



Report of the Cabinet Member for Community

Scrutiny Programme Committee - 16th July 2024

Swansea Council Co-production Project

Purpose	To provide an update of the delivery of the Co-production Project and Strategy for Swansea Council
Content	The report provided details of the Co-production project and its key outcomes.
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the information provided and give views
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1. Background

- 1.1 A report was presented to the Scrutiny Working Group in March 2023 which provided details on plans and progress towards embedding co-production at the council.
- 1.2 The report outlined that funding from the Economic Recovery Fund was secured in October 2022. The Council used this funding to procure external support from Co-production Lab Wales, Wales' leading co-production and citizen involvement specialists, to work with us to help develop a corporate approach to co-production. Work commenced in October 2022 and completed in March 2024.
- 1.3 The aim of the co-production project (“the project”), which began in October 2022, was to build on the work and learning relating to co-productive approaches employed throughout the pandemic and to build further internal capacity and capability. This report provides an update on the project and its outcomes.

2. Co-production Project

2.1 Learning Phase

The learning phase was designed to assess the current state of citizen involvement and co-production practices within the council. Three primary staff engagement activities were implemented: the co-production champions group, an online survey, and one-to-one/small group conversations. Additional engagement opportunities were considered on a case-by-case basis. Continuous analysis, reporting, and regular communication were integral to this phase.

2.1.1 Existing Good Practice

Emerging themes from the learning phase identified several areas of existing good practice:

- **Structure:** Frameworks and guidance were in place to ensure co-production and involvement, particularly within Social Services, Regional Partnership Board, and Integrated Impact Assessments.
- **Resources:** Dedicated officers facilitated citizen involvement through various initiatives, such as Local Area Coordination, Parents Advocacy Network, and Ageing Well Swansea.
- **Inclusion:** Efforts were made to ensure wider community representation, supported by teams like the Community Cohesion Team and the Commissioning Hub.
- **Relationships:** Strong, trust-based relationships were established between officers and communities, exemplified by initiatives like the Parents Advocacy Network and Local Area Coordination.

2.1.2 Key Findings from Learning Stage

The learning phase highlighted several key findings that informed subsequent project activities:

- **Culture:** Embedding co-production required a shared understanding of its values and benefits. Communicating the positive outcomes of co-production was essential for staff buy-in.
- **Infrastructure:** Appropriate structures were needed to sustain co-production, considering decision-making processes and project planning.
- **Workforce Development:** Training was necessary to clarify the distinctions between co-production, consultation, participation, and information sharing. Additionally, community organizing was often mistaken for citizen involvement.
- **Practice:** Staff needed support to implement co-production approaches and learn from existing successful practices within the organization.

2.2 Co-production Champions Network

The network was established as part of the project and intended to provide a space for peer learning and develop internal ambassadors for the co-production approach. Champions attended 'Introduction to co-production' training prior to the network meetings commencing to ensure that they had a baseline understanding of the approach.

Over the course of the project, the champions fed into the learning phase, co-designed what they wanted the champion role to entail, supported the development of the co-production policy and learned from case studies of co-production in action.

- 2.2.1 At present, there are 48 officers on the Co-production Champions Network list. The champions are available to services wanting to develop more co-production activities. They can act as a critical friend, provide advice and advocate for co-production across the Council.

2.3 Co-production Training

A suite of training sessions was delivered to council staff, covering various aspects of co-production:

- **Introduction to Co-production:** For staff with minimal knowledge, addressing the question "Is co-production for us?"
- **Implementing Co-production:** Practical planning and potential challenges of applying co-production to real-life scenarios.
- **How to Share Co-production:** Tools and materials for staff to share co-production within their teams.
- **Facilitation Skills:** Techniques for effective facilitation, including online methods.
- **Forming Groups for Co-production:** Tips for recruiting members and developing a shared code of conduct.
- **Co-producing Strategies:** Using co-production for regional strategies and policies.
- **Co-recruitment:** Involving people with lived experience in staff recruitment.

- 2.3.1 Videos of each session are included in the co-production toolkit also produced as part of the project.

2.4 Co-production Toolkit

A comprehensive toolkit was developed to assist staff and members in implementing co-production. Hosted on the staff intranet available for anyone to use, the toolkit includes:

- Definitions and reasons for co-production
- Legislative and policy context
- Stakeholder and community mapping
- Meeting and workshop design and facilitation
- Case studies and training videos

This toolkit provides a huge amount of information and guidance to staff wanting to use a more co-productive approach within the council.

2.5 Co-production Policy

A key element of the project was the development of a Co-production Policy for the council. A high-level policy has been developed to support creating the conditions for co-production to be considered as an approach where appropriate by council staff and members. The policy was approved by Council in January 2024 (*see Appendix A*)

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure that co-production is considered alongside other methods of engagement and applied in all areas where it can add value, across the entire scope of the council's work.
- ensure the term 'co-production' is understood consistently throughout the council.
- encourage a consistent approach to co-production across council departments and when talking about co-production with other organisations and residents.

2.5.1 This policy provides council staff and members with the framework to incorporate co-production behaviours in the work they do and the services they deliver. The policy draws on the good work undertaken within Social Services, specifically the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board Strategic Co-production Framework and Swansea Council's Co-production for Social Care Strategy.

2.5.2 Developing the Policy

The policy has been co-produced with council staff and members:

- **Whilst the main aim of this policy is to increase co-production for Swansea residents, the main users of this policy will be council staff.** For this reason, Co-Production Lab Wales have involved council staff and members in their research and engagement during their work of designing the corporate policy.

- **The scope to influence/shape the policy from a citizen perspective is limited.** The policy builds on and fits around a number of existing council policies and strategies, governance arrangements and is based on best practice in the field of co-production. Co-Production Lab Wales were commissioned to draft the policy based on their co-production practice expertise.
- **This policy is helping to build the infrastructure needed to co-produce with citizens in the future.** Whilst some departments and projects are further ahead in their co-production journey, the council as a whole is at an early stage in its journey.
- **Co-producing policy is one of the most advanced types of co-production.** The council should aim to do more co-production at this level in the future, after staff have gained more experience and built more confidence in co-production. It is also important to have built more relationships with citizens who are equipped and trained to take part in strategic co-production.

2.5.3 As the main audience of the policy is council staff, we involved a wide range of internal stakeholders to co-produce the content and feed into its development:

- Discussions with Corporate Management Team
- Corporate Services & Financial Resilience Service Transformation Committee
- Leadership team session
- Cabinet discussions
- Co-production champions

2.6 Advice and Support for Live Projects

Teams across the Council were invited to have conversations with the Co-production Lab Wales team to scope potential support for live projects or issues.

Various teams within Swansea Council received support and mentoring for live projects, these were:

- **Gower Domiciliary Care Support:** Co-produced service specifications with service users to inform tendering processes.
- **Diversity Networks:** Scoped the implementation of diversity networks to engage with lived experiences.
- **West Glamorgan CYP Participation & Engagement:** Supported the development of a regional strategy for children and young people.
- **Community Co-production and Social Value Development:** Developed a project brief and role scope for embedding co-production and social value.
- **Community Hubs Scoping Session:** Explored the role of community hubs as a future model and fostering collaboration between services.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 The council's co-production project, in collaboration with Co-production Lab Wales, has made significant strides in embedding a culture of co-production.
- 3.2 The learning phase identified existing good practices and areas for improvement, while the Co-production Champions Network and comprehensive training sessions equipped staff with the necessary skills and knowledge.
- 3.3 The development of a corporate co-production policy and a practical toolkit further supports the council's commitment to an increase of the use of co-productive approaches across the Council.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The Council's Corporate Management Team has supported the project and its outcomes from its inception. With the policy, toolkit and champions in place, we have a solid foundation to increase of the use of co-productive approaches across the Council.
- 4.2 CMT committed that the Co-production Policy and toolkit will be promoted across the Council. Both senior managers and co-production champions will help promote the benefits of co-production and the support that's available for those wanting to use more co-productive approaches.
- 4.3 The Strategic Equality Board will monitor the impact of the Co-production Policy as part of the Human Rights and Strategic Equality Plan annual review process.

5. Legal implications

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

6. Finance Implications

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

7. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 7.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

7.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

7.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

7.2 As this is an information report there is no need for an IIA.

Background papers: None

Appendices: Appendix A – Co-production Policy