

When everything is called co-design

Setting co-design standards

Service Design in Gov, Virtual 2025

Henrietta Curzon

- 1 About me and Newham
- 2 How the journey began
- 3 What we did
- 4 The standards
- 5 Key learning



22 years in
local
government

14 years in
service design





Mayor

Cabinet

- 1 About me and Newham
- 2 How the journey began
- 3 What we did
- 4 The standards
- 5 Key learning

Let's co-design!

A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt, is smiling and holding up a large blue speech bubble sign with his right hand. The sign has white text that reads "Let's work jointly with residents to create this".

Let's work jointly
with residents to
create this

A woman with dark hair, smiling, is holding up a large pink speech bubble sign with both hands. The sign has white text that reads "Let's inform the resident forum".

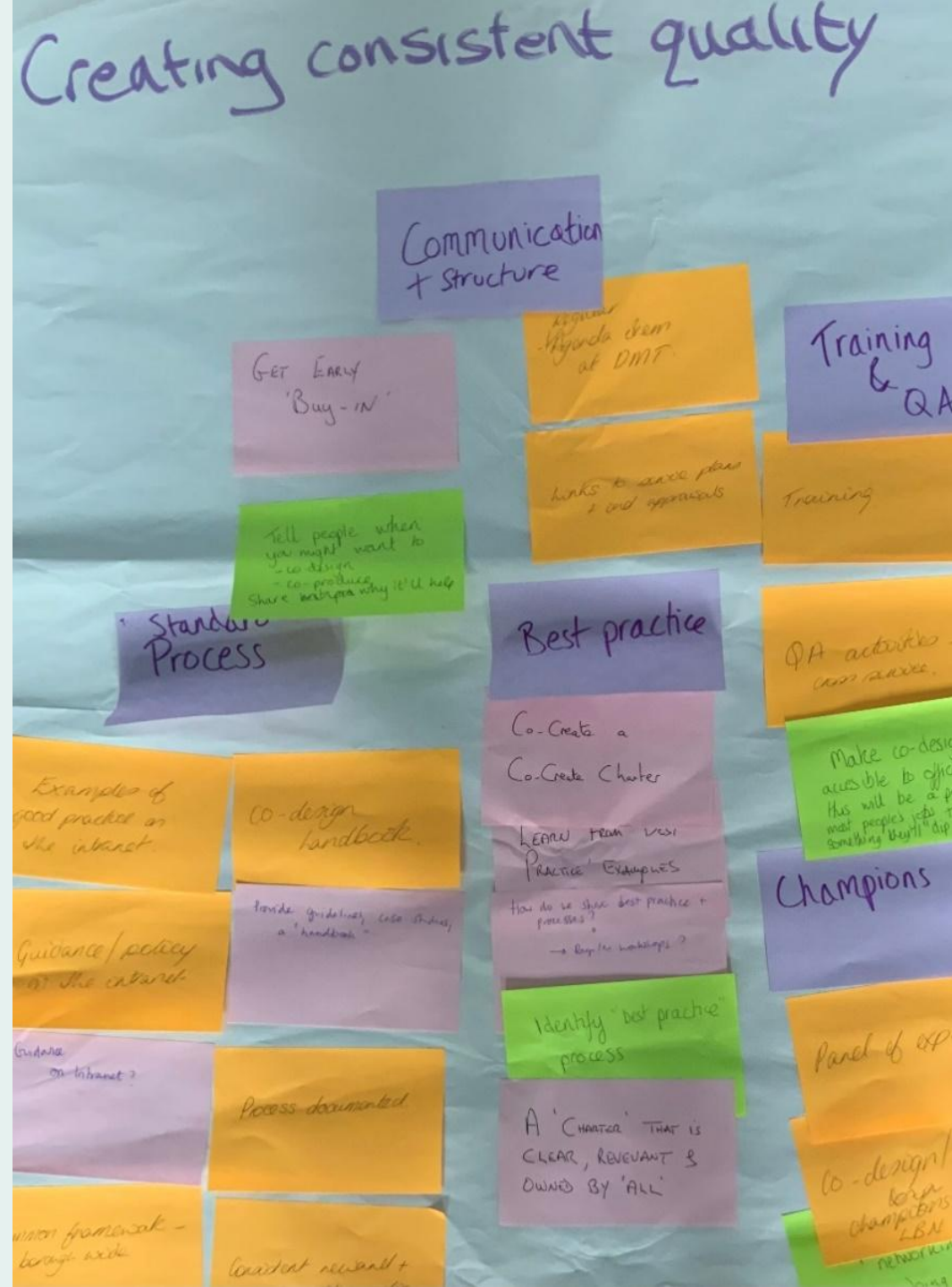
Let's
inform the
resident
forum

A woman with curly hair, smiling, is holding up a large teal speech bubble sign with both hands. The sign has white text that reads "Let's speak with lots of local residents".

Let's speak
with lots of
local
residents

Step 1 | Assess current landscape

- Identified who was doing co-design
- Workshop to map our different approaches



Key findings

- Strong focus on 'co'
- Engagement rather than co-design
- Not distinguishing between co-design team and bigger circle of people involved
- Lack of 'design' activity

Proposal

1

Provide co-design training and develop quality standards

2

Launch a community of practice for co-design practitioners

3

Create consistent funding arrangements

4

Gain leadership endorsement

- 1 About me and Newham
- 2 How the journey began
- 3 What we did
- 4 The standards
- 5 Key learning

Step 2 | Train staff

Facilitated by KA
McKercher,
author of Beyond
Sticky Notes

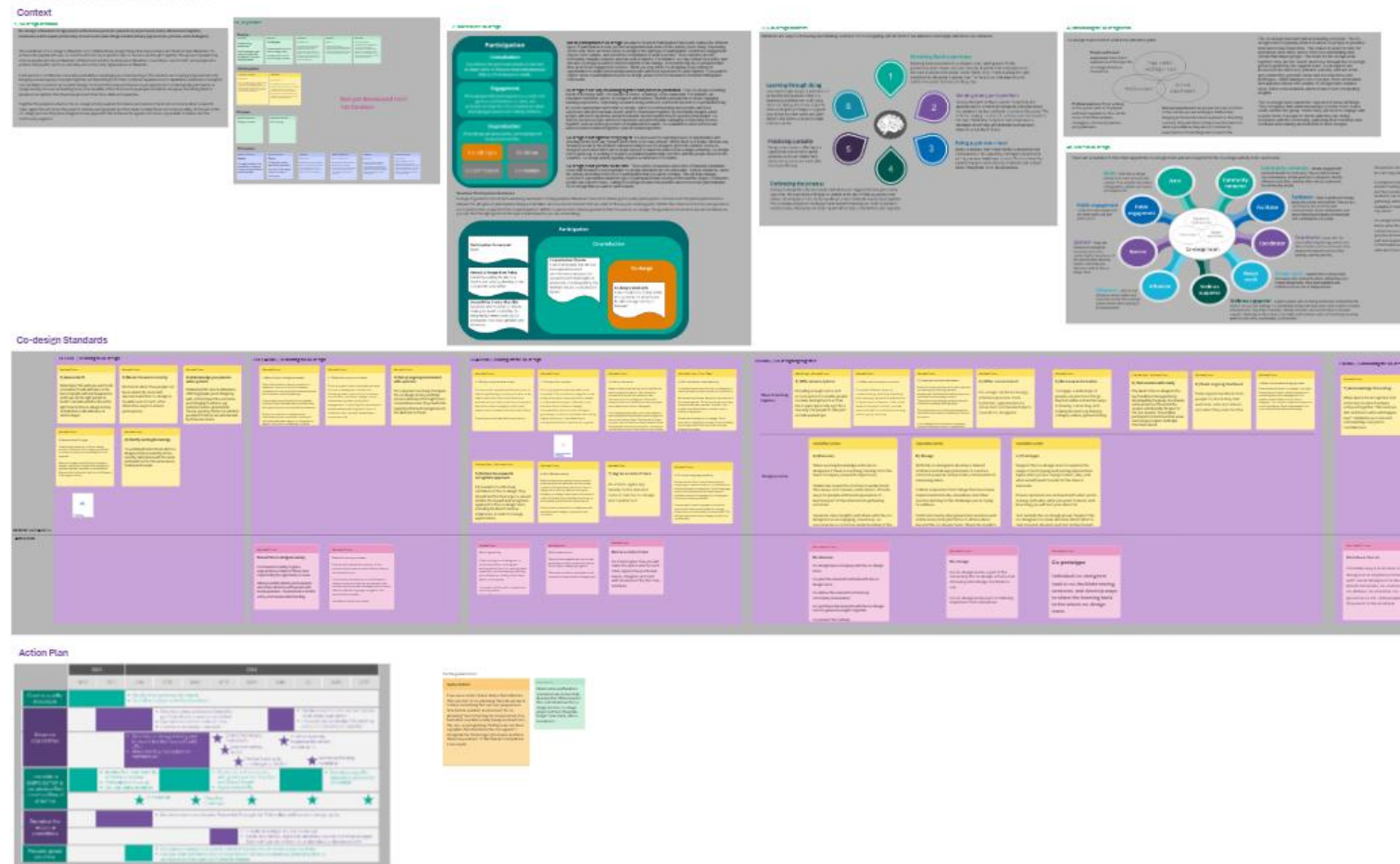


Step 3 | Develop standards

Series of workshops
and asynchronous
working

NEWHAM'S CO-DESIGN STANDARDS | SECOND ITERATION

Please note that this is a draft of the co-design standards. For this draft the focus is on getting the content right. Then we will concentrate on format, style, look and feel etc.



Step 4 | Embed

- ✓ Approved by Corporate Leadership Board
- ✓ Ratified by informal Cabinet
- ✓ Established a participation & co-production network of excellence
- ✓ Set up participation section on the intranet
- ✓ Simplify the Reward & Recognition financial reward process

And there's more...

Co-Design Code of Care

Our aim is to co-create a comfortable and safe space for each other so that everyone feels welcome and included. We all contribute towards achieving and maintaining this.

Everyone is encouraged to share thoughts and ideas about how we can better work together and to voice concerns or discomfort they may have regarding the process or collaboration.

As your hosts, we will work to protect and uphold this at all times. Inform the event organisers if you believe someone is breaking any element of the Code of Care.



Everyone is included

- No 'them' and 'us'
- Barriers and disparities are addressed
- People can bring their whole self
- We accept people's identities

Inclusion



Everyone has something to offer and all contributions are valued

- Everyone is an expert based on their lived/living experience
- Have an open mind

Inclusion



We respect a person's right to confidentiality

- Share on the basis of trust
- Right to remain anonymous
- Names and personal stories shared with permission only

Wellbeing



Wellbeing and safety

- Wellbeing and safety is a priority
- Take care of ourselves
- Don't tolerate comments or behavior that excludes, offends, intimidates or causes discomfort

Wellbeing



We individually choose what and when to share

- Choose when you feel comfortable to share and who with
- No pressure on people to share

Sharing



We communicate and share in an honest, clear and considerate way

- Use plain language
- No offensive comments, actions or language

Sharing



We don't speak on behalf of others

- We talk about our own views and experiences
- We don't make generalisations

Sharing



We are respectful and supportive when people share

- Be curious about each other's viewpoint
- We won't interrupt
- Ask questions respectfully

Understanding & Exploring



Be open and non-judgemental

- Remain open-minded
- Difference is not bad
- Don't blame, attack or put-down
- Critique the issue, idea or topic not an individual

Understanding & Exploring



Know it's okay not to know, to try things out

- Creativity and experimentation are encouraged
- Make mistakes and learn from them

Understanding & Exploring

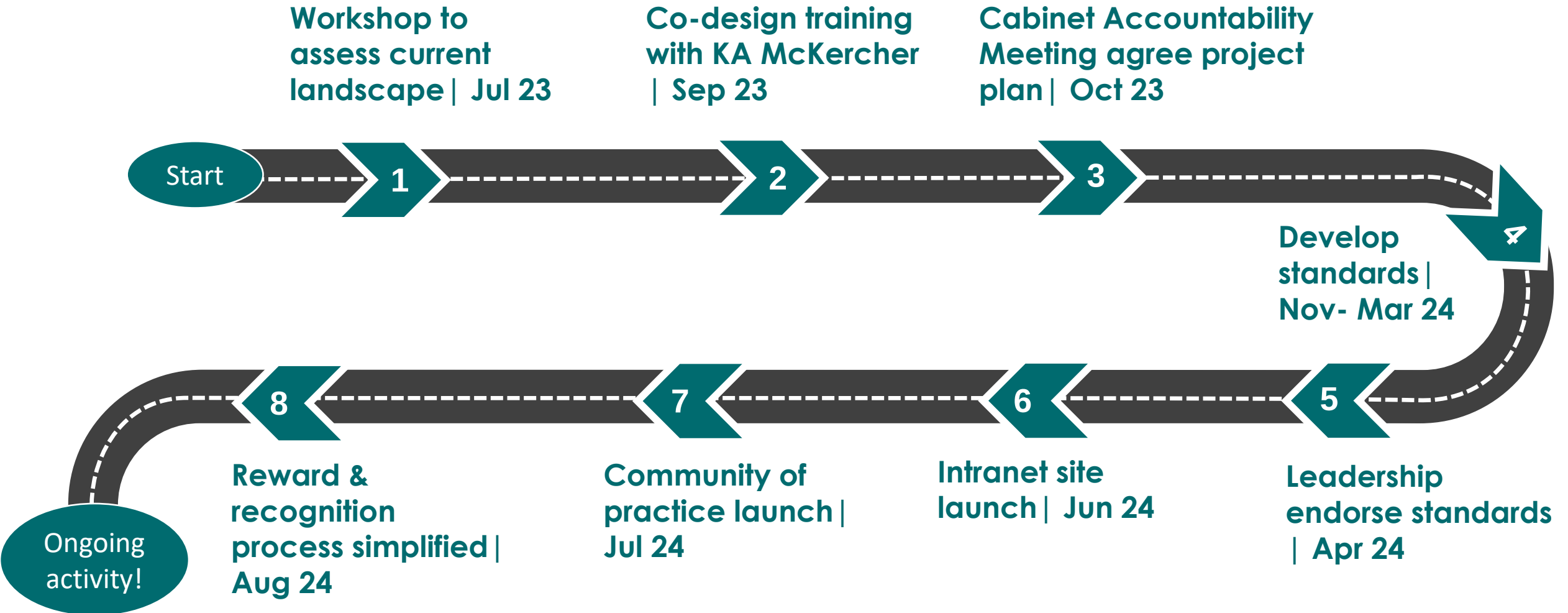


Acknowledge reality and be optimistic for change

- Be honest about the situation
- Work positively to achieve change for the better
- Focus energy on solutions

Understanding & Exploring

Timeline...



- 1 About me and Newham
- 2 How the journey began
- 3 What we did
- 4 The standards
- 5 Key learning

Co-design standards

- Promote common understanding
- Correctly manage expectations
- Enhance co-design capabilities
- Champion participatory democracy
- Successful service improvements, enhanced experiences, and better outcomes for people



Standards content

1 Setting co-design foundations

- What co-design is
- When to use co-design as opposed to other types of participation

2 Getting in the zone

- Co-design mindset
- Co-design team and supporting roles

3 Co-design standards

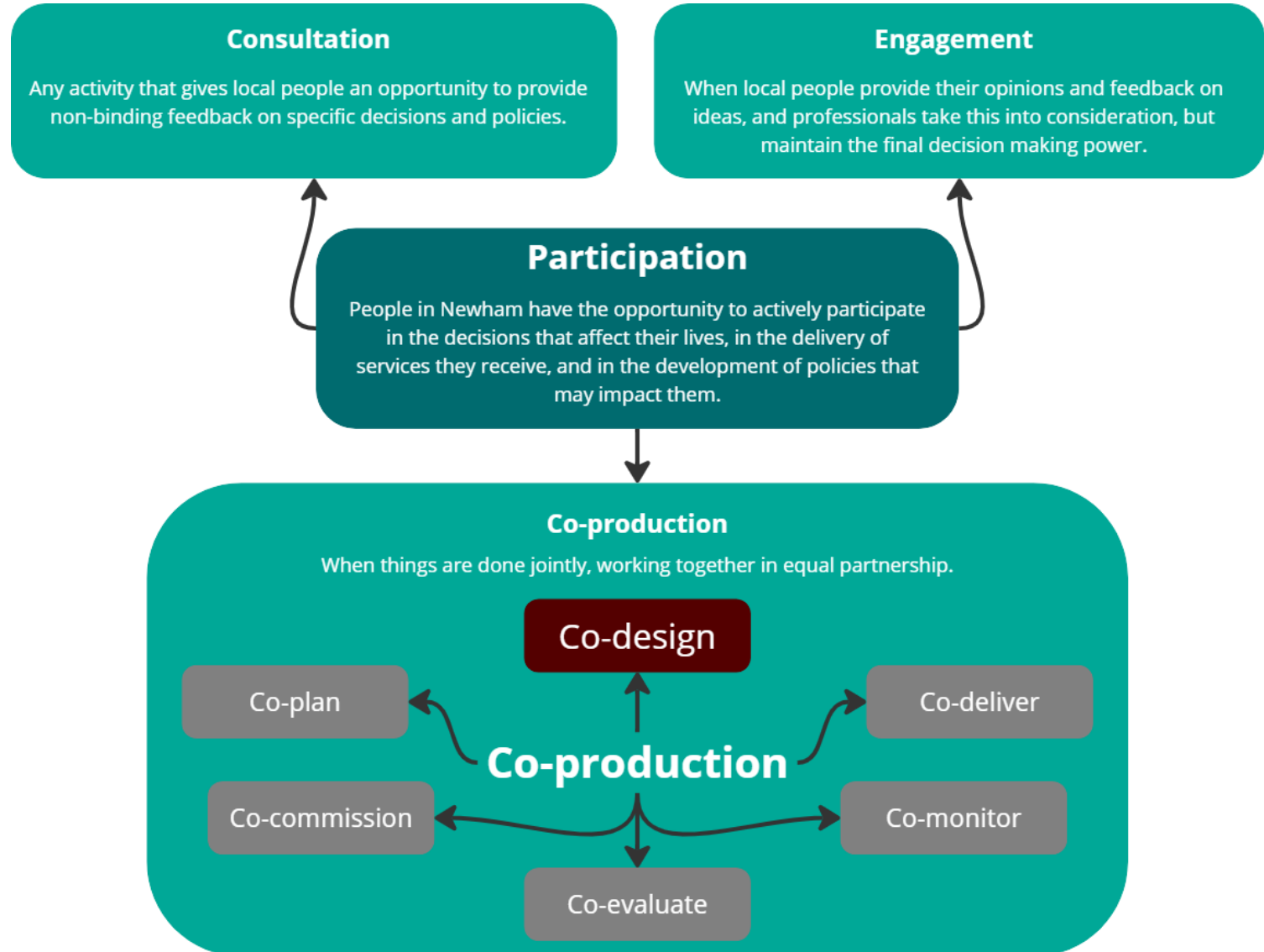
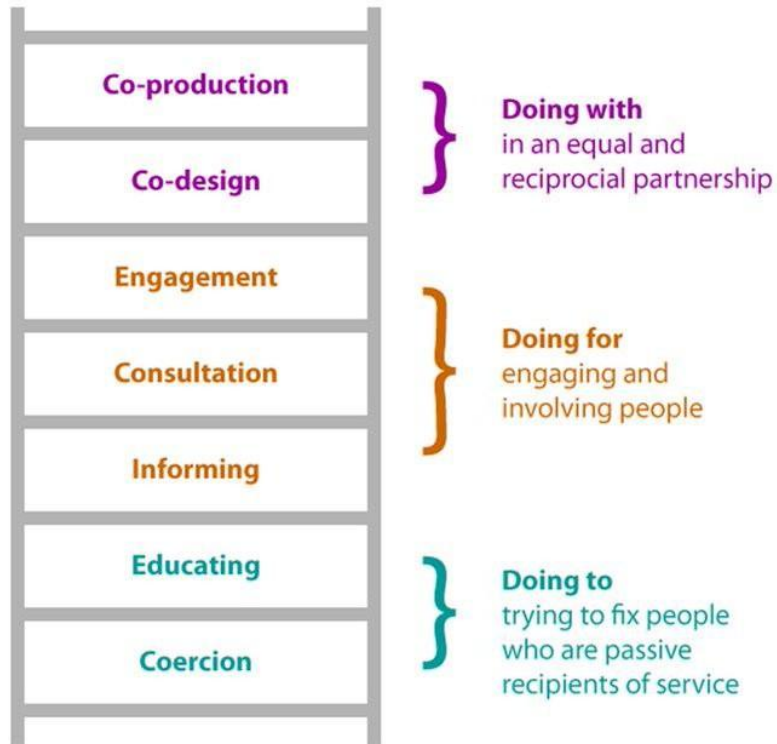
- Deciding to co-design
- Recruiting for co-design
- Kicking off co-design
- Doing co-design
- Concluding co-design

4 Reaching beyond the standards

- Co-design activities that stretch our ambitions beyond the standards

1 Setting co-design foundations

Not all participation is co-design



1 Setting co-design foundations

Co-design is not a community only activity, or a professional only activity.

Co-design is not possible or desirable all the time

If you're not doing co-design, don't call it that

2 Getting in the zone

Co-design mindset

OUR VALUES

HONESTY

EQUALITY

AMBITION

RESPECT

TOGETHER

OUR BEHAVIOURS

We act with integrity

We communicate openly and transparently

We take responsibility if things go wrong

We treat people fairly and consistently

We include everyone in our diverse community

We stand up to injustice and discrimination

We work hard to make Newham better for everyone

We think creatively to find new solutions

We are committed to learning and improving

We treat people with courtesy and compassion

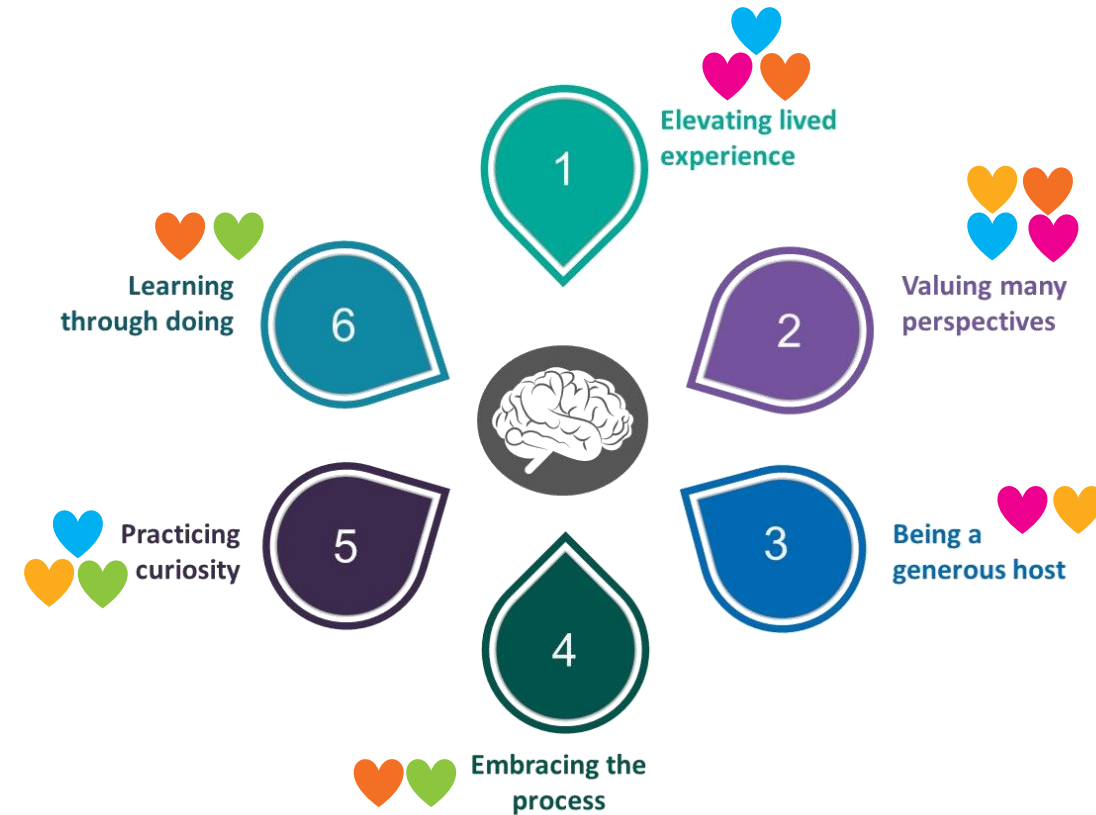
We welcome other people's ideas and perspectives

We consider how our behaviour impacts on others

We are One Council, One Team

We collaborate and coproduce to achieve results

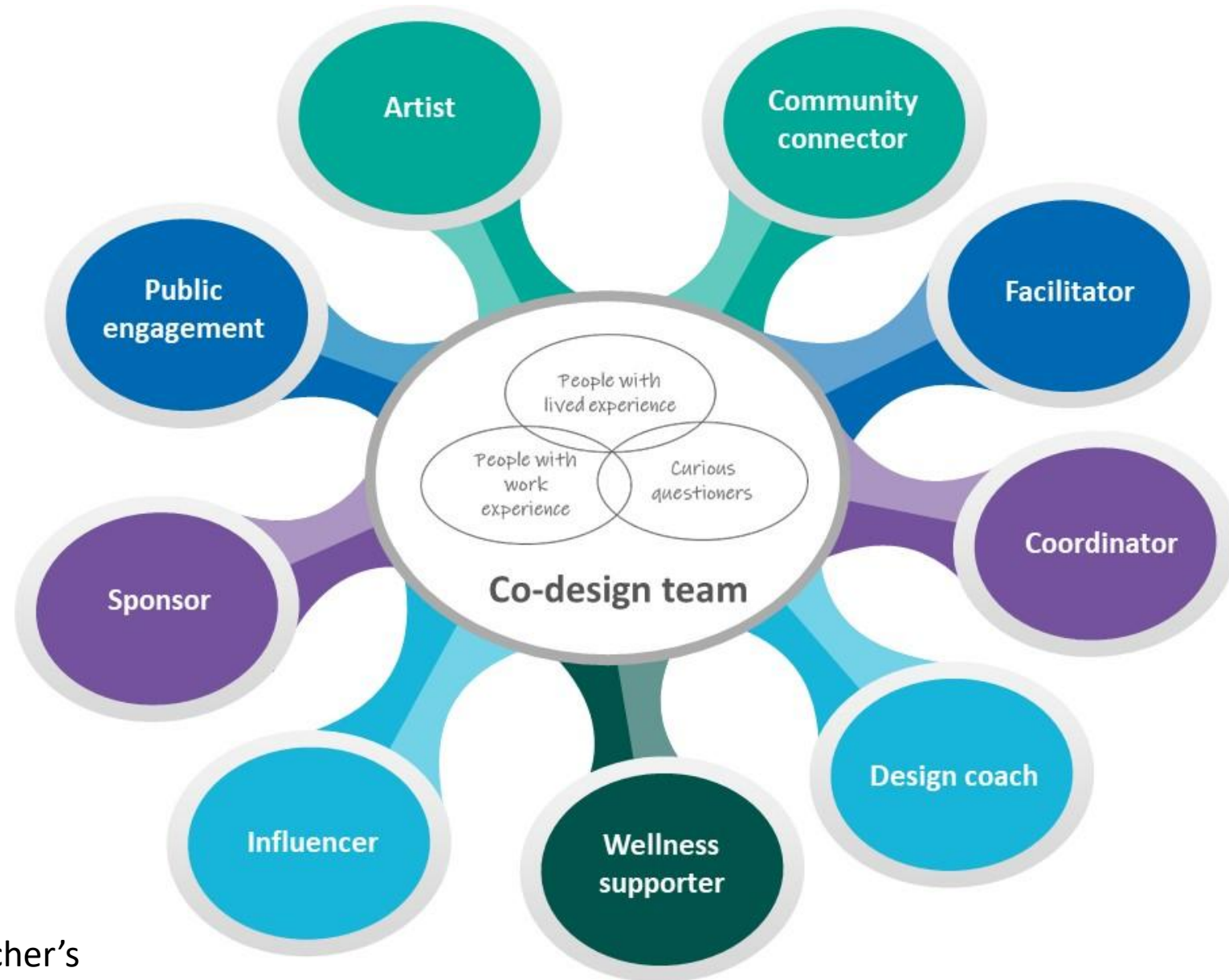
We trust appreciate and constructively challenge each other



<https://www.beyondstickynotes.com/mindsets-for-codesign>



2 Getting in the zone



Based on KA McKercher's
"Beyond Sticky Notes" 2020

3 Co-design standards



Deciding to co-design

Assessing if the work is needed, who to lead it, and whether co-design is the best approach.



Recruiting for co-design

Establishing a co-design team and the supporting roles.



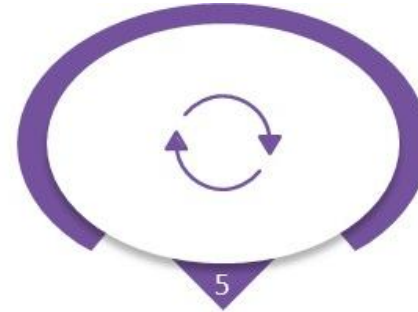
Kicking off co-design

Warmly welcoming everyone, preparing for access and agreeing how to work together.



Doing co-design

Discovering, designing and prototyping together.



Concluding co-design

Acknowledging the ending, capturing lessons, and seeking ongoing relationships.

1 | Deciding to co-design



Deciding to
co-design



Recruiting
for co-design



Kicking off
co-design



Doing
co-design



Concluding
co-design

1 | Assess the fit

Determine if the work you want to do is needed, if it will add value to the lives of people with lived experience, and if you are the right person to lead it. Consider whether this is the right time for this co-design activity and whether it will add value or create fatigue. [1]

2 | Name the work honestly

Be honest about how people can be involved. Be clear with sponsors whether co-design is feasible and, if it isn't, offer alternative ways to ensure participation. [2]

3 | Acknowledge your place in wider systems

Understand the structural barriers affecting people you're designing with, or that impact the outcomes you're hoping to achieve. (eg systemic racism, generational trauma, poverty). Reflect on whether you benefit from or are also harmed by those structures.[3]

4 | Assess time & budget

Create a high level plan of the co-design activity, in line with the co-design standards, to ascertain the approximate length of time required.

Secure a budget to enable the co-design to happen. A budget is required to pay for reward and recognition, accessible spaces to gather, translators, refreshments, and so on. Ensure this is in line with the Council's Reward & Recognition Policy.

5 | Identify existing knowledge

To avoid duplication check what co-design activity is currently or has recently taken place with the same participants or on the same issues, and reuse the work.



[1] McKercher, KA (2021) Model of Care for Co-design

[2] McKercher and Muller (2023) Model of Care for Co-design Expansion Pack

[3] McKercher and Cataldo (2023) Model of Care for Co-design Expansion Pack

3 Co-design standards

4 | Doing co-design



The design element in doing co-design...

A | Discover

- Share existing knowledge and ask co-designers if there is anything missing from the lines of enquiry (research objectives).
- Undertake research activities to understand the issues, root causes, and context. Provide ways for people with lived experience to become part of the information gathering activities.
- Generate clear insights and share with the co-designers in an engaging, visual way, so everyone has a common understanding of the challenges and opportunities from different perspectives.
- Support the co-designers to develop opportunity statements (How might we statements) based on the insights.
- Decide together how you will share and spread the insights.

B | Design

- With the co-designers develop a shared ambition and design principles to create a common purpose and provide a framework for assessing ideas.
- Collate inspiration from things that have been implemented locally, elsewhere and other sectors relating to the challenge you're trying to address.
- Hold community idea generation sessions and utilise innovation platforms to obtain ideas beyond the co-design team. Share the insights and opportunities with them before moving onto idea generation.
- Over a few sessions support co-designers to build on the ideas, and assess and prioritise them using the design criteria.
- Check in with sponsors.

C | Prototype

- Support the co-design team to explore the range of prototyping and testing approaches. Agree what you are trying to learn, why, and what would need to work for the idea to succeed.
- Ensure sponsors are on board with what you're testing, with who, what you want to learn, and how long you will test your ideas for.
- Test outside the co-design group. Support the co-designers to make decision about what to take forward, develop and test further based on the learning. Repeat this loop of learning as needed. Feedback to the people you're testing with showing them how their views have been incorporated.
- Support co-designers to decide which concepts are worthy to take forward into implementation. Find the intersection point between desirability, feasibility and viability.
- Develop a range of materials to communicate the key elements and expected impact (eg video, exhibition etc.) alongside a written document for the more practical aspects.

- 1 About me and Newham
- 2 How the journey began
- 3 What we did
- 4 The standards
- 5 Key learning

Good
base to
work
from

NEWS

Newham Council becomes first social landlord to receive lowest 'C4' consumer grade

Resident Access and Transparency



For residents, there is no alternative to using landlord services, so they must work for everyone. Making our landlord services inclusive means making sure anyone who needs to use them can do so as easily as possible.

Newham is one of the most diverse areas in the country, so the design of our services needs to reflect this diversity. Every decision we make can raise or lower barriers to participation in society and there is a duty on registered providers of social housing to support people to receive an equitable level of service and not compound existing inequalities.

A Resident Participation Framework has been developed by the Council and it will inform the ongoing design of services within the improvement programme scope.

newham.gov.uk



WE ARE NEWHAM.

Key learnings

1. Common understanding is crucial to name the work honestly
2. Having an external expert has been invaluable
3. Engagement staff need a mindset shift and design awareness to do co-design
4. Ideal pushes the limits of practicality