56 --> 00:07:59:	that real estate allows us to do and to shift
00:07:59 --> 00:07:59:	and adapt.
00:07:59 --> 00:08:03:	And whether we're building, you know, 10,000 built to rent
00:08:03 --> 00:08:06:	portfolios across Europe or new industrial and logistics parks or
00:08:06 --> 00:08:10:	retail super centers, like there is always that human element
00:08:10 --> 00:08:12:	and experience that I think we have to remember.
00:08:12 --> 00:08:16:	And I'm certainly hoping to keep grounding myself in through
00:08:16 --> 00:08:18:	sort of growing up in in that world for many
00:08:18 --> 00:08:19:	years.
00:08:19 --> 00:08:21:	Now Bridget, for those people that are listening in and
00:08:21 --> 00:08:23:	also thinking of jumping on off a Cliff.
00:08:24 --> 00:08:25:	It was a good clip.
00:08:25 --> 00:08:26:	It was a good clip.
00:08:26 --> 00:08:26:	It was a good.
00:08:26 --> 00:08:28:	Clip but just just walk me through this a moment.
00:08:28 --> 00:08:32:	There you are in Australia and then you decide, as
00:08:32 --> 00:08:35:	you said, to just buy literally a one way ticket
00:08:35 --> 00:08:36:	over here to London.
00:08:36 --> 00:08:39:	But then you managed to get this job in CBRE.
00:08:39 --> 00:08:41:	But so for those people that, you know, think of
00:08:41 --> 00:08:43:	taking a risk, how did you go about doing that?
00:08:43 --> 00:08:45:	It was quite calculated.
00:08:45 --> 00:08:48:	I say it quite clearly now, but I, it's hard,
00:08:48 --> 00:08:52:	you know, when you're in comfortable job and life and
00:08:52 --> 00:08:56:	relationships and network and security, change is always, you know,
00:08:56 --> 00:08:57:	very scary.
00:08:57 --> 00:08:59:	And I'm certain and it certainly was for me.

00:08:59 --> 00:09:01:	There's no, there's no denying that.
00:09:01 --> 00:09:03:	But I knew I, I travelled to London a few
00:09:03 --> 00:09:06:	times and I knew there was just something here for
00:09:06 --> 00:09:06:	me.
00:09:06 --> 00:09:08:	I didn't know what it was like this invisible cord
00:09:08 --> 00:09:11:	just saying like, come back, come back, come and come
00:09:11 --> 00:09:12:	and see what's here.
00:09:12 --> 00:09:15:	And there was a few sort of signs from the
00:09:15 --> 00:09:18:	universe I interpreted and, you know, my, my time at
00:09:18 --> 00:09:21:	CBR in Australia was fantastic and, and I really learned
00:09:21 --> 00:09:24:	a lot and I'm very grateful for the team there.
00:09:24 --> 00:09:27:	I, I just, I just wanted to be in a
00:09:27 --> 00:09:28:	different type of pond.
00:09:28 --> 00:09:32:	So in terms of how I got here, I literally
00:09:32 --> 00:09:34:	picked a date, 21 June 2016.
00:09:34 --> 00:09:36:	I had it on my wall, had it as a,
00:09:36 --> 00:09:37:	you know, password.
00:09:37 --> 00:09:39:	It was like in every way that I could remind
00:09:39 --> 00:09:41:	myself I was getting on a plane that day.
00:09:42 --> 00:09:44:	I sent like 300 goodbye.
00:09:44 --> 00:09:45:	Everyone thinks I'm ridiculous.
00:09:45 --> 00:09:47:	I sent everyone goodbye cards.
00:09:47 --> 00:09:49:	Like I'm going, I sold everything.
00:09:50 --> 00:09:51:	You know it.
00:09:51 --> 00:09:53:	I look back and I wonder, like, why did I
00:09:53 --> 00:09:56:	micromanage every single part of my life?
00:09:56 --> 00:09:58:	Because I could have just gotten a plane.
00:09:58 --> 00:10:00:	I didn't have to have an Excel spreadsheet with all
00:10:00 --> 00:10:01:	these filters on color codes.
00:10:01 --> 00:10:04:	But also like I could have just gotten a plane.
00:10:04 --> 00:10:07:	And I think I didn't want to give myself any
00:10:07 --> 00:10:08:	excuse to not get on that plane.
00:10:09 --> 00:10:11:	I didn't want to make it easy to come back.
00:10:11 --> 00:10:14:	Didn't want to have a car or, or anything really
00:10:14 --> 00:10:16:	assets that I could just, you know, I kind of
00:10:16 --> 00:10:18:	didn't know how hard it would be.
00:10:18 --> 00:10:20:	It's like any, any change in your life, you never
00:10:20 --> 00:10:21:	know how challenging it's going to be until you're in
00:10:21 --> 00:10:22:	it.
00:10:22 --> 00:10:23:	And of course, it's been challenging.
00:10:24 --> 00:10:26:	It's also been the best thing I've ever done.
00:10:26 --> 00:10:28:	And so because I couldn't go back to a security

00:10:28 --> 00:10:30:	blanket, that was never an option in my mind.
00:10:32 --> 00:10:34:	But yeah, it's funny the things that you think about
00:10:34 --> 00:10:35:	after the benefit of hindsight.
00:10:35 --> 00:10:37:	OMG I you know, I thought I was a meticulous
00:10:38 --> 00:10:39:	planner, but you absolutely.
00:10:39 --> 00:10:40:	Take the biscuits ego CD.
00:10:41 --> 00:10:42:	With your color coding expert.
00:10:42 --> 00:10:45:	So you come to London, you land this job.
00:10:45 --> 00:10:48:	What do you do at CBRE in London at this
00:10:48 --> 00:10:48:	point?
00:10:48 --> 00:10:52:	And just also, I've noticed from your, say, LinkedIn profile
00:10:52 --> 00:10:56:	that you, you, you seem to have got so heavily
00:10:56 --> 00:11:00:	involved in things like Proptech, for example, and then your
00:11:00 --> 00:11:01:	profile began to rise.
00:11:01 --> 00:11:05:	You were involved in panel sessions, sometimes sharing events and
00:11:05 --> 00:11:07:	so on and so forth.
00:11:07 --> 00:11:08:	That that's what's caught my eye.
00:11:08 --> 00:11:09:	But perhaps tell us a little bit about that.
00:11:10 --> 00:11:11:	So I had a really interesting role at CBRE.
00:11:12 --> 00:11:15:	I was working in the development advisory and management team
00:11:15 --> 00:11:19:	there, so essentially site and land assembly across London and
00:11:19 --> 00:11:22:	taking those sites through that initial pre application and pre
00:11:22 --> 00:11:23:	planning stage.
00:11:23 --> 00:11:27:	So appointing and working with brilliant architects and MEP engineers
00:11:27 --> 00:11:29:	and structural designers and somehow trying to make it all
00:11:30 --> 00:11:32:	stack up with the numbers and go, oh, I was
00:11:32 --> 00:11:34:	not really going to know what else can we do?
00:11:34 --> 00:11:37:	It was great because, you know, it really allowed me
00:11:37 --> 00:11:40:	to understand some of the constraints that we have definitely
00:11:40 --> 00:11:43:	in the planning system and then also the opportunities that
00:11:43 --> 00:11:45:	that London and the UK has to build some fantastic
00:11:45 --> 00:11:48:	real estate and, and sort of outcomes for different users
00:11:48 --> 00:11:49:	in that space.
00:11:49 --> 00:11:50:	It was great.
00:11:50 --> 00:11:52:	I, I learned a lot and you know, my first
00:11:52 --> 00:11:55:	project was cross route 2 and I was like, how
00:11:55 --> 00:11:57:	do I even catch the tube, let alone like work
00:11:57 --> 00:11:58:	on cross route 2?
00:11:58 --> 00:11:59:	So has.

00:11:59 --> 00:11:59:	That been built yet?
00:12:00 --> 00:12:01:	I don't think so.
00:12:01 --> 00:12:03:	I still didn't get the cross route, but like, it
00:12:03 --> 00:12:06:	was really interesting because I think the thing that I
00:12:06 --> 00:12:09:	was just so inspired by when it came, it was
00:12:09 --> 00:12:10:	this level of scale.
00:12:10 --> 00:12:12:	Like you get to work on the biggest stuff in
00:12:12 --> 00:12:14:	London and Europe because there's just so many people and
00:12:14 --> 00:12:15:	you've got to plan for that.
00:12:15 --> 00:12:18:	Crossroad 2 is a 2035 timeline.
00:12:18 --> 00:12:21:	We've got to do the feasibility five years ago and
00:12:21 --> 00:12:24:	even before that, because there's so many stages to go
00:12:24 --> 00:12:24:	through.
00:12:24 --> 00:12:26:	It's a brilliant project to work on as, as one
00:12:27 --> 00:12:27:	of a few.
00:12:28 --> 00:12:30:	And so as I was doing that, I, I recognized
00:12:30 --> 00:12:33:	that there was some murmurs around technology.
00:12:33 --> 00:12:34:	You know, I just could sort of see that there
00:12:34 --> 00:12:35:	was.
00:12:35 --> 00:12:38:	So there's some opportunities there and I suppose, you know,
00:12:38 --> 00:12:40:	sort of working in, in this world for a while,
00:12:40 --> 00:12:43:	you know, you better recognize the role technology has to
00:12:43 --> 00:12:43:	play.
00:12:43 --> 00:12:46:	And I thought there's, there's, there's some things to understand
00:12:46 --> 00:12:48:	here about what, how much impact it's really going to
00:12:48 --> 00:12:48:	have.
00:12:48 --> 00:12:51:	This was like 6 years ago alongside this, like I
00:12:51 --> 00:12:54:	had no network when I moved here.
00:12:54 --> 00:12:54:	I moved here.
00:12:54 --> 00:12:57:	I didn't know a single person, like no family, no
00:12:57 --> 00:12:57:	friends.
00:12:59 --> 00:13:02:	And so I really focused on building my network alongside,
00:13:02 --> 00:13:06:	you know, working and, and try and understand what, what
00:13:06 --> 00:13:09:	tech could, could, you know, play a part in that.
00:13:09 --> 00:13:12:	And so I got started getting involved in the industry
00:13:12 --> 00:13:14:	and put my hand up and volunteer for things and
00:13:14 --> 00:13:16:	be that, you know, awkward person who says, I'll do
00:13:16 --> 00:13:17:	it, I'll do it.
00:13:17 --> 00:13:19:	And I just to make some friends really and see
00:13:19 --> 00:13:20:	where that goes.

00:13:21 --> 00:13:23:	And a friend of mine from CBRE was running a
00:13:23 --> 00:13:27:	brilliant program called Pier 20, which I'm going to plug
00:13:27 --> 00:13:28:	now the listeners.
00:13:28 --> 00:13:30:	And it's a it's a great program where we, you
00:13:30 --> 00:13:33:	know, we bring people together across the dinner series and
00:13:33 --> 00:13:35:	really try and build different types of relationships across the
00:13:35 --> 00:13:36:	industry.
00:13:36 --> 00:13:38:	And that definitely helped me almost as a vehicle to
00:13:38 --> 00:13:41:	build my own network and also meet some brilliant people,
00:13:41 --> 00:13:43:	some of who worked in the prop tech space and
00:13:43 --> 00:13:44:	some who didn't.
00:13:45 --> 00:13:47:	And so as my time at CBR evolved and I
00:13:47 --> 00:13:50:	was becoming more and more more involved in technology, I
00:13:50 --> 00:13:53:	got involved in the Urban Land Institute tech tech steering
00:13:53 --> 00:13:56:	committee, which again was great really to people around the
00:13:56 --> 00:13:56:	table.
00:13:56 --> 00:13:58:	And we would say, you know, what are we, what
00:13:58 --> 00:13:59:	is prop tech?
00:13:59 --> 00:14:00:	Where is it going to go?
00:14:00 --> 00:14:02:	What are we going to do having to respond to
00:14:02 --> 00:14:03:	it and that kind of pick things off.
00:14:03 --> 00:14:06:	And so that, you know, led to another thing where
00:14:06 --> 00:14:09:	I got involved in CBR UK innovation board.
00:14:09 --> 00:14:11:	I remember the time being around the table.
00:14:11 --> 00:14:14:	I think I was the only one there under 30
00:14:14 --> 00:14:16:	and I had some questions.
00:14:16 --> 00:14:17:	It was great.
00:14:17 --> 00:14:19:	But I think there was a definitely a piece around,
00:14:19 --> 00:14:21:	you know, that diversity of skills and age trying to
00:14:21 --> 00:14:22:	bring to it.
00:14:22 --> 00:14:24:	So that for me was a good opportunity, a bit
00:14:24 --> 00:14:27:	of horizon scanning of seeing what's coming down down the
00:14:27 --> 00:14:29:	pipeline and and where there's real opportunities.
00:14:30 --> 00:14:33:	And alongside that I, I met Savannah Discovery, who was
00:14:33 --> 00:14:36:	the founder, still is the founder of a prop tech
00:14:36 --> 00:14:40:	company called built ID through AP 20 dinner that I
00:14:40 --> 00:14:41:	was hosting with, with Lorna.
00:14:42 --> 00:14:44:	And I remember she told me about both ID and
00:14:44 --> 00:14:47:	give my view the, the platform that she was developing
00:14:47 --> 00:14:48:	at the time with the team.
00:14:49 --> 00:14:51:	And we had a conversation around it.
00:14:51 --> 00:14:53:	She showed me sort of the prototype.

00:14:53 --> 00:14:54:	It was yet to launch.
00:14:54 --> 00:14:57:	And there I was trying to send the prop tech
00:14:57 --> 00:15:00:	sector and see what those real gaps were and see
00:15:00 --> 00:15:04:	what role I might play in advising clients and everything.
00:15:04 --> 00:15:06:	I'd go work at a startup purely because of the
00:15:06 --> 00:15:07:	visa that I had.
00:15:07 --> 00:15:09:	I had to sort of be sponsored by a by
00:15:09 --> 00:15:10:	a company.
00:15:10 --> 00:15:12:	And I just said, well, I'll be involved because I'm
00:15:12 --> 00:15:14:	curious and I want to know more.
00:15:14 --> 00:15:15:	And they'll never forget.
00:15:16 --> 00:15:18:	Savannah showed me the prototype, forgive my view.
00:15:18 --> 00:15:21:	And I thought, this is going to change the world.
00:15:22 --> 00:15:25:	So what I'm hearing is you had no mates basically
00:15:25 --> 00:15:26:	and you volunteered for everything.
00:15:26 --> 00:15:28:	It just happened to be prop tech.
00:15:28 --> 00:15:30:	And this is, it seems like it's, it's grown on
00:15:30 --> 00:15:30:	you.
00:15:30 --> 00:15:33:	And then after, out of all of this, your journey
00:15:33 --> 00:15:36:	you described so far, you end up, as we've said,
00:15:36 --> 00:15:38:	working for the British government, right?
00:15:39 --> 00:15:40:	You landed this role.
00:15:40 --> 00:15:42:	Now I'm gonna ask you to say your title again
00:15:42 --> 00:15:43:	one more time.
00:15:43 --> 00:15:45:	And this is the time where you actually get to
00:15:46 --> 00:15:47:	explain what this means.
00:15:47 --> 00:15:48:	What is the role about?
00:15:48 --> 00:15:48:	Fantastic.
00:15:48 --> 00:15:51:	So my title is head of digital citizen engagement for
00:15:51 --> 00:15:54:	the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
00:15:54 --> 00:15:56:	Here we go got it.
00:15:57 --> 00:15:58:	It's a bit of a mouthful.
00:15:58 --> 00:15:59:	It's a really exciting role.
00:15:59 --> 00:16:02:	So I might just do a quick bridge from the
00:16:02 --> 00:16:05:	the previous story, but when I was end up working
00:16:05 --> 00:16:08:	at built Idi was working with Savannah team to scale
00:16:08 --> 00:16:12:	their prop tech platform give my view, which essentially is
00:16:12 --> 00:16:16:	a digital citizen engagement tool working with developers, public and
00:16:16 --> 00:16:20:	private sector on how we can engage communities in the
00:16:20 --> 00:16:22:	plan making and development process.
00:16:22 --> 00:16:24:	And that was a brilliant, a brilliant position and a

00:16:24 --> 00:16:25:	brilliant team and products.
00:16:25 --> 00:16:28:	And we certainly scaled it across the UK and into
00:16:28 --> 00:16:32:	Ireland and probably a different story for a different question.
00:16:32 --> 00:16:35:	But I sort of recognize that there was a real
00:16:35 --> 00:16:39:	opportunity to to drive us even further scale an opportunity.
00:16:39 --> 00:16:42:	And there's a role that legislation has to play in
00:16:42 --> 00:16:44:	supporting scaling of prop tech across the UK.
00:16:45 --> 00:16:47:	And there was a role that government can play in
00:16:48 --> 00:16:51:	hopefully stimulating a more diverse and recently an ecosystem of
00:16:51 --> 00:16:55:	prop tech supplies, ultimately driven by local government demand.
00:16:56 --> 00:16:58:	So that's kind of the the recognition I was having
00:16:58 --> 00:16:59:	at the time.
00:16:59 --> 00:17:01:	And then this role came up and I thought, wow,
00:17:01 --> 00:17:03:	maybe I should go for this.
00:17:03 --> 00:17:06:	Like this is this is one of those roles where
00:17:06 --> 00:17:07:	it won't happen again.
00:17:07 --> 00:17:08:	And it's the first time it's happening.
00:17:08 --> 00:17:11:	And then, yeah, I think the curiosity got the better
00:17:11 --> 00:17:13:	of me and the ambition I had to see, you
00:17:13 --> 00:17:16:	know, what is the real potential for central government and
00:17:16 --> 00:17:19:	prop tech to to work together with local authority demand
00:17:19 --> 00:17:22:	across, you know, more than 300 councils in the country.
00:17:22 --> 00:17:23:	It's huge potential.
00:17:24 --> 00:17:27:	And so I started in the role just over 12
00:17:27 --> 00:17:30:	months ago and it's been an amazing experience.
00:17:30 --> 00:17:34:	Essentially, to come back to your question, my focus is
00:17:34 --> 00:17:38:	on how we build a self-sustaining ecosystem in the UK
00:17:38 --> 00:17:39:	around prop tech.
00:17:39 --> 00:17:43:	Let's focus now on digital citizen engagement because that's a
00:17:43 --> 00:17:46:	critical part of the planning system that is, that is
00:17:46 --> 00:17:51:	broken often when buildings and roads and hospitals infrastructure is
00:17:51 --> 00:17:51:	built.
00:17:51 --> 00:17:53:	You know, people living around that are the last to
00:17:53 --> 00:17:54:	hear about it.
00:17:54 --> 00:17:55:	You might get a litter in the mail.
00:17:56 --> 00:17:59:	You might see an advertisement in the in the newspaper,
00:17:59 --> 00:18:00:	but often it's in English.
00:18:01 --> 00:18:04:	It's designed to tell you what's happening, but not really
00:18:04 --> 00:18:05:	for you to engage.

00:18:05 --> 00:18:08:	And people have been trying for a long time and
00:18:08 --> 00:18:11:	spending a lot of investment in community engagement, but it's
00:18:11 --> 00:18:13:	being in quite an analogue approach.
00:18:13 --> 00:18:17:	And so there's a really interesting opportunity for technology part
00:18:17 --> 00:18:20:	of that approach to bring more people into that conversation
00:18:20 --> 00:18:23:	around change and to have a more inclusive experience for
00:18:23 --> 00:18:24:	the wider community.
00:18:24 --> 00:18:27:	Whether they're in the rental market, whether they're in a
00:18:27 --> 00:18:30:	different language, whether they're transient, whether they're in a different
00:18:30 --> 00:18:31:	demographic.
00:18:31 --> 00:18:34:	You know, we should be hearing from all people around
00:18:34 --> 00:18:37:	what change means for them in a planning and housing
00:18:37 --> 00:18:40:	context and hopefully use that to not only inform but
00:18:40 --> 00:18:42:	de risk that planning process.
00:18:42 --> 00:18:45:	And so that's kind of the space that we're playing
00:18:45 --> 00:18:48:	in a digital planning where we're looking at how we
00:18:48 --> 00:18:52:	can support local authorities to pilot a range of digital
00:18:52 --> 00:18:57:	solutions to consulting their residents across a different huge broad
00:18:57 --> 00:19:00:	of huge, huge range of planning projects and see, see
00:19:00 --> 00:19:03:	what we learn from that and where it goes.
00:19:03 --> 00:19:06:	And so as I mentioned, we're focusing right now on
00:19:06 --> 00:19:08:	consultation as it is an engagement, but recognise there are
00:19:09 --> 00:19:11:	other opportunities in the wider prop tech ecosystem that we
00:19:11 --> 00:19:13:	love to see how we can support as well.
00:19:14 --> 00:19:16:	Yes, I was just going to ask you about that,
00:19:16 --> 00:19:18:	actually bring it down to the practical level.
00:19:18 --> 00:19:20:	You know, what is it that you and your team
00:19:20 --> 00:19:21:	are actually doing on the ground?
00:19:22 --> 00:19:24:	It's it's, it's about engagement.
00:19:24 --> 00:19:26:	So I, I guess I'm just sat here wondering, is
00:19:26 --> 00:19:28:	there any engagement out there?
00:19:28 --> 00:19:31:	Who are you trying to engage and is that engagement
00:19:31 --> 00:19:33:	actually being generated?
00:19:33 --> 00:19:33:	Shall we?
00:19:33 --> 00:19:35:	Say it's a, it's a good question, something that we're
00:19:35 --> 00:19:36:	thinking about all the time.
00:19:36 --> 00:19:39:	So at a practical level, in the last 12 months
00:19:39 --> 00:19:42:	we've been able to fund 45 local authorities across the
00:19:42 --> 00:19:44:	UK to go and invest in a range of prop

00:19:44 --> 00:19:48:	tech solutions and services to then engage communities again on
00:19:48 --> 00:19:49:	a range of projects.
00:19:49 --> 00:19:53:	So whereas S is Plymouth, whereas Plymouth, whereas north of
00:19:53 --> 00:19:57:	Liverpool, we're working on public realm and nighttime strategy, infrastructure
00:19:57 --> 00:20:02:	development, state regeneration, local plans, strategic master plans, garden communities,
00:20:02 --> 00:20:04:	low traffic neighborhoods.
00:20:04 --> 00:20:06:	We're kind of trying to touch as many areas of
00:20:06 --> 00:20:09:	where planning is involved as possible, both from a that's
00:20:09 --> 00:20:12:	a true requirement, but also an opportunity to sort of
00:20:12 --> 00:20:16:	reinvent different areas where communities and build environment interact.
00:20:16 --> 00:20:19:	And so we've funded 45 local authorities who then have
00:20:19 --> 00:20:21:	been on a part of these solutions.
00:20:21 --> 00:20:24:	And across these platforms, we've seen a huge increase in
00:20:24 --> 00:20:25:	response.
00:20:25 --> 00:20:27:	So we worked with Cotswolds Council and they had 6
00:20:27 --> 00:20:31:	1/2 thousand people respond to their local plan consultation, which
00:20:31 --> 00:20:34:	completely surpassed their previous benchmarks.
00:20:35 --> 00:20:38:	We've had councils get 2-3, four, 100% times higher level
00:20:38 --> 00:20:41:	of responses because they're using digital to go to the
00:20:41 --> 00:20:45:	people rather than assuring that people will come to them
00:20:45 --> 00:20:47:	in in town halls and that sort of stand up
00:20:47 --> 00:20:48:	events.
00:20:49 --> 00:20:51:	And what's been really interesting is a space of where
00:20:51 --> 00:20:52:	digital and physical meet.
00:20:52 --> 00:20:53:	It's that hybrid experience.
00:20:53 --> 00:20:56:	So you might again go to the people, You might
00:20:56 --> 00:21:00:	go to a farmers market or a community networking events,
00:21:00 --> 00:21:03:	but you'll take an iPad, you'll take a survey that's
00:21:03 --> 00:21:07:	game gamified has virtual reality or to make augmented reality
00:21:07 --> 00:21:09:	and you'll change that experience for the user.
00:21:10 --> 00:21:12:	You better sell them and show them the visions that
00:21:12 --> 00:21:16:	ultimately have a much more positive engagement experience around that
00:21:16 --> 00:21:19:	consultation and we hope a more positive response to the
00:21:19 --> 00:21:21:	actual proposed changes.
00:21:21 --> 00:21:24:	And we're certainly seeing that a number of councils who've
00:21:24 --> 00:21:27:	piloted virtual reality and augmented reality and, you know,

	putting
00:21:28 --> 00:21:30:	headsets on kids at schools and, you know, and even
00:21:30 --> 00:21:33:	putting on jet packs and flying through high streets in
00:21:33 --> 00:21:36:	in Cornwall and Surrey and different areas in the country.
00:21:37 --> 00:21:40:	It's completely changed the game of what consultation could be
00:21:40 --> 00:21:43:	useful in terms of that more experiential part of planning
00:21:43 --> 00:21:44:	and development.
00:21:44 --> 00:21:47:	I think has really brought the vision to life for
00:21:47 --> 00:21:50:	a lot of people who normally see APDF document and
00:21:50 --> 00:21:53:	say, well, I don't know how this relates to me
00:21:53 --> 00:21:55:	and they turn it up.
00:21:55 --> 00:21:57:	So we're we're really trying to to to challenge a
00:21:57 --> 00:22:00:	lot of thinking and we're certainly seeing a lot of
00:22:00 --> 00:22:01:	results in that space.
00:22:01 --> 00:22:03:	This is music to my ears, but at the same
00:22:03 --> 00:22:05:	time you really got me thinking because let me let
00:22:05 --> 00:22:07:	me give a, a, a shout out to my where
00:22:07 --> 00:22:10:	I live, it's a London borough, just Lewisham.
00:22:10 --> 00:22:11:	I don't know if you've had any dealings.
00:22:11 --> 00:22:12:	Have you had some?
00:22:12 --> 00:22:12:	Dealings.
00:22:12 --> 00:22:14:	They're not, they're not working with us, but there's some
00:22:14 --> 00:22:15:	brilliant opportunities.
00:22:15 --> 00:22:16:	Well, we should tell them to apply.
00:22:16 --> 00:22:20:	Lewisham, if you're listening because, because look, let's, let's get
00:22:20 --> 00:22:22:	real very real for a second.
00:22:22 --> 00:22:24:	So here I am as a resident of Lewisham.
00:22:24 --> 00:22:26:	There's some very good things in in Lewisham and there's
00:22:26 --> 00:22:27:	many things that aren't so good.
00:22:27 --> 00:22:30:	Now, being a typical person, I look around and there's
00:22:30 --> 00:22:31:	two things.
00:22:31 --> 00:22:34:	One, I want to moan about a few things.
00:22:34 --> 00:22:38:	Secondly, I may even have some decent ideas about how
00:22:38 --> 00:22:39:	to improve things.
00:22:39 --> 00:22:41:	You mentioned infrastructure community.
00:22:41 --> 00:22:44:	So if I want to do that right now, what
00:22:44 --> 00:22:45:	do I do?
00:22:45 --> 00:22:47:	Of course I go to the website and you know,
00:22:47 --> 00:22:49:	well, doesn't work, does it?
00:22:49 --> 00:22:51:	You're, you're shrugging your shoulders because it, it doesn't work.

00:22:51 --> 00:22:53:	There's, there's, there's nothing I can do.
00:22:53 --> 00:22:55:	There's maybe a form that doesn't even work properly.
00:22:56 --> 00:22:57:	Of course, I never hear back.
00:22:57 --> 00:22:58:	Where does it go?
00:22:58 --> 00:22:59:	Where does it go?
00:22:59 --> 00:23:00:	Who's looking at it?
00:23:00 --> 00:23:01:	Do they even care?
00:23:01 --> 00:23:02:	Is anyone out there this?
00:23:02 --> 00:23:04:	Is the thing, this is the thing, people do care
00:23:04 --> 00:23:05:	and this is, I think this is where we come
00:23:05 --> 00:23:06:	in and try and bridge the gap.
00:23:07 --> 00:23:08:	Planners are some of the most.
00:23:09 --> 00:23:10:	I've just spent the whole day yesterday at the planning
00:23:10 --> 00:23:11:	conference.
00:23:11 --> 00:23:13:	Brilliant people but they are under resourced.
00:23:13 --> 00:23:14:	Everyone's doing poor people's jobs.
00:23:15 --> 00:23:18:	There is a capacity issue particularly for local government in
00:23:18 --> 00:23:19:	planning teams and and they do care.
00:23:19 --> 00:23:21:	They care because they're there.
00:23:21 --> 00:23:24:	But there's a thing around how we can use technology
00:23:24 --> 00:23:26:	to almost take that burden off a little bit.
00:23:26 --> 00:23:28:	So you know, we can go to you, we can
00:23:28 --> 00:23:30:	ask you your opinions about Lewisham.
00:23:30 --> 00:23:32:	We can see what matters to you, what are those
00:23:32 --> 00:23:34:	priorities and what your ideas are and we can automate
00:23:34 --> 00:23:37:	that and we can take that off planners hands and
00:23:37 --> 00:23:38:	give them that feedback back.
00:23:38 --> 00:23:40:	There's still a long way to go in terms of
00:23:40 --> 00:23:41:	the product development.
00:23:41 --> 00:23:43:	That's kind of the space we want to play next
00:23:43 --> 00:23:46:	of how we can really Co design with industry, what
00:23:46 --> 00:23:49:	good looks like for those specific platform solutions led by
00:23:49 --> 00:23:52:	the lived experience of planners and local authorities and also
00:23:52 --> 00:23:54:	the development market as well.
00:23:54 --> 00:23:57:	It has to work for everyone, but I totally hear,
00:23:57 --> 00:24:00:	you know, there's everyone's almost got a story around a
00:24:00 --> 00:24:04:	frustration, which is an interesting starting point because it helps
00:24:04 --> 00:24:07:	us sort of relate our program and I think really
00:24:07 --> 00:24:09:	drive that wider adoption.
00:24:09 --> 00:24:11:	Our key, our key principle is how we can enable

00:24:11 --> 00:24:14:	and empower every local authority in the country to use
00:24:14 --> 00:24:18:	digital technology in planning and real estate development.
00:24:18 --> 00:24:20:	Prop tech obviously is part of that.
00:24:20 --> 00:24:22:	Some people call it prop tech, some people call it
00:24:22 --> 00:24:23:	plan tech, some people call it tech.
00:24:24 --> 00:24:27:	You know, it's all relatable, but there's a piece on
00:24:27 --> 00:24:28:	how we really Dr.
00:24:28 --> 00:24:31:	Advocacy and and can work with some brilliant local authorities
00:24:31 --> 00:24:33:	who want to be the Champions of change and we're
00:24:33 --> 00:24:35:	just lucky enough to be on that journey with them.
00:24:35 --> 00:24:36:	And here's a journey.
00:24:36 --> 00:24:38:	So just just to give people like me hope, are
00:24:38 --> 00:24:40:	we going in the right direction?
00:24:40 --> 00:24:43:	Where are we on this journey right at the beginning?
00:24:43 --> 00:24:45:	I, I guess I'm not really sure.
00:24:45 --> 00:24:47:	And count how fast can we get to our destination.
00:24:48 --> 00:24:51:	Depends how you define the destination, I think, I think
00:24:51 --> 00:24:54:	we're, I think we're on a good, we're on a
00:24:54 --> 00:24:54:	good.
00:24:54 --> 00:24:55:	We've got, we've got good momentum.
00:24:56 --> 00:25:00:	I think what's what I've been really surprised about is
00:25:00 --> 00:25:04:	the level of demand from industry to adopt digital citizen
00:25:04 --> 00:25:05:	engagement platforms.
00:25:06 --> 00:25:07:	And that's again just one part of the prop tech
00:25:07 --> 00:25:08:	ecosystem.
00:25:08 --> 00:25:11:	So for example, we did a showcase event in July
00:25:11 --> 00:25:13:	this year where we sort of presented back some of
00:25:14 --> 00:25:17:	the outcomes of the increased engagement and the more positive
00:25:17 --> 00:25:20:	response and the time saved by planner teams because they
00:25:21 --> 00:25:23:	were able to use digital technology.
00:25:23 --> 00:25:25:	And there was an online session and I know I
00:25:25 --> 00:25:28:	could talk about it all day, but you know, it's
00:25:28 --> 00:25:30:	exciting stuff, but it is still one part of the
00:25:30 --> 00:25:31:	planning ecosystem.
00:25:31 --> 00:25:35:	We had 863 people registered for that event and we
00:25:35 --> 00:25:37:	had 650 people turn up on the day.
00:25:38 --> 00:25:41:	And I think that's one of many indicators we've seen
00:25:41 --> 00:25:44:	in terms of the number of authorities who reached out
00:25:44 --> 00:25:47:	to us, who we've been able to work with and
00:25:47 --> 00:25:50:	fund that shows sort of the growing demand and appetite
00:25:50 --> 00:25:52:	and curiosity for the role, the prop tech and planning

00:25:53 --> 00:25:55:	and, and our role and, and my role is to
00:25:55 --> 00:25:58:	stimulate that demand and keep driving that demand that the
00:25:58 --> 00:26:01:	ultimate will drive adoption beyond the length of, of our
00:26:01 --> 00:26:05:	funding program and, and the, the length of government intervention.
00:26:05 --> 00:26:07:	We'll of course do what we can in this space.
00:26:07 --> 00:26:10:	We'll create policy, we'll create guidance, we'll create some digital
00:26:10 --> 00:26:11:	toolkits that enable and support that.
00:26:12 --> 00:26:16:	But ultimately the way that this will be supported long
00:26:16 --> 00:26:20:	term is when the prop tech sector has consistent demand
00:26:20 --> 00:26:25:	and capacity to pay for solutions from local government alongside
00:26:25 --> 00:26:26:	the private sector.
00:26:27 --> 00:26:29:	And that will in turn foster much more, I think,
00:26:29 --> 00:26:32:	developed and diverse ecosystem in the prop tech sector as
00:26:33 --> 00:26:33:	well.
00:26:33 --> 00:26:36:	And as you look across the world, coming from Australia,
00:26:36 --> 00:26:39:	and then of course you'll, you'll probably have peered at
00:26:39 --> 00:26:41:	other countries in Europe, for example, to see how they
00:26:41 --> 00:26:43:	do this or don't do this.
00:26:43 --> 00:26:45:	How is the UK on this?
00:26:45 --> 00:26:47:	Please tell me we're not the worst.
00:26:47 --> 00:26:48:	I mean, are there?
00:26:48 --> 00:26:49:	Are there?
00:26:49 --> 00:26:52:	Are there some fantastic examples out there where you've seen
00:26:52 --> 00:26:53:	this really working?
00:26:53 --> 00:26:55:	Again, I think it depends what this means.
00:26:55 --> 00:27:00:	I think there's there's interesting examples in France around participatory
00:27:00 --> 00:27:03:	budgeting and of digital democracy.
00:27:03 --> 00:27:05:	So essentially government saying we have a pot of money
00:27:05 --> 00:27:08:	and citizens decide how it's allocated and where it goes
00:27:08 --> 00:27:08:	to.
00:27:08 --> 00:27:10:	And we've got a few of those projects in our
00:27:10 --> 00:27:12:	latest front of funding, which is great.
00:27:13 --> 00:27:16:	Watford's doing that and they've seen an amazing result because
00:27:16 --> 00:27:18:	they've literally given power to the people through a prop
00:27:18 --> 00:27:21:	tech platform and and they had thousands of people respond
00:27:21 --> 00:27:23:	in quite a short period of time.
00:27:23 --> 00:27:26:	But I think I think the best case studies, I

00:27:26 --> 00:27:29:	know I'm probably biased are in the UK, both inside
00:27:29 --> 00:27:32:	the fund that we've been supporting directly and some emerging
00:27:32 --> 00:27:35:	ones outside what the UK has all the all the
00:27:35 --> 00:27:38:	right ingredients to be a world leader in this space.
00:27:38 --> 00:27:41:	We've got a planning system that we know needs to
00:27:41 --> 00:27:42:	be radically fixed.
00:27:43 --> 00:27:45:	There's a term fix the plumbing like get the basics
00:27:46 --> 00:27:49:	right with planning, make it more efficient, make it easier
00:27:49 --> 00:27:52:	to engage both for planners and for consultants and for
00:27:52 --> 00:27:53:	everyday citizens.
00:27:53 --> 00:27:55:	So we've got applying system that we know is broken
00:27:55 --> 00:27:55:	into fixed.
00:27:56 --> 00:27:59:	We've got local authority scaled 300 plus local authorities in
00:27:59 --> 00:28:02:	this country and they've all got demand and and sort
00:28:02 --> 00:28:06:	of different levels of requirement for digital transformation and they
00:28:06 --> 00:28:08:	want to be part of this.
00:28:09 --> 00:28:12:	We've got a prop tech ecosystem and marketplace that I
00:28:12 --> 00:28:13:	think is world leading.
00:28:13 --> 00:28:16:	I'm sure the others on the program might say other
00:28:16 --> 00:28:18:	sectors, but I think the UK has an amazing prop
00:28:18 --> 00:28:21:	tech ecosystem and, and peer based network.
00:28:21 --> 00:28:24:	Even just going to the UK prop tech awards last
00:28:24 --> 00:28:29:	week, fantastic indication of how far the industry's grown in
00:28:29 --> 00:28:30:	five or six years.
00:28:30 --> 00:28:33:	Six years ago, you know, they weren't 300 people in
00:28:34 --> 00:28:37:	a room celebrating awards and focusing on things like ESG
00:28:37 --> 00:28:38:	and social impact.
00:28:38 --> 00:28:41:	And now we can do that because we have depth
00:28:41 --> 00:28:44:	in the marketplace and that will only continue to grow.
00:28:44 --> 00:28:48:	So we've got these ingredients that all fit together to
00:28:48 --> 00:28:52:	support, I think global leadership in this space to respond
00:28:52 --> 00:28:55:	to I think which is the most critical issue of
00:28:55 --> 00:29:00:	enabling the delivery of faster homes and infrastructure, because we
00:29:00 --> 00:29:04:	know more people need access to housing, whether rental or
00:29:04 --> 00:29:05:	permanent.
00:29:05 --> 00:29:07:	And and that's the role that I hope Proptec can
00:29:07 --> 00:29:10:	play in fast tracking that for many people across the
00:29:10 --> 00:29:10:	country.
00:29:11 --> 00:29:13:	Well, Bridget, if we are going to make a success
00:29:13 --> 00:29:17:	of this, I think we need more Bridget's involved which

00:29:17 --> 00:29:19:	which actually brings me to my next question.
00:29:20 --> 00:29:22:	I think you, you, you joined this role, perhaps it
00:29:22 --> 00:29:23:	was it 2 years ago.
00:29:23 --> 00:29:23:	A.
00:29:23 --> 00:29:24:	Year ago just.
00:29:24 --> 00:29:25:	A year ago.
00:29:25 --> 00:29:28:	So I am hoping obviously, that you stay in this
00:29:28 --> 00:29:31:	position, but bring it back to your personal story.
00:29:32 --> 00:29:33:	So what's, what's the plan?
00:29:33 --> 00:29:36:	You told me that you're a meticulous planner.
00:29:36 --> 00:29:39:	So you probably, you probably know exactly what you're going
00:29:39 --> 00:29:40:	to do for the next 40 years.
00:29:40 --> 00:29:41:	It's on the spreadsheet.
00:29:41 --> 00:29:43:	What, what, what, what can people expect?
00:29:43 --> 00:29:44:	What do you expect of yourself?
00:29:44 --> 00:29:46:	Oh, that's a good question.
00:29:46 --> 00:29:48:	It's funny, I used to be a meticulous planner.
00:29:48 --> 00:29:50:	I've kind of let it go a little bit.
00:29:50 --> 00:29:52:	Maybe because I'm getting older, I got to trust the
00:29:52 --> 00:29:52:	process.
00:29:55 --> 00:29:56:	I really enjoy my role.
00:29:56 --> 00:29:59:	I really enjoy the team I'm working with and the
00:30:00 --> 00:30:03:	vision that we have to radically change planning.
00:30:03 --> 00:30:05:	Planning is hard, like it's, it's a hard space to
00:30:05 --> 00:30:08:	be in, but it's meaning meaningful for me and it's
00:30:08 --> 00:30:11:	worthwhile and it's very aligned to the values that I
00:30:11 --> 00:30:13:	that I want to lead by and, and work work
00:30:14 --> 00:30:14:	by.
00:30:14 --> 00:30:16:	So what's next to me?
00:30:16 --> 00:30:17:	I mean, I'll do a vision board at the start
00:30:17 --> 00:30:18:	of next year.
00:30:18 --> 00:30:20:	Of course, that's always important to, to see what the
00:30:20 --> 00:30:21:	future holds.
00:30:21 --> 00:30:24:	And I encourage every all listeners to sort of manifest
00:30:24 --> 00:30:27:	or what what might come up for you.
00:30:28 --> 00:30:31:	But I think I really am curious about the role
00:30:31 --> 00:30:35:	that communities can play when you combine that with delivering,
00:30:35 --> 00:30:39:	enabling and almost de risking the built environment.
00:30:39 --> 00:30:42:	I think a lot of us still see communities as
00:30:42 --> 00:30:46:	existing residents who perhaps sometimes are opposed to change.

00:30:46 --> 00:30:48:	And that's fine.
00:30:48 --> 00:30:50:	But also communities could be your occupier, They could be
00:30:50 --> 00:30:51:	your end user.
00:30:51 --> 00:30:55:	They could actually help inform how you're designing space and
00:30:55 --> 00:30:56:	how you're delivering it.
00:30:56 --> 00:30:59:	And I think they could bring a lot more value
00:30:59 --> 00:31:01:	into that process that perhaps we perceive.
00:31:02 --> 00:31:05:	And to me, that's a really exciting space to keep
00:31:05 --> 00:31:08:	thinking about how we use technology, but also how we
00:31:08 --> 00:31:11:	use common sense in communication and engagement and inclusion and
00:31:12 --> 00:31:15:	and we ultimately create a more inclusive built environment around
00:31:15 --> 00:31:17:	us with with those key principles.
00:31:18 --> 00:31:20:	Now you talked about a vision boards that is something
00:31:20 --> 00:31:21:	that you will do.
00:31:21 --> 00:31:23:	We like to help people on this podcast.
00:31:24 --> 00:31:26:	So we're now onto the subject of tips.
00:31:27 --> 00:31:29:	Those that are looking perhaps to enter into the real
00:31:29 --> 00:31:30:	estate industry.
00:31:30 --> 00:31:33:	Can you think of one or two things that you
00:31:33 --> 00:31:36:	can advise people the do's and don'ts of getting into
00:31:36 --> 00:31:37:	the industry?
00:31:38 --> 00:31:39:	Getting into the industry.
00:31:39 --> 00:31:42:	And being a success while you're in it.
00:31:43 --> 00:31:43:	OK.
00:31:43 --> 00:31:46:	In terms of getting into the industry, my advice would
00:31:47 --> 00:31:50:	be there's no path before you that isn't your own.
00:31:50 --> 00:31:52:	That kind of like the role that I have now
00:31:52 --> 00:31:54:	didn't exist 12 months ago, the role before that didn't
00:31:54 --> 00:31:55:	exist 12 months ago.
00:31:56 --> 00:31:58:	And even the role I had before that, OK, CBRE
00:31:58 --> 00:32:00:	had a development team, but there was no one kind
00:32:00 --> 00:32:01:	of doing that and prop tech.
00:32:01 --> 00:32:03:	And then even in Australia there was no rule of
00:32:03 --> 00:32:03:	woman.
00:32:03 --> 00:32:05:	It was only a few women in capital markets.
00:32:05 --> 00:32:07:	So, you know, if I'd sat there 15 years ago
00:32:07 --> 00:32:10:	and thought, oh, I'll go down this path that I
00:32:10 --> 00:32:13:	can see all that path would be eroding before me.
00:32:13 --> 00:32:16:	So I think there is a role to have a
00:32:16 --> 00:32:20:	vision of, of, of walking your own path, even if

00:32:20 --> 00:32:22:	you can't see it ahead of you.
00:32:22 --> 00:32:25:	And that vision and that what allows you to keep
00:32:25 --> 00:32:26:	walking down that path.
00:32:26 --> 00:32:29:	I really key understanding and alignment of your values to
00:32:29 --> 00:32:32:	what you're doing in terms of the work you're doing,
00:32:32 --> 00:32:35:	the behaviour you're creating for you and your team, and
00:32:35 --> 00:32:38:	the change that you want to influence around you.
00:32:39 --> 00:32:42:	I made quite a conscious choice a number of years
00:32:42 --> 00:32:45:	ago to to be very values LED in the work
00:32:45 --> 00:32:46:	that I do.
00:32:46 --> 00:32:49:	And I think having having values sort of instill in
00:32:49 --> 00:32:52:	in how you approach problems and and solutions is often
00:32:52 --> 00:32:55:	what gets us out of bed in the morning, isn't
00:32:55 --> 00:32:57:	it on a cold, cold, rainy Friday?
00:32:57 --> 00:32:58:	I guess like today.
00:32:58 --> 00:33:00:	Why, why, why are we doing if we don't, if
00:33:00 --> 00:33:02:	we're not there because we care about it and we
00:33:02 --> 00:33:05:	want to drive change, then like what's the point?
00:33:05 --> 00:33:06:	Life's too short, it's too precious.
00:33:06 --> 00:33:07:	Like absolutely.
00:33:07 --> 00:33:10:	So I think real estate is a challenging and complicated
00:33:10 --> 00:33:13:	and complex industry, but it's absolutely brilliant.
00:33:13 --> 00:33:15:	And the thing that makes it brilliant is the people,
00:33:15 --> 00:33:17:	the people that you get to meet and, and become
00:33:17 --> 00:33:19:	friends with, the people that you get to work with
00:33:19 --> 00:33:21:	and the ideas and the inspiration and the people that
00:33:21 --> 00:33:24:	ultimately we're serving, the people who have access to homes
00:33:24 --> 00:33:27:	and different, you know, experiences and different types of real
00:33:27 --> 00:33:28:	estate infrastructure.
00:33:28 --> 00:33:31:	And we can touch so many different people digitally and
00:33:31 --> 00:33:32:	physically in, in this sector.
00:33:33 --> 00:33:36:	But if we're not driven by our, our core values
00:33:36 --> 00:33:38:	in that space, it's a very long and it's a
00:33:38 --> 00:33:41:	very hard and often it's a very lonely game.
00:33:41 --> 00:33:44:	And our values give us our ability to tap into
00:33:44 --> 00:33:45:	our superpowers.
00:33:45 --> 00:33:48:	So I think my advice would be for anyone listening,
00:33:48 --> 00:33:50:	you know, take the time sit down, whether with an
00:33:50 --> 00:33:53:	Excel spreadsheet or not, and, and really be honest with
00:33:53 --> 00:33:56:	yourself and what your true values are and hold them

00:33:56 --> 00:33:59:	as your North star and guiding light in decisions that
00:33:59 --> 00:34:03:	you make both personally and professionally that hopefully can align
00:34:03 --> 00:34:04:	them throughout your career.
00:34:05 --> 00:34:08:	And finally, finally, what about things that you read or
00:34:08 --> 00:34:12:	maybe even podcasts that you listen to that you think
00:34:12 --> 00:34:16:	and would be helpful to other people to also listen
00:34:16 --> 00:34:16:	to?
00:34:17 --> 00:34:20:	I read a great book recently, it's called Black Box
00:34:20 --> 00:34:23:	Thinking by Matthew Saeed, and it was about the science
00:34:23 --> 00:34:26:	of diversity, the science of cognitive diversity.
00:34:26 --> 00:34:28:	And I think diversity is still a key issue in
00:34:28 --> 00:34:31:	the built environment and prop tech sector.
00:34:32 --> 00:34:33:	We've got a long way to go.
00:34:33 --> 00:34:36:	We have made some strides recently and what Matthew talks
00:34:36 --> 00:34:39:	about is the real science behind it, which I think
00:34:39 --> 00:34:40:	is quite fascinating.
00:34:40 --> 00:34:41:	It's hard to argue with science.
00:34:41 --> 00:34:44:	Some people still do, but it's harder to argue with
00:34:44 --> 00:34:44:	science.
00:34:45 --> 00:34:49:	And he talks about how diversity literally saves lives and
00:34:49 --> 00:34:52:	saves teams and programs at NASA and you know, the
00:34:52 --> 00:34:54:	FBI and different areas.
00:34:54 --> 00:34:57:	So I think it's a really good challenge on thinking
00:34:57 --> 00:35:00:	about the conscious and unconscious bias we have as humans
00:35:00 --> 00:35:03:	when we're looking to create more diverse environments.
00:35:03 --> 00:35:06:	And really challenge that thinking to ensure that we are
00:35:06 --> 00:35:11:	bringing different perspectives to conversations, to the table, to consultations,
00:35:11 --> 00:35:14:	to planning for the future and see how we really
00:35:14 --> 00:35:18:	validate the role that sort of disruptive and different thinking
00:35:18 --> 00:35:20:	can have in that space.
00:35:20 --> 00:35:22:	Bridget, thank you very much for joining us.
00:35:23 --> 00:35:23:	Fantastic.
00:35:23 --> 00:35:24:	Great to be here.
00:35:24 --> 00:35:24:	Thanks for having me.

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