# Sandwell Coproduction Charter Feedback from community / residents (Held throughout October / November 2023)

#### Coproduction is...

- When we worked together as a group to find out what we would like to do in the school holidays.
- ~ When we worked together to fill in an application form to do the activities in the school holiday.
- ~ All working together to find out what is needed and what we want and try and come up with something that we are all happy about.
- ~ When things are done together, as a group?
- ~ Getting ideas from people
- I think it's a way for people who make decisions feel as though they have asked local residents their views on things but in the end they do just what they want anyway.
- ~ A lot of it comes to nothing and it becomes a waste of time
- ~ Views are put across to those who hold the purse strings

# Coproduction is NOT about...

- ~ Bad customer experience is an issue that needs to be dealt with
- ~ There is a lack of update and communication re Housing and waiting for something appropriate to become available.
- ~ Shouldn't have to get too complaints before anything is done
- "We are asked for our views and feedback quite often but it's just a tick box nothing is actually done about what we say."
- Housing needs for 'individuals' are not considered properly as everyone has a unique situation
- ~ Some tenants said they genuinely feel that they are 'made to feel guilty' for having a housing need.

#### The Charter should ...

- ~ Be simple, clearly communicated set of principles.
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- Address those in the community who are living on the margins there was a feeling that some areas are getting more priority, resources and attention than others. This needs to be acknowledged and recognised and reasons more clearly communicated.

#### Working together better means...

- 1. People: Who / getting the right people: "Passion comes from people"
- Have dedicated housing officers who attend community spaces (e.g. ground floor Addenbrooke Court) at a set day of the week and set time

- Local groups can be good sources to raise concerns and issues, but they are not always representative.
- ~ Remember that each person is unique see people as individuals
- Adapt what you do to include people properly: language, ability, communication styles. Don't expect people to join in and understand the landscape like professionals do - they will see things from the grassroots.
- People are struggling with the basics think about what would be valuable to them in terms of recognition for their involvement/supporting them to be involved e.g.: travel
- People go where they 'feel comfortable- this point was reinforced twice in the discussion on this question, the sense of connection people felt to a particular group or place meant it was more likely that they would participate and share their concerns with those in that organisation/ group / activity than expect them to go someone unfamiliar to make their views on an issue heard. Recognise the challenges this places on public and VCS bodies when seeking to consult as you are dealing with individuals who already have some level of engagement with others.
- Recognise the specific challenges for newer communities in Sandwell go to the places they go for their voice, language needs and accessibility.
- How you can ensure equality between those involved in the co-production process.
- Steps are taken to ensure those who feel / are disconnected from the community or those who have experienced racism and / or discrimination are proactively included.
- Questions about how youth can / are involved in the process and the impact that lower/ lack of youth provision might contribute to lower levels of engagement from young people.
- ~ Engagement of the elderly and the possible work via warm spaces.
- How do those who are at work engage in co-production activities if this is being done during the day?
- ~ Is a felt need for all people to connect with others and local plans?
- Impact of travel costs to be involved in co-production meetings. Also, time and questions about perceived fear of crime within some sections of the community which could be a barrier to involvement?
- How will local people / organisations would be involved to make the process inclusive but also manageable – this would be helpful to communicate as part of the process.
- ~ Could the council identify specific community representative who would be involved on specific issues of interest or at a town level?
- Focus on youth engagement, building stronger connections between volunteering and employment as a way of helping young people to feel stronger investment in the local community/ place.
- Some work on intergenerational connections between groups and communities was seen as useful in helping deal with issues that people felt a strong local connection too.
- For new communities or those who may have moved into Sandwell from other parts of the UK: to what extent or how do people get an understanding of the history of Sandwell and what makes it what it is, how do new comers develop / if they need/ want to a sense of connection and belonging to place /

Sandwell as a whole? What do local people feel and how might this affect town vs. Sandwell wide co-production discussions?

# 2. Good communication

- ~ Information accessible i.e.: easy read.
- Ensure regular communication about the process and what is happening and being considered through the co-production process to give others the opportunity for comment and involvement.
- ~ There should be more conversations
- ~ Use simple straightforward language (not council speak)
- ~ Use lots of different ways of communicating with people
- Think about using Teams and Zoom to speak with people it is easier for some - but face to face easier for others
- Use local newsletter to highlight things coming up: changes etc. Involve people in writing it/get residents involved in writing them
- ~ Less email
- Emails do not work for everyone. One tenant said they need a phone number or face to face.
- ~ Clear communication
- "We need people (from the Council) we can speak to regularly not just once a year. They should be someone you can get on with and know they are going to work with you."
- More 1:1 conversations about housing needs and individual circumstances rather than IT systems and emails
- A need for more systems to enable face to face dialogue between council officers and tenants and residents.
- Online/ Face book consultations don't always work and can exclude sections of the community e.g., elderly, those who are not digitally literate. Need to recognise the limits and ensure co-production is meaningful.
- Consultations must be accessible one delegate noted that there is only a copy of the current Oldbury consultation available in Oldbury Library – but this is not available in Langley library for example which is part of Oldbury town.
- Comment on the council's Herald and the opportunity to provide more information on cop-production and community activities through this means and make it less of a council focus?
- ~ Listen to people
- ~ Let us know how things work (so we understand what can and can't be done)
- If we are consulted or asked what we think we want to know what has happened
- ~ Peer support is important acknowledge
- ~ Understand the value and what people get from each other

# 3. Honesty, trust and keeping to your word

- ~ Trust respect honesty
- Tell the community the truth especially around funding. Be upfront about what's possible and not possible
- There was also a plea for honesty about what is possible in the coproduction process, what the budget is for a specific project and honesty that tough decisions need to be made at times sometimes between competing priorities.

- ~ Trust people to come up with ideas
- ~ Listen to what we know works
- ~ Listen people have good ideas
- ~ Listen to people's experiences
- ~ The main concerns from the group were that they didn't want the Coproduction Charter to be another 'tick box' exercise.
- $\sim$  let the community know when things are changing/things need to be changed
- Trust building/ rebuilding trust with individuals and the wider community seen as crucial. Several in the group commented on a perceived legacy of not being listened to and of no feedback from previous council consultations. Any new approach to co-production must be clear about how we can ensure communities get feedback on their views and contribution – people need to feel a sense that something has changed as a result of being involved. Participants spoke of the need to see results from their involvement in consultation and co-production.
- ~ Focus on building trust with the wider community.
- Recognise there is sensitivity around certain issues people in one area may feel a strong attachment to a place/ park / building etc which might be the focus of change, social / public health services changes might also illicit string feelings too. Listening to the wider community to understand people's concerns as well as ideas is key.
- There is a need for honesty about how long term a service / change might be. There is less willingness to be involved in a process that produced an outcome which is then changed by a new administration or set of policy priorities. People don't want to commit to something that is seen as 'a Fad'

# 4. Decision making

- $\sim~$  Stop trying to push square pegs into round holes ask people what is useful to them/what works from them
- ~ Sandwell people should decide and choose priorities
- "We are never part of the decision making we just get told it is happening.
   What if we had suggestions for how closures could be avoided?"
- ~ Start from point of view that people know their own situation
- Ask the people of Sandwell what's important to them what would make life better
- ~ Ask don't impose things or assume
- Fed up with being asked what they thought of things and felt changes should start from what people actually want, not being asked about a plan that is already in place.
- ~ Match funding to what is needed not the other way
- ~ Outcomes should come from people not from professionals (at all levels)
- "The Council needs to come and listen to what the issues are and how we would resolve them. They can then work with us to plan how to do that."

# 5. Being clear at every stage

~ Officers should have a strict time frame when they have to respond

- ~ What difference is the change / service / building / plan going to make to the community, who may need to be persuaded of the merits of getting involved in co-production?
- People think they are consulted' with often (for some too often) but that there
  was already a plan in place and what they said wouldn't be taken into
  consideration.

#### 6. Valuing people's experience and views

- ~ "When the Social Worker does their assessment, they need to properly listen to us and to what we need. Then we should be able to work together to find solutions not just told what is going to happen."
- "It would be nice to be properly listened to. Changes to services are often made because of decisions higher up by people who have no idea what it is like to be a carer or have dementia. You need to walk in our shoes, see what our lives are like."
- "Our communities know what they need better than someone in the council who doesn't even live in Sandwell."

#### 7. Building connections

- Need for a greater understanding of the current connections between community and the CVS organisations and the extent to which they have an active community voice in their own organisational set up. Greater connections between vol and community sector organisations was seen as a priority.
- ~ Something that helps build local and cross-town connections would be helpful with building a sense of connection and belonging to Sandwell as a whole.

#### 8. General / other

- $\sim$  To have health services in one place.
- ~ Not to have duplicate services.
- ~ To have services on bus routes.
- ~ To have drop in services.
- ~ To have the right support.
- ~ Focus on holistic services that do more than one thing
- ~ Prevention comes through holistic services

#### Examples of benefits to better involvement (for tenants)...

- Being confident to put their ideas forward to the council and the council supporting them
- Starting important conversations between tenants and residents and council officers
- ~ Organising events in the Addenbrooke Community Space (ground floor flat)
- ~ Emailing councillors and the leader of the council
- ~ Organising their first community day
- $\sim~$  Writing an introductory letter from tenants to other tenants in the two tower blocks
- ~ Attending drop-ins with the community partnerships team

- ~ Tenants and residents understanding their position as they 'see what's happening 24/7'
- Tenants and residents explaining that they know the 'reality' of where they live and therefore are best placed to have an understanding about issues and what's needed in their area
- Tenants and residents stating that it's their children using the parks and therefore they are best placed to know what works well, what doesn't work and what would be best in terms of new play equipment.
- $\sim\,$  They (tenants) had built relationships with the workers of the community partnerships team
- ~ They (tenants) had a good understanding of planning activities and working with children in a community setting
- ~ They(tenants) had grown in confidence
- ~ They (tenants) had also built the confidence to do more 1:1 work within their community by carrying out door-knocking to reach more tenants.
- They (tenants) had made more regular connections within the community they live (they speak to more people, especially those they've met at activities in the community space)
- ~ They (tenants) gained a good understanding of the need for flexibility when working in a community setting.

# Young people: Good ways of sharing information, getting views and involving...

- There are lots of ways, especially using social media such as Twitter (X), Face book, and Instagram etc.
- Some schools have screen in the reception area; you could always put something on there and talk about it during form time.
- We could be asked in forums like this one can those that want the feedback ask you to ask us? Or other groups that work with children and young people?
- ~ Talk to us about what you are planning
- ~ Use social media apps.
- We enjoyed using survey monkey when we couldn't do our face to face workshop, at least we could still take part. Our parents interacted with this one too.
- ~ Using mentimetre when we were together.
- $\sim\,$  It's good to do it in more fun ways. I think more people take part and give their views when you offer a choice of digital and face to face.
- $\sim\,$  Hold meetings in school, we use a tally chart in school where we give yes or no answers
- ~ Visit our school committee meetings and talk to us
- ~ Use quizzes to interact
- Invite to a meeting however, I don't normally read notices from the council addressed to the occupier, or leaflets these go straight in the bin. I would prefer correspondence to be personalised either parent of, or use my name.
- $\sim$  I find apps useful e.g. the school uses apps to communicate with us.
- ~ Could consider using You Tube to better explain what is to be planned.

# Sandwell Coproduction Charter Feedback from steering group (Held 30th November 2023)

The workshop considered 4 key questions in thinking about the Charter. Feedback under each question below has been grouped into broad themes.

# 1. We need to work in a coproduced way because...

#### Key themes:

# Outcomes

- Better outcomes
- · Services that work saves money as we commission what people want
- Delivers the best quality ie: people access services
- Quality assured
- Better, more effective services
- Better outcomes what is commissioned is what is wanted and needed
- Shared outcomes
- Cost effective in the long run instead of commissioning services that don't fit the needs of communities
- We can't deliver what people want unless we know what they want!
- Person-centred
- Normally simpler solutions for people than organisations think about
- Coproduction links to prevention

# Wider benefits of coproduction

- Comes up with new ideas
- · Allows for creativity not just professional ideas wider range of solutions
- Flexible parameters choice
- We should build on what is strong not what is wrong!
- Different assets bringing all to the table
- · Makes use of assets
- · Builds communities and strengths
- Community/individual ownership
- · Accountable to communities we serve and adding value
- · Accountability to the communities we serve
- Honesty and transparency builds trust
- Realistic: giving the truth/what's possible takes people on the journey

# **Power sharing**

- · Shared power eg: participatory budgeting
- · It supports the process of sharing power

- Coproduction challenges power/shifts power
- To truly coproduce you have to let go of power; balance of power
- With you not to you
- Doing with not for people! Or to them!
- People see themselves as in it
- Signed up

# Ethical

- It's the right thing to do
- It's the right thing to do because: we're not the experts; lived experience will help inform better, more effective, more appropriate, cost effective, fit for purpose
- The right thing to do cost effective equity more of a voice choice collaboration
- It's the right thing to do- if we don't we miss out on the value of lived experience/people closer to the issue/on the ground/at grassroots

# Experts by experience

- People using services (experts by experience) are best placed to design/shape
- People using services are best placed to design and shape them but with an eye on the detail: prevention, development, wider context, accessibility, people using services now and in the future.
- · Benefit from lived experience
- We don't know everything

- Differences between co-commissioning, co-delivery, co-assessment.
- Blobs to squares
- Cultural sensitivity and making sure this is thought about

2. Lived experience, expertise and knowledge is important for what we do across health, the council and the community sector because...

#### Key themes:

#### Value of experience

- Provides insights and learning
- Everyone has gifts of the head, heart, hands and feet
- People are our greatest strengths
- They will know what the issues, and maybe, the solutions are
- Real people are affected by services, rather than labels eg: disabled etc
- Brings understanding and insight
- They know the services in detail and area they are in
- They experience the services whereas we don't

#### **Outcomes for services**

- Services will be grounded in reality
- Makes things simpler and streamlined less complicated

# Other

- How we work together, within the council, across sectors we all bring different knowledge
- Coproduction vs consultation: decision making/power sharing/ownership/accountability/responsibility and consequences
- Issue of time and resources
- Still need to improve connections between these {health, council & community sector}

# 3. Principles/pledges/promises

NB: There was general agreement that the Charter needs to include **<u>pledges</u>** rather than principles.

#### Key themes:

# Behaviour when coproducing

- Be honest
- Openness we will be clear about what we expect/want from people's involvement
- · Honesty about what can and can't be done/what is and isn't possible
- We should be transparent when reviewing, changing or setting up a new service
- Be clear throughout at every stage
- Transparency about who is doing what
- We will be honest with people with the resources we have
- We tell people what coproduction is and how you can get involved in telling us your views\* / having an equal voice (to / for / with / by)
- Adapt what you do to include people properly: language, ability, communication styles (ie: don't expect people to understand professionals language)
- Relatable work in a way that people can relate to and makes sense eg: using easy read
- We will come to you, rather than you come to us where you feel comfortable
- We work inclusively to get the best outcomes for everyone
- Inclusive; commitment to accessibility (the Charter itself in different formats)
- Each agency will be clear to the people they work with about how they can get involved
- Inclusion give time for a community development approach
- Good and ongoing communication even if it's negative. Be honest and keep to your word to build trust.
- Accessibility language use, venues, access etc
- Honesty about what choices / offences meaningful
- Coproduction needs to be locally relatable, ie: someone's needs / wishes / ideas / views in Tipton will be different from someone's in Smethwick.
- Language needs to make sense to the people we seek to involve in a piece or coproduction activity
- We will go to people closest to the issue
- People close to the issue are involved
- Getting the right people
- Residents should be involved from beginning to end
- Inclusion go to where people are at, at the right times
- Go to where you need Trusted Voices! Always listen to what people have to say

# **Recognition of everyone's input**

- Power recognising resident's time and effort to address power imbalance. Does this mean paying people? Other rewards?
- Reward people for their time and sharing expertise and experience
- Value people's experience and views recognise people's assets and build on strengths.
- Each organisation will be clear on how you will be compensated/rewarded/remunerated for your expertise and time eg: paid, bought linch etc
- Inclusion recognition / reward / incentive minimum "not out of pocket". Issue of volunteering.
- Mutually beneficial / mutual commitments
- "What's in it for me?" = people may want to get involved in something that directly affects/ impacts on them or their immediate environment.
- We can't leave people behind
- Common ground / common interest brings people together and can unite them
   on an issue
- We will up-skill/train you for your role which can help provide other opportunities (eg:build up a CV)
- Opportunities for people to develop training / skills / self-development

# **Embedding coproduction**

- Embed in commissioning cycles/project reviews/monitoring/continuous improvement processes/impact assessments
- · Embed in the cycle culture needs to change
- Embed leadership/management has to sign up
- Embed service users past, present and future customer journey / exit interviews
- Planning with coproduction weaved in strive to make it business as usual
- Revisiting and ongoing

# Commitment

- Coproduction can / should be the default approach to any change
- Through coproduction rather than a tokenistic coproduction each agency will make time for coproduction, if possible, and we will expand our pool of lived experience people
- Sharing knowledge, limitations and parameters eg: how to work with ICB not whether we have ICB
- Commitment from the public sector organisations to talk to each other; and the departments/directorates to talk to each other & work together (not duplicate). Responsibility to do this; holistic & joined up.
- Agencies need a clear procedure for coproducing
- Coordinated by someone impacted by an issue
- Make good choices about who leads on each coproduction programme
- Involve vol/community sector who aren't commissioned.

#### Governance

- If an organisation signs up to the Pledge/Charter then that organisation becomes part of the steering group
- The steering group will: raise awareness of coproduction; share good practice & ideas; support projects with expertise; review & refresh Charter
- We will communicate with other organisations when things are changing / developing / coming to an end
- If a service is changed or decommissioned we will bring users on board / involve in the review
- As organisations we will commit to using coproduction when we can
- Each agency that 'signs up' has a representative that also joins the steering group.
- As agencies we will learn from each other and together
- Agencies share any coproduction exercises and information to try and avoid duplication.
- Good ongoing communication; a named person / team to coordinate from the lead body
- · Resources in the council and in the sector

# Responsibility and accountability

- Release power and champion empowerment
- Releasing power is key
- · Recognising value
- Be held to accountant to those in power but to our communities
- · Hold colleagues to account start of culture shift
- · Accountability to residents / holding each other to account
- Who are the squarely bombs who will hold the squares accountable for coproduction on behalf of the blobs.

- Where should Charter sit? ICB? HWB?
- Charter not called coproduction people don't buy into it anymore / overused / not used properly
- Coproduction Portal?

# 4. What should the Charter look like?

#### Key themes:

- Comply with accessibility standards
- Plain English
- · Easy Read and other formats
- No jargon
- Locally relatable (language)
- Short eg: 1 page
- Short and concise
- **Pledges** not promises
- Not rules needs to offer flexibility
- · Must be able to deliver on it
- Include sentence opener "We will..."
- "We will..." Language
- Signed by agencies with info about who 'we'/ the agencies are
- Widely adopted (LA, ICB, ICS, MHT, Vol sector etc)
- Something partners can be held to
- · Description of who 'you' are and who 'we' are
- · 'You' lived experience of services / circumstances / issues
- Resources available
- · Value people's involvement

# Sandwell Place Based Coproduction Charter 2024

# Feedback from Steering group workshop held on November 30th 2023

# 1. We need to work in a coproduced way because...

# Key themes:

- Better outcomes

- Services that work saves money as we commission what people want
- Delivers the best quality ie: people access services
- Quality assured
- Better, more effective services
- Better outcomes what is commissioned is what is wanted and needed
- Shared outcomes
- Cost effective in the long run instead of commissioning services that don't fit the needs of communities
- We can't deliver what people want unless we know what they want!
- Person-centred
- Coproduction links to prevention
- Shared power eg: participatory budgeting
- It supports the process of sharing power
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- To truly coproduce you have to let go of power; balance of power
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- People see themselves as in it
- Signed up
- Comes up with new ideas
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- Different assets bringing all to the table
- Makes use of assets
- Builds communities and strengths
- Community/individual ownership
- Accountable to communities we serve and adding value
- Accountability to the communities we serve

- Honesty and transparency builds trust
- Realistic: giving the truth/what's possible takes people on the journey
- It's the right thing to do
- It's the right thing to do because: we're not the experts; lived experience will help inform better, more effective, more appropriate, cost effective, fit for purpose
- The right thing to do cost effective equity more of a voice choice collaboration
- It's the right thing to do- if we don't we miss out on the value of lived experience/people closer to the issue/on the ground/at grassroots
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- People using services are best placed to design and shape them but with an eye on the detail: prevention, development, wider context, accessibility, people using services now and in the future.
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- We don't know everything

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- Services will be grounded in reality
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#### 3. Principles/pledges/promises

NB: General agreement that the Charter needs to include <u>pledges</u> rather than principles.

#### Key themes:

- Be honest
- Openness we will be clear about what we expect/want from people's involvement
- Honesty about what can and can't be done/what is and isn't possible
- We should be transparent when reviewing, changing or setting up a new service
- Be clear throughout at every stage

то	FOR
WITH	BY

- Transparency about who is doing what
- We will be honest with people with the resources we have
- We tell people what coproduction is and how you can get involved in telling us your views\* / having an equal voice \*
- Adapt what you do to include people properly: language, ability, communication styles (ie: don't expect people to understand professionals language)
- Relatable work in a way that people can relate to and makes sense eg: using easy read
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- We work inclusively to get the best outcomes for everyone
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- Something partners can be held to
- 10 pledges
- Pledges not promises
- Not rules needs to offer flexibility
- Must be able to deliver on it
- Description of who 'you' are and who 'we' are
- 'You' lived experience of services / circumstances / issues
- Resources available
- Value people's involvement