

# PlanningHub, AI powered insights for property development

*Creating a startup is always challenging. Founding one during a tech downturn, cost of living crisis and recession seems near impossible. However, with risk comes reward and many of the world's most successful companies were founded during times of economic uncertainty. As part of a series with Antler, Maddyness has interviewed founders hoping to become the entrepreneurial success stories to emerge from this time of crisis. This week, Maddyness spoke to Ewa Moskwiak, cofounder of PlanningHub.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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The shortage of housing in the UK and globally is a huge problem. The UK government has to deliver 300k homes every year to meet the needs of a growing population. But complexities in the planning system are getting in the way. Every development needs planning permission, but the process of getting permission is so complicated that planning authorities are struggling to cope with huge backlogs and staff shortages and developers are facing long delays. Even the process of collating all of the documents needed for a single planning application is complex.

The data is scattered and updated intermittently.

Collation is done manually, which slows down the planning process.

Nothing - or, at least, very little - has been done to streamline a system so complex that it generates unnecessary omissions, mistakes, delays and financial losses estimated at £1.2B pa in the UK alone. That's precisely why we have joined forces with Professor Harald Braun who has a

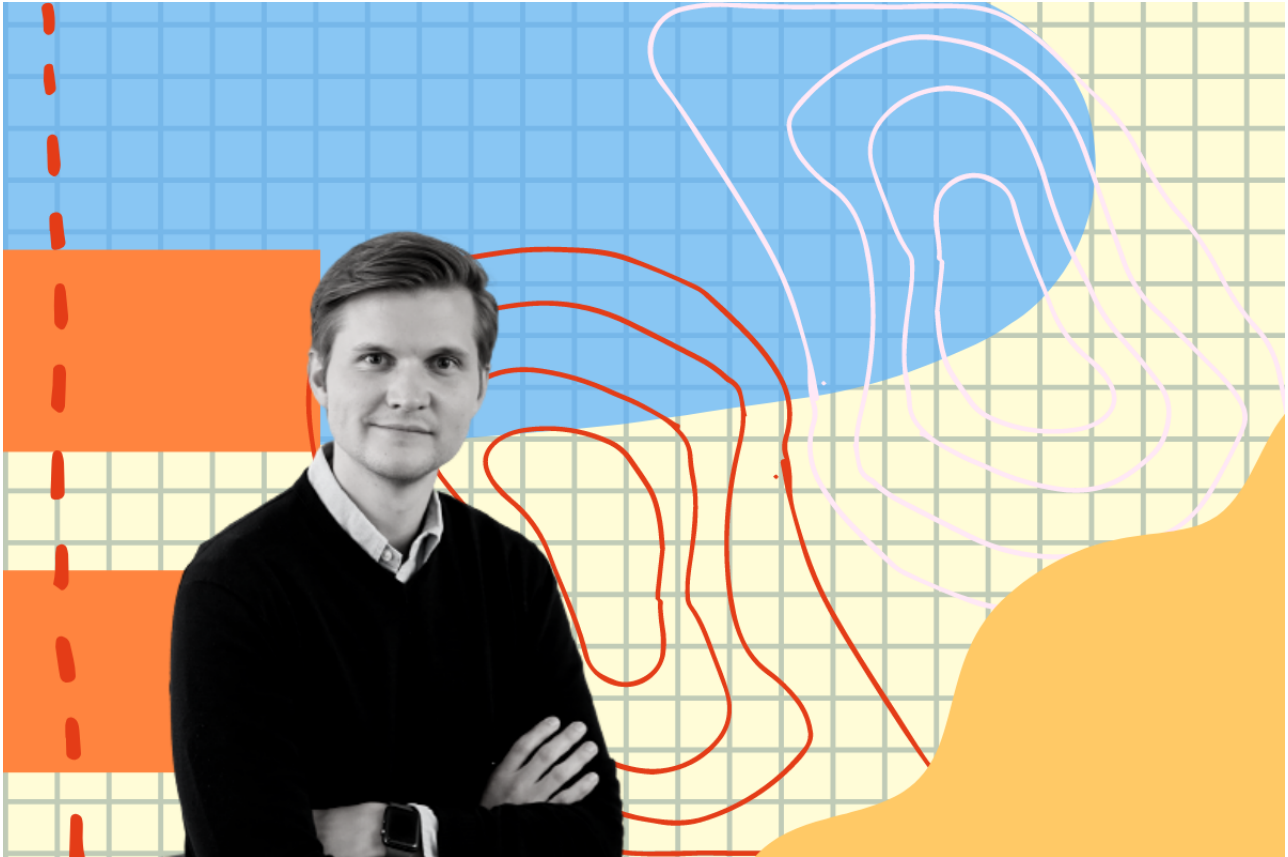
background in Artificial Intelligence (AI) spanning 30 years and five sectors. I have been a Chartered Architect, property investor and developer for 18 years, and together we came to the conclusion that it's the perfect time to bring innovation to this outdated process. That's how PlanningHub was born.

## Can you share your elevator pitch?

*PlanningHub* streamlines the time-consuming and error-prone manual process of collating property development planning information. We use cutting edge technologies including AI and Large Language Models (LLM) to sieve through the vast amounts of planning data - including policies, decisions, planning and environmental zoning - to provide site and project specific planning insights for property development. Our mission is to democratise access to planning information, reduce planning backlogs and boost the delivery of much needed housing. The planning insights reports our system produces support everyone involved in property development including investors, developers, consultants, property and land intelligence platforms and Local Planning Authorities.

## Can you tell our readers about your engagement with Antler?

Attending Antler Cohort was a life-changing experience. The quality of the program, the knowledge sharing and coaching helped shape the key business concept behind PlanningHub. Antler explains in practical terms how to build scalable and investable businesses. On top of that, the cohort and the wider Antler network has been hugely supportive.



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## Tell us about the working culture at PlanningHub?

PlanningHub's working culture revolves around knowledge sharing, team support and a desire for change in the planning system and an improvement in housing delivery. When we're hiring, we're not only looking for excellent skills, we want to see true entrepreneurial spirit.

## What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

We are the first company worldwide to deploy cutting edge AI

technologies to provide project and site-specific property development planning insights. Our technology stack is very complex and involves multiple AI, ML and geospatial tools. Thanks to Harald's vast experience in building innovative technologies, we have been able to cover all aspects of the development in house. We are also very grateful to our advisor Simon Bevan who is a former director of planning at Southwark Council, our partners at PlanningPortal and UK Innovate who are co-funding and influencing our product development. All of them have played a pivotal role in our product development.

## What's in store for the future?

We are currently scaling our product geographically to cover whole of the UK and to deal with planning queries with increasing levels of complexity. We are running pilot projects with various Greater London Boroughs. Once we've achieved these initial goals, we plan to scale our services abroad to Ireland and Germany, the wider EU and across the pond to the US. Our technology can be used anywhere where property development is controlled through planning with complex requirements that are difficult to navigate.

## How has the cost of living crisis and the tech downturn impacted your experience building PlanningHub?

We have been extremely fortunate not to be affected by the cost of living crisis and tech downturn. As successful business operators, we understand the importance of strategic and financial planning. We are very fortunate to be a first mover in the \$12T turnover pa construction sector, which has so far been slow to innovate and has developed problems as a result. Thanks to our unique positioning and Antler's initial backing, we have rapidly managed to secure support from industry

partners, won backing from VCs and angel investors, received a UK Innovate Smart Grant (so competitive it rewards less than 2% of innovative solutions across all sectors) and been invited to join the Geovation program backed by HM Land Registry and Ordnance Survey.

## What barriers have you faced in realising your entrepreneurial ambitions?

I remember when founding my first business, the finances were a major worry. Organisations like Antler who offer financial support during the cohort and then fund startups from day one are removing this barrier to entry for many aspiring entrepreneurs.

## What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Your knowledge, experience and network are your best friends. Leverage these to speed up your progress, accelerate your growth, scale up the business and fill in any gaps you might have. And if you are missing one of these 'best friends', start working on them right away.

## And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

The early stages of building a business are extremely demanding and to accommodate all new challenges, I take a similar approach to my personal life as to business. I optimise the 'operations', organise 'the workflow' and prioritise the most important things. I have developed helpful routines to make sure there is enough time for exercise, healthy eating, good sleep and time to wind down with family and friends. I

maintain my hobbies like gardening and continue working towards my personal development goals - to become an experienced public speaker, for instance. I enjoy making personal progress every day, and evolving alongside the business. Ultimately, success lies in the small details - get those right, and you will achieve your goals.

Ewa Moskwiak is the co-founder of *PlanningHub*.

*Antler is one of the world's most active early-stage investors. With 1,000 portfolio companies in 27 countries, they have a global community of early-stage founders addressing the world's biggest challenges.*

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Article by Ewa Moskwiak