



Report of the Cabinet Member for Community

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 9 March 2023

Swansea Council Coproduction and Involvement Project

Purpose:	This report provides an update on corporate plans and progress towards embedding coproduction at Swansea Council
Policy Framework:	Council's 2022-23 Corporate Plan Transformation and Future Council Development Wellbeing Objective
Consultation:	Legal, Finance, Access to Services.
Report Author:	Richards Rowlands Suzy Richards
Finance Officer:	Paul Roach
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
For Information	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Coproduction occurs in public bodies when the people responsible for the design, commissioning, and the provision of public services (i.e., elected members and professionals), and the people who access and receive services (citizens), share power and responsibility, and work together for mutual benefit in equal, reciprocal, and caring relationships. It helps to ensure that services are effective and make a positive difference in people's lives; it helps to enable people to access relevant and meaningful support when they need it; and through coproduction, people, services, and communities become more effective agents of change.
- 1.2 Coproduction is part of a wider spectrum of interactive activity illustrated in the diagram below, which ranges from coercion/ protection (e.g., public

health responses to a pandemic) to coproduction and involvement (e.g., designing care services).

A spectrum of interactions

doing to		doing for			doing with
coercion protection	education persuasion	information	consultation	participation	co-production involvement
e.g. criminal justice, safeguarding	e.g. smoking cessation programmes	e.g. Council website info on bin collections	e.g. surveys, urban planning, FixMyStreet	e.g. drop-in events, focus groups	e.g. person-centred care, shared decision-making

2. Background

2.1 The Council has been striving to improve its coproduction capacity and capability in recent years and has had some success, particularly in social care. For example, in July 2021, the Council endorsed the Regional Partnership Board’s Strategic Framework for Coproduction (Annex 1).

2.2 As part of the Equalities Scrutiny Inquiry, it was recognised that ‘a desire for a cross-council coproduction strategy’ was an emerging theme, this was clear during discussions especially with disabled people and carers. Coproduction was also identified as a key issue during engagement as part of the Human Rights City launch/ year of action.

2.3 Our 2022-23 corporate plan commits the Council to continuing to strengthen “consultation, engagement, participation and coproduction with our stakeholders including our staff, citizens of Swansea and our partner organisations, so the Council can make informed decisions that improve the access, quality and delivery of services”.

2.4 We recognise that we are very much at the start of our coproduction journey, and we understand that:

- *Citizens and communities want an equal say in the services they receive and in shaping the communities in which they live, even more so following lived experiences during the pandemic. Coproduction is a great way of enabling this to happen.*
- *Working co-productively requires change across the organisation to our culture, systems, and processes. In order to succeed, we need an infrastructure and specialist skills in place to deliver this change.*
- *Politicians and senior managers have vital roles to play in driving cultural change and they will be pivotal for coproduction to be embedded in Swansea.*

- *We will aim to work in partnership with other bodies and organisations to align our co-productive approach on a local, regional and national basis.*

2.5 Good practice to date is generally concentrated around Social Services reflecting systemic changes in the way we work as part of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. We aim to extend this work which engages increasingly diverse parts of the community to get involved in coproduction and improving outcomes. The Project will result in the creation of tools to help staff better support people from all backgrounds particularly those from excluded and underrepresented groups.

2.6 This Project aims to help staff and members to clearly scope the scope of coproduction projects at the earliest opportunity ensuring limitations such as legal obligations and limits on resources are clarified and set the framework within which coproduction takes place and where other forms of involvement are more appropriate. Ensuring feedback loops with service users, partners and members of the public are completed will be a key consideration.

2.7 Against that background, in 2022 with funding from the Economic Recovery Fund, the Council procured external support from CoPro Lab¹, to work with us over a 12-month period to help develop a corporate approach to coproduction. The aim of the Coproduction and Involvement project (“the project”), which began in October 2022, is to build on the work and learning relating to co-productive approaches employed throughout the pandemic and to build further internal capacity and capability.

3. Achievements to Date

3.1 The first phase of the project is focusing on assessing the Council’s existing coproduction capability and experience, through the use of a survey and collection of examples of practice. In addition, stakeholder mapping and the recruitment and initial training of nearly 40 Coproduction Champions from across services has taken place along with initial engagement with the Council’s senior leadership.

3.2 The learning phase of the project will continue until mid-March and an insight report is expected by the end of March 2023. Work to date has already identified some good practice as well as areas for improvement, including the need for a corporate coproduction and involvement policy.

3.3 Good practice to date identified by CoPro Lab as part of the engagement process exemplifies the values of coproduction (in bold below).

¹ Co-production Lab Wales is a not-for-profit organisation which helps public services improve outcomes for people through coproduction and involvement. Its surplus contributes to funding the community of practice at the Co-production Network for Wales.

- a) **Value people and build on their strengths**
The Local Area Coordination Team worked alongside their communities during the pandemic, supporting people in those communities to plan and develop how best to support others in their communities. As a result, new projects have been developed and delivered since lockdown with the community taking the lead and Local Area Coordinators helping with communications and connecting people. A small grant pot has been developed with no application process or formal reporting, based on the trust that has developed between the local authorities and communities.
- b) **Develop networks that operate across silos**
Teams also consult and utilise networks with internal departments (e.g., Local Area Coordination) and external specialist organisations to develop their services based on their knowledge of the communities they represent e.g., Kids in Museums, Carers Centre, EYST, Citizens Advice, etc.
- c) **Focus on what matters for the people involved**
Social Workers invite all families to be part of the decision making about their lives. They also undertake ongoing evaluation based on feedback collected from families, using the input from the families who use their service to continually adapt and ensure that the service is appropriate to user needs.
- d) **Build relationships of trust & shared power**
This is exemplified through the development of heritage trails in partnership with local community groups as part of wider regeneration of Lower Swansea Valley.
- e) **Enable people to be change makers**
Children and Young People worked with members of the Corporate Parenting Board sharing their lived experience to develop pledges that will lead towards service redesign.

3.3 The project will lead the development of a draft corporate policy, which will identify when and how coproduction and involvement should be used in the context of wider interactive activity. The policy will also help elected members and officers to determine the most effective ways to coproduce projects ensuring a diversity of people with an interest in the matter are involved.

4. Next Steps

4.1 In addition to the policy, the project, which is scheduled to end in October 2023, will also deliver the following outputs:

- A toolkit of resources to assist officers and members in supporting citizens to coproduce services
- A webpage where staff and officers can access practical coproduction resources

- A role description for Coproduction Champions and virtual Champions' network
 - Training, including for Coproduction Champions, to help ensure we have relevant coproduction expertise within all our services
- 4.2 Over the coming months, CoPro Lab Wales will also provide advice and support on live projects / issues (yet to be identified) that would benefit from a co-productive approach.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 This paper demonstrates that although Swansea Council is at the start of its corporate coproduction journey, this is well underway and making good progress.
- 5.2 The Project demonstrates the Council's proactive approach towards the integration of coproduction and involvement across services. This will help to improve involvement and engagement with service users, partners and the public in the design and delivery of services.
- 5.3 There is a clear plan in place to achieve the desired outcomes. We aim to build internal capacity and capability supported by a clear policy, associated tools and training targeted at a Champions Network with representation across all services.
- 5.4 This will ensure officers across the Council are able to support any service user, partner, or member of the public from across the diversity of our communities, including those who are often excluded or under-represented. Upskilling officers to offer support rather than assuming those we interact with, will have a pre-existing understanding of coproduction and pre-existing skills, will enable any voice to join in around the table rather focus attention and expectations on those who may already be familiar with coproduction and involvement processes.
- 5.5 The scope and parameters of where coproduction is appropriate will be explored as part of the Project and addressed by the Policy. This would include communication and feedback to those involved in coproduction activities.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report itself.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers:

Annex 1 Strategic Coproduction Framework

Appendices: None