



To:
Councillor Hayley Gwilliam
Cabinet Member for Community

Please ask for: Scrutiny
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Date 28 March 2023
Dyddiad:

Summary: This is a letter from the Coproduction Scrutiny Working Group to the Cabinet Member for Community. The letter concerns the meeting held on 9 March 2023. A response is required by 18 April.

Dear Councillor Gwilliam,

On the 9 March, a Scrutiny Working Group was held to look at the issue of Coproduction. We are grateful to you and the officers for attending.

The officers presented their report and explained the current progress made on the corporate coproduction strategy which is in the early stages of development. We were informed that the 12 month contract with CoPro Lab Wales is due to end in October 2023 when they will produce a feedback report. As part of their contract they will offer a review of current coproduction, a training needs analysis, stakeholder mapping and help to identify and train Coproduction Champions in directorates across the Council.

We were informed that Coproduction Champions will be equipped to provide support to colleagues within their directorates and identify coproduction opportunities. We favour this approach over a more centralised coproduction service as although this model can be harder to achieve, the result will see coproduction more embedded across the Council.

The tool kit and webpage that CoPro Lab Wales will help produce will provide advice and information for Council officers and members as well as training and ongoing advice and support. We feel that coproduction should be a proactive approach and encourage training for Coproduction Champions on this. We also recommend the training covers the whole spectrum of involvement, so that officers can identify and action involvement opportunities where coproduction is not the most suitable method.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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We asked for more information about the tools that will be provided and were informed they will include information on framing discussions, asking the right questions, facilitating meetings, workshops, what to do with information gathered and identifying what is in scope within the frame of limited resources. In addition a stakeholder matrix will be developed, this takes stakeholder mapping a stage further by cross referencing stakeholders with areas like protected characteristics and interests. We were pleased to hear about the development of a bespoke stakeholder matrix but also encourage the use of the many pre-existing coproduction tools.

We were informed that Co Pro Lab Wales will support a number of pilot projects which are aligned with the 12 projects in the transformation plan. These will be identified as quick wins and will provide examples of how coproduction can be used within the Council.

Due to the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014, we are aware that Social Services have developed coproduction practices further than in other areas of the Council. We were grateful to the officer for attending to give us a comprehensive progress update.

The officer informed us that Social Services have produced a training package on coproduction for all their officers. The many ways they have enabled coproduction were explained to us including procurement panels, designing services, policy development, service monitoring, review of individual support plans and recruitment. Their coproduction strategy covers all areas within Social Services including governance, strategic commissioning and service delivery. Social Services use a variety of tools including most significant change, theory of change, asset based community development, community organising, beyond sticky notes and rich pictures. Networks like the Swansea Coproduction Network are one of the main ways to reach people however networks need support to sustain them. In addition Social Services have developed a Remuneration Policy to value the commitment required from volunteers. They also have a clearer understanding of scope and parameters, what can and can't be offered and what is within officers' power to offer. Work is still to be done around using more appropriate language to avoid jargon.

We are pleased that the knowledge and experience gained in Social Services will be used across the Council and asked how you plan to widen out coproduction opportunities further than Social Services to include areas like education, transport and leisure facilities where there are identifiable opportunities for coproduction. You informed us that this is work in progress with foundations being built in Social Services and the developing work with CoPro Lab Wales.

We felt that some departments will not have such an easily identifiable client base with definable services as with Social Services, your officers informed us that identifying and supporting opportunities for coproduction within other departments will sit with the Coproduction Champions who will be trained to identify these opportunities.

Amanda Carr the Director of Swansea Council for Voluntary Services shared with us that bringing in coproduction Council wide will be advantageous as people's lives intersect across numerous services and departments. She also shared that coproduction needs to be introduced "pre cradle" even before a service has been

scoped or plans designed and advised that realistic expectations need to be set regarding what can be achieved. Some of the challenges of coproduction were also shared including identifying and finding those seldom listened to, sharing power and the importance of safeguarding.

We feel coproduction requires people to feel they are totally equal around the table and to involve underrepresented groups to benefit from their depth of knowledge. We look forward to hearing more in future about the development of coproduction across the Council.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the briefing received and questions asked we held a discussion on progress and made the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. Overall the Working Group was encouraged by the approach the Council are taking to coproduction.
2. Although the Coproduction Champions model can be harder to achieve than a centralised coproduction provision it will be more successful in embedding coproduction across departments.
3. The Working Group felt the slow and steady approach will work well while learning from the work carried out by Social Services.
4. Where possible coproduction should be a proactive approach with the aim of identifying opportunities for coproduction before services are planned.
5. The Working Group was pleased to hear about the bespoke stakeholder matrix that will be developed, however it encourages officers where possible to utilise existing tools that are already available.
6. It is important to embed coproduction at all levels therefore the Working Group was pleased there is backing from the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet.
7. The Working Group requests that CoPro Lab Wales develop training on involvement as well as coproduction to educate officers and members on areas where coproduction is not achievable but levels of involvement are.
8. The Working Group suggests using the Coproduction Champions to share and promote case studies and the long term impacts of coproduction to demonstrate success and encourage participation from officers.
9. The Working Group will recommend to the Scrutiny Programme Committee to revisit this topic after October 2023 when the report has come out and next steps are planned.

Your Response

We are interested in hearing your thoughts about the issues raised in this letter and would ask that you respond to the points in our conclusions by 18 April.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES

Convener, Scrutiny Working Group – Coproduction

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