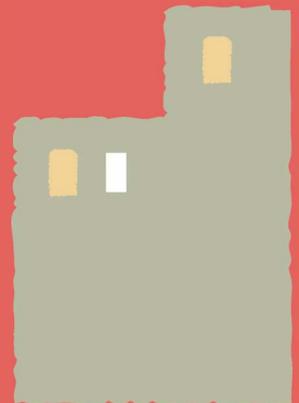
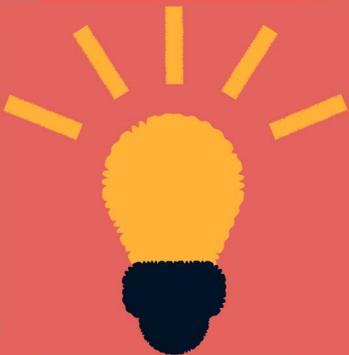


# The Great Estates Co-Design Toolkit



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Introduction

Co-design

Process & tools

**Created by**

This toolkit was created by design studio **COMUZI** for Southwark Council's Great Estates Programme.

**With help from**

David Suen, Mia Peters & Sharon Miller of Southwark Council.

# Introduction

## What is this toolkit?

The toolkit provides you with practical methods that you can put into practice straight away that will help you work with residents to address some of the community based challenges that come up in the Great Estates programme.

The toolkit is intended to be aspirational, to encourage the Great Estates Programme team and residents to build a repertoire of tools over time and build capacity through the use of the tools.

## How can it help?

We will use a method called the design process. Design is about addressing challenges and imagining how things could be better in the future.

It can be driven by wanting to solve a problem or take advantage of an opportunity. Design is a way of thinking that can make sense of complex situations and propose innovative changes.

This toolkit helps you initiate and run a project, and explains when and how the co-design process can help you achieve positive outcomes.

This toolkit provides an explanation of how design can help you achieve community impact, and provides an explanation of the processes that can help you develop innovative programmes, and projects for the people you serve.

## When to use?

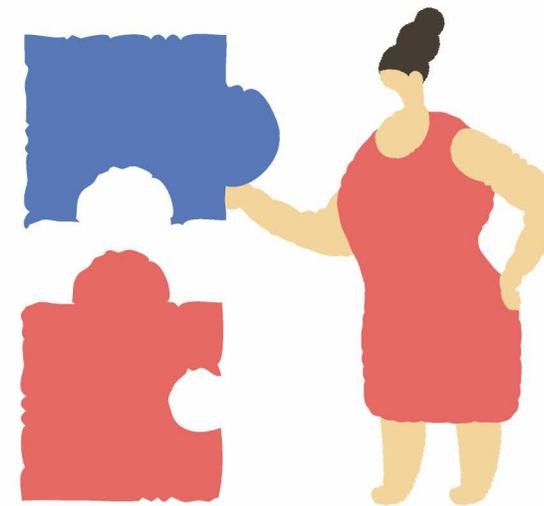
The toolkit can be used at a number of different stages.

**At the beginning:** to help inform the decision-making process.

**During the project:** to build political and community support for a project or action so that it can obtain approval.

**During the design:** to make sure that the action meets the needs of the community.

**While doing:** to determine if the plan or policy is achieving its objectives.





# Co-design

Co-design

Process & tools



An early example of an co-design approach is in Scandinavia, during the 80s. The workplace democracy movement was aimed at providing workers with better tools for doing their jobs.

Giving these workers a voice in decision-making about the designing of tools, environments and social institutions shaped their lives positively.

### What is co-design?

Co-design is an approach that centres around the idea that people who are affected by a decision, event or product should have an opportunity to influence it.

To engage in co-design means developing new processes for understanding, developing and supporting mutual learning between the council and residents.

This helps to have collective decision-making on interventions that will be implemented in council estates to achieve the Great Estates Guarantee.

### Why is co-design important?

Southwark residents affected by design projects need to have a voice through the overall process. Co-design assumes that residents will not always have the possibility to speak the language of experts (in this case Council staff & its partners that may be commissioned to achieve the work).

Therefore during co-design it is important to create activities that everyone can participate in. Co-design aims to share power often held within select groups of individuals, who make important decisions about others' lives. Often, with little to no involvement of the people who will be most impacted by those decisions.

During a co-design process, everyone increases their knowledge and understanding. Residents benefit from potential options they have not considered and council staff who need knowledge about the residents are provided with it.

## Principles of co-design

There is a lack of consistency in how co-design is used in local government and what it means in practice. If co-design is to be effective there needs to be agreement on what it is and how it works.

Co-design is not the answer for everything but can be effective when responding to complex issues. It is not a linear process and cannot be rushed. There are no step-by-step procedures or checklists.

Taking inspiration from the Southwark approach to community engagement principles, co-design in projects should have these principles embedded in every step of the process:

**Inclusive** – The process includes representatives from the council and residents who are involved in the co-design project from framing the issue to developing and testing solutions. It utilises feedback, advice and decisions from residents with lived experiences, and the knowledge, experience and skills of experts in the field.

**Respectful** – All participants in the co-design project are seen as experts and their input is valued and has equal standing. Strategies will be deployed to remove potential or perceived inequality. Participants manage their own and others' feelings in the interest of the process. Co-design requires everyone to negotiate personal and practical understandings at the expense of differences.

**Participative** – The process itself should be open, empathetic and responsive. Co-design uses a series of conversations and activities where dialogue and engagement generate new, shared meanings based on expert knowledge and lived experience. Major themes can be extracted and used as the basis for codesigned solutions. All participants are responsible for the effectiveness of the process.

**Flexible** – Ideas and solutions are continually tested and evaluated with the participants. Changes and adaptations are a natural part of the process, trialling possibilities and insights as they emerge, taking risks and allowing for failure. This process is also used to fine-tune potential outcomes or solutions as it reaches fruition and can later be used to evaluate its effectiveness.

**Results focused** – The process will be used to create, redesign or evaluate ideas for the Great Estates Programme. It is designed to achieve a result or series of results, where the potential solutions can be rapidly tested, effectiveness measured and where the spreading or scaling of these solutions can be developed with stakeholders.





### **What co-design does not**

**Ignore professional expertise.** It is important to bring professional experience alongside lived experience to develop a more robust understanding and foster mutual learning. This will produce stronger solutions and provide immense professional and personal development.

**Have to be expensive.** Investing in co-design may be more costly than a public consultation in the short term. However, with co-design, the goal is to ‘pay now to avoid paying later’. Co-design builds long term commitment. By contrast, consultation often gives the illusion that people have been brought on board - only to have communication fade during the duration of a project. Co-design aims to protect having to pay later which is often costly, public and reputation-damaging.

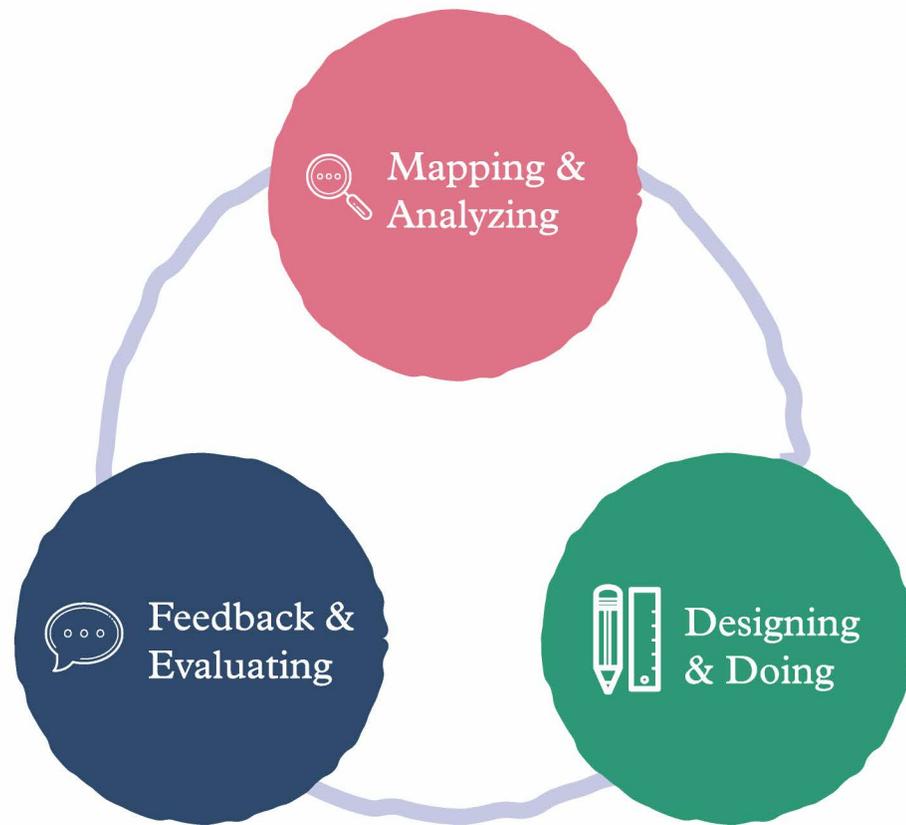
**Ignore existing evidence.** Co-design should not ignore evidence of what works, or existing strengths. Instead, participants must work hard to bring relevant evidence into the process in accessible ways. This includes bringing value to residents’ stories and experiences, which are ‘evidence’ too.

**Involve just having public workshops.** Co-design fails if it just focuses on asking people’s opinions while excluding them from critical decision making.

**Bring a large group of council staff together, with one or two people with lived experience.** Being a minority can be intimidating, hostile and unsafe. If staff lack curiosity and self-awareness, they can force people with lived experience to defend their experience and identity. When there are no conditions for inclusion and meaningful participation – that is tokenistic and preformative.



## Process & tools



*The co-design process should not be seen as a one time approach but a repeated circular process, i.e. the Feedback & Evaluating stage of one resident engagement process should feed into the Mapping & Analyzing stage of the next thus helping to build an consistent approach to resident engagement.*

## How to run a co-design project

The co-design approach for this toolkit includes three phases:

1. **Mapping & Analyzing:** understanding and clearly defining issues that residents have.
2. **Designing & Doing:** developing potential solutions with residents
3. **Feedback & Evaluating:** testing potential solutions with residents.

The process aims to change the mindsets and behaviours of the partners, encouraging and supporting innovative processes and solutions as they work to identify the “*sweet spot*” where change can evolve.



# Mapping & Analyzing



### What is this stage?

This stage is to work with residents who are usually described as *'hard-to-reach'*.

This stage will aid you in better understanding residents' stories and experiences (e.g. from informing residents of a new sustainable waste management plan to seeking ideas for co-designing a local community garden), and how you could communicate effectively with them.

Key activities at this stage include:

- One to ones discussions with residents to map problems in the council estate
- Resident led-focus groups
- Resident-led location studies
- Finding Insights
- How Might We? questions



## **Different methods of engaging with residents**

### **One to ones discussions with residents to map problems in the council estate**

Residents like to share, and you may be positively surprised by just how much!

It is key to approach these one to one conversations with residents in an open and transparent way. It is also key to be clear about your objectives, as this will allow you to be able to unlock invaluable insights.

When engaging in one to one conversations with residents, ask questions in a nonthreatening and curious manner. Listen carefully and don't dismiss their insights.

Consider who you approach carefully and always strive to go to where people live, work and play to trigger discussions about behaviours, mindsets and lifestyle values. One to one conversations with residents can be fun and productive experiences for everyone involved.

### **Resident led-focus groups**

Resident-led focus groups are community engagement sessions where participants have been recruited by residents themselves - connecting with their local network of neighbours, friends and family who live in the same council estate as them.

The reason why these types of engagement sessions work is that you are able to find the voices of those in Southwark who may never engage with the public outreach already conducted by the council.

Having residents lead the recruitment and possibly facilitating the focus groups also creates a safe space that some residents need to share their stories without fear of their viewpoints being discredited.



## Different methods of engaging with residents

### Resident-led location studies

Residents may not always do, think or feel what they say in a one to one chat or a group environment.

Observational techniques such as a location study conducted by a resident can also be used to unlock new insights that are often more authentic and can further communicate the actual values, habits and preferences of residents.

The location study conducted by a resident allows you to truly see the council estate from their own perspective.

The aim of the location study is to ask residents to use their smartphone to take photos & record a video communicating:

- things in their council estate that gives them a sense of pride
- things in their council estate which are a cause of concern
- areas of improvements that they feel is needed in their council estate

## Different methods of engaging with residents

### A guide for having discussions with residents

Creating a discussion guide is key to extracting value from resident engagement.

The goal for resident engagement is to create a dialogue, not a survey.

Planning discussion guides helps you to maintain direction on conversations with residents and will help prevent discussions from straying too far from the problems that need to be addressed.

It would also help to keep the responses from multiple conversations that may be conducted as part of the research to be consistent.

When you are engaging with residents, you always want to find out:

*“What are you trying to get done?”* (gather context)

*“How do you currently do this?”* (analyze their approach)

*“What could be better about how you do this?”* (find opportunities)

#### Steps to creating a discussion guide

1. Generate questions that you could ask residents and cluster them into topic areas to allow a comfortable flow.
2. Ensure that the questions are open and non-leading. Starting questions with the words/phrases *‘why’*, *‘how’*, and *‘tell me about a story when...’* is a good way to do so.
3. Once questions are completed, do a final review of the guide to check that your questions will allow you to gather context, goals, aspirations and problems areas.
4. Rehearse with a team member to identify if there are any questions that are missing and to ensure the questions have a flow.

*A simple tip during your conversations with residents is to ask why 5 times, this will help you to get the root cause of a problem.*





## Unpack learnings from resident engagement

### Finding insights

Now that you've got a huge amount of notes, photos, videos and quotes, you want to start making sense of them.

An insight is what you may deem to be:

- a 'gut-felt' response that makes you sit up and think
- a new way of interpreting existing information
- it communicates a resident's need
- an opinion-changer

As you go through your gatherings from resident engagement, here are a number of questions to ask yourself to find those insights:

*Have any patterns emerged?*

*Is there a compelling insight you heard again and again?*

*A consistent problem that residents face?*

*Is there anything that feels significant?*

*Is there anything surprising you?*

As you begin to find insights, a very good approach to communicating them is by creating insight statements; these sentences will be helpful as you begin to frame opportunities for design.



## Unpack learnings from resident engagement

### How might we?

The insights you find from your resident engagement will play an important role in shaping potential solutions.

By now, you would be able to identify problems in and around the council estate that pose challenges to the residents you're aiming to support.

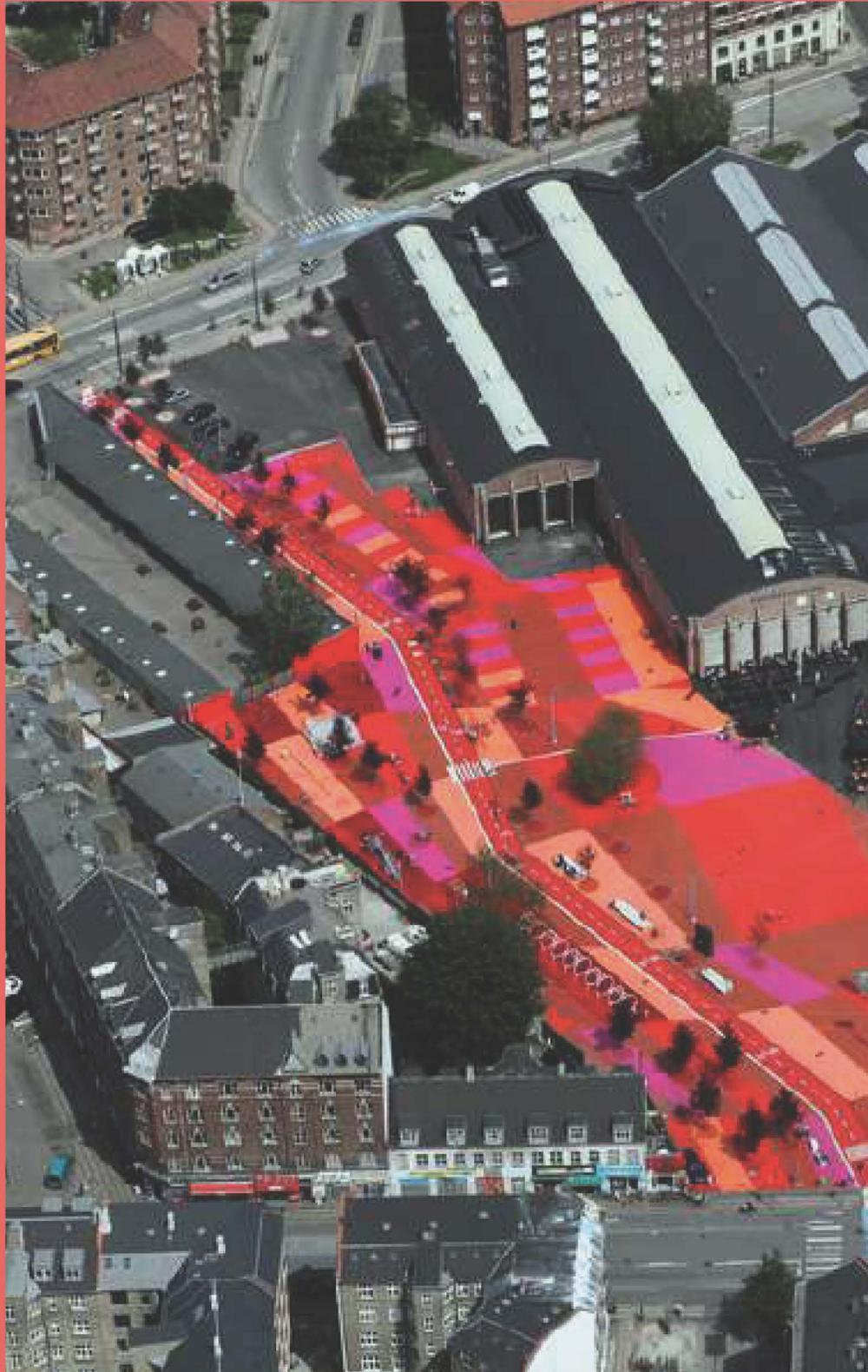
An exercise to try out at this stage is called *'how might we'*.

These *'how might we'* (HMW) questions are short questions that will help encourage brainstorming for ideas.

With HMW questions, it is important for your questions to be as broad as possible, allowing you to have a wide range of solutions.

### How to do a HMW exercise

1. The first step is to rephrase your insight statements into questions by adding 'how might we' at the beginning.
2. If your insights suggest several "how Might We" questions, that's fine.
3. Review your 'how might We' question and ask yourself if it allows for you to come with a number of ideas to answer the question. If it doesn't, try to broaden your question.
4. The final step is to make sure that your questions are also not too broad. You still want to keep some boundaries.
5. It would be a tricky process, the first time doing this exercise. However a good HMW question should give you both a narrow enough frame to let you know where to start your brainstorm, but also enough breadth to give you room to explore creative ideas.



## Case Study: Superkilen Park

### Creating a public space that represents the voices of more 60 nationalities

Superkilen is a 355,000 square foot urban park in Copenhagen completed in 2012.

It was designed through an intense public participation process with the surrounding community, representing the voices of more than 60 nationalities in one of the most ethnically and economically diverse neighborhoods in Denmark.

The project includes a variety of features to support physical activity and community gathering including swings, monkey bars, a boxing ring, slides, punching bags, skateboard ramps, and a bicycle lane that runs through the entire site.

Superkilen encourages adults and kids alike to be more active while celebrating the diversity of the neighborhood.

The public participation process ensured that the space is responsive to the many cultures represented in the neighborhood. In public meetings the community were asked to make suggestions on objects to be placed in the public space.

In the end 108 objects and 11 trees from all over the world were chosen. They have either been imported or were reproduced on site.

For instance: a Moroccan fountain, a Kazakh bus stop, a Japanese play structure in the shape of an octopus, a Thai boxing ring, a Qatar dentist's sign, a swing bench from Baghdad, the Spanish Osborne bull, posts with neon advertising from different countries, and even soil from Palestine.

In an area that is known for its wealth of diverse nationalities, the park has become a peaceful meeting ground where everyone can feel proud of their cultural heritage and participate in group activities.

According to the project's design team made up of architecture firms Bjarke Ingels Group, Topotek 1 & artist Superflex: *"No matter where you're from, what you believe, and which language you speak, it is always possible to play football together."*



# Designing & Doing

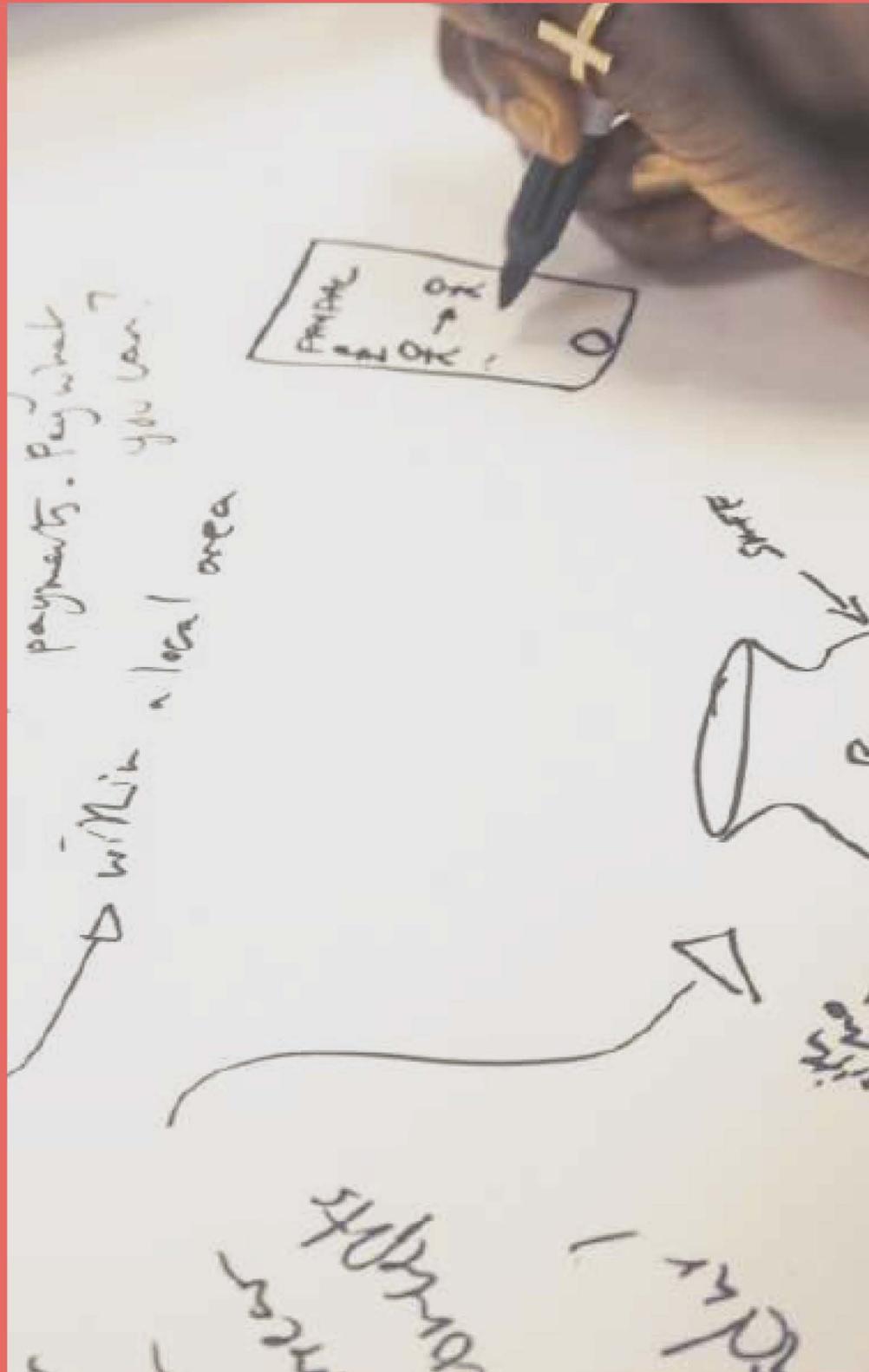


### What is this stage?

This stage is about creating a number of ideas that address residents' problems. This section will provide support and guidance on how to bring these ideas to life with residents and how to test these ideas.

Key activities at this stage include:

- Brainstorming workshop with residents
- Crazy 8's for idea generation
- Turning rough ideas into fully fledged concepts
- Prototyping a solution with residents
- Three simple methods for prototyping



## Brainstorming workshop with Residents

Setting up a brainstorming workshop with residents allows everyone to tap into a broad body of knowledge and creativity.

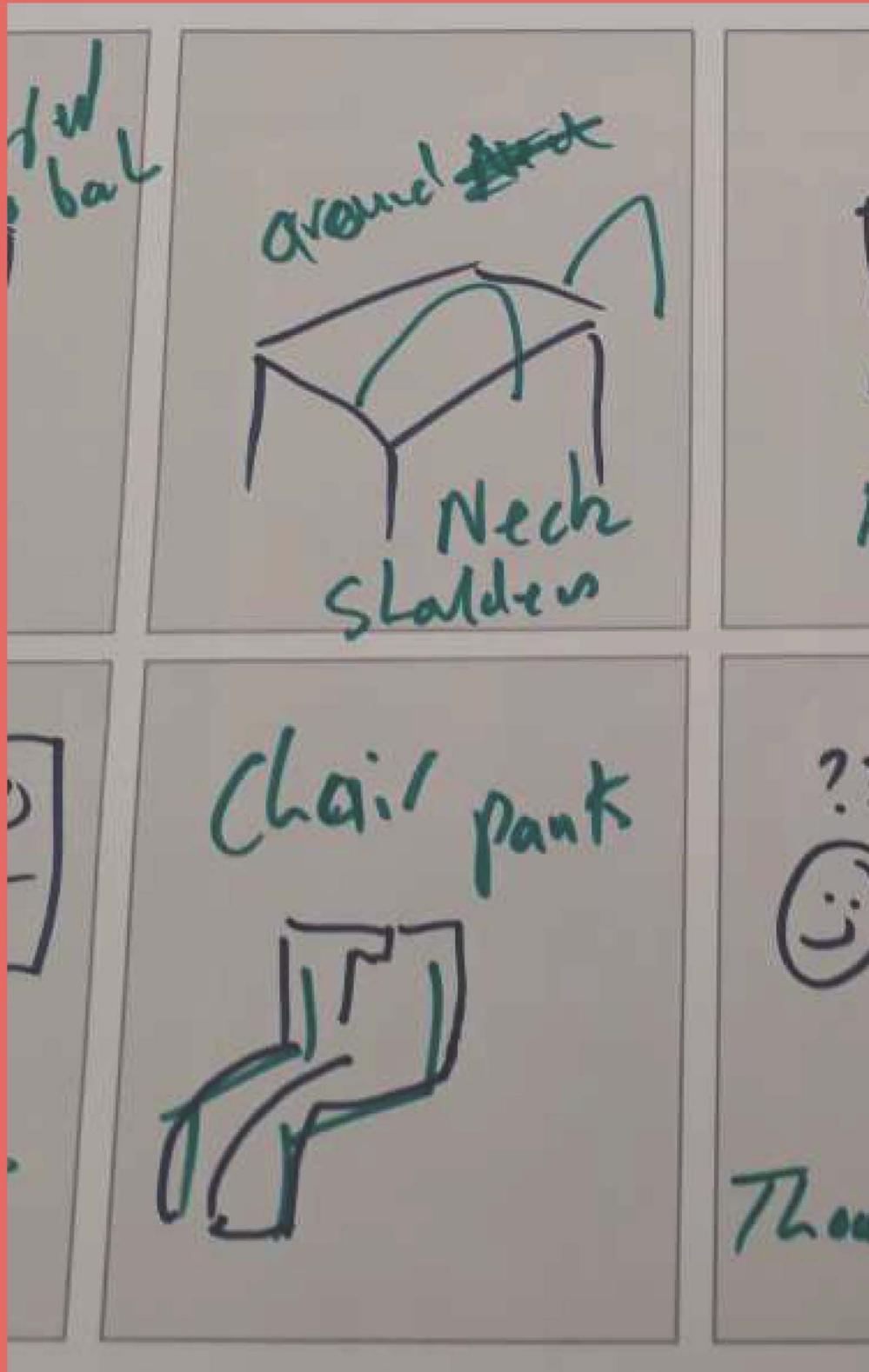
The best way to work together in a brainstorming workshop is to promote openness, lots of ideas and creativity over immediate feasibility.

You want everyone attending the workshop to be positive, optimistic and focused on generating as many ideas as possible.

Remember, in a brainstorming workshop with residents - you are not just hearing their voices, you're empowering residents to be part of a team solving problems in their community and environment.

### Rules for a fruitful brainstorming workshop

1. Encourage wild ideas.
2. Build on the ideas of others.
3. One conversation at a time.
4. Defer judgement. There is no such thing as a bad idea.
5. Stay focused on the topic.
6. Quantity over quality.
7. Be visual.



## Coming up with ideas & concepts with residents

### Crazy 8's for idea generation

A simple and fast approach to coming up with ideas is by doing an exercise called Crazy 8's.

It is a fast sketching exercise that challenges people to sketch eight distinct ideas in eight minutes. The goal is to push beyond your first idea, frequently the least interesting, and to generate a wide variety of solutions to the problem area.

Some workshop participants may find this approach intimidating at first, so it is helpful to reassure everyone that these are rough sketches. They do not need to be perfect or beautiful—sketches just need to communicate the idea.

It's also important to communicate that the ideas do not have to be great.

This exercise is about quieting the inner critic and giving our creative impulses space to flourish.

### How to use Crazy 8's in a workshop setting (virtual/physical)

1. Make sure everyone has paper, pens, coloured dot stickers or coloured pens.
2. Assign someone to be the timekeeper so you are not distracted by the clock.
3. Fold the paper into 8 different sections.
4. The facilitator sets a timer for eight minutes.
5. Everyone needs to spend up to an minute to come up with an idea.
6. When the timer goes off, all pens or pencil are down.

## Coming up with ideas & concepts with residents

### Turning rough ideas into fully fledged concepts

Doing an exercise such as Crazy 8's should give you a lot of ideas to explore through. Now it's time to move these ideas and turn them into a fully fledged concept, one that you'll refine and push forward in Southwark.

A concept is more polished and complete than an idea. This leads to something that you'll want to test with residents, and looks like an answer to the challenge your residents are facing.

The goal is to get a robust, flexible concept that addresses the problem you're trying to solve.

To turn your best ideas into a concept, here's how:

1. *Give your concept a name.*
2. *Write a brief description of concept.*
3. *Identify and write who is your target resident for this concept.*
4. *Identify and write about what the value of the concept is to the resident and the council.*
5. *Identify and write about critical partnerships within the council needed to bring this concept to life.*
6. *Identify and write about potential partnerships outside the council needed to bring this concept to life.*
7. *Identify and write about any anticipated barriers/challenges for the concept.*
8. *Identify and write about key factors to the success of the concept.*

During this process, keep referring back to your problem areas:

*Is this concept answering it?*

*Are there elements missing in your concept?*

*What else can you incorporate?*

This process may take trial and error, but that's fine, feel free to experiment and get insight from colleagues who may be able to help refine the concept more.





## Prototyping a solution with residents

The phrase '*prototyping*' may be a term that is normally seen to be associated with physical products or software services.

At its most basic level, prototyping is focused on bringing tangibility to your concepts. Whatever your concept is there will be a prototyping approach that works for your solution.

The famous saying in design communities is "*If a picture is worth 1000 words, a prototype is worth 1000 meetings*". With prototyping, you are able to develop your concept more deeply so that you can test it internally with colleagues, senior management and with residents.

At the heart of prototyping is risk mitigation. This gives you the opportunity to learn about what works and what doesn't, so that you can adjust and improve your solution before it is actually created.

Prototyping can also be carried out at different levels, building your understanding of what the concept really means and you will have the ability to experiment with different tools and methods as your concept progresses.

A key note to mention is that pilots and prototypes are not the same thing. While a pilot and a prototype are methods for experimenting, pilots in local government are normally viewed as a 'phase 1' rollout activity of a new policy or service launch rather than the focus being on pure experimentation.

By the time you have completed the prototyping process. Your solution should be at a much more robust stage for it to be created (*where it could possibly be rolled out as a pilot*).

The prototyping methods introduced over the next three pages do not require you to have any technical skills to bring your ideas to life.

These methods just needs you and those join in during this step to have fun and experiment!



## Three simple methods of prototyping

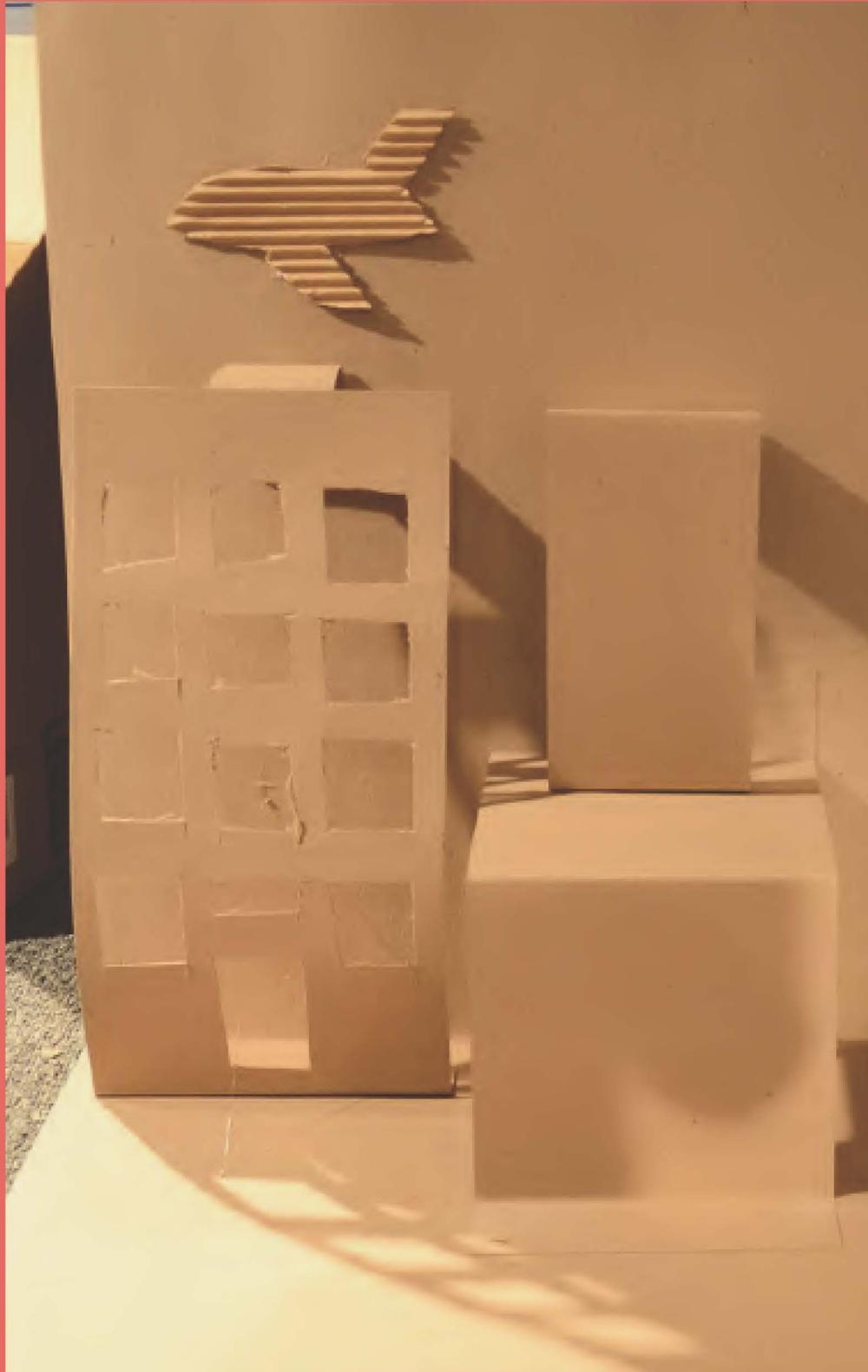
### LEGO prototyping

LEGO is a staple of any kid's toy box.

For this prototyping method, it's time to bring out your inner child and take advantage of LEGO's ubiquity and versatility to create quick and simple prototypes of your ideas.

The best part of using LEGO to build your prototypes is that they become easy to dismantle and tweak; simply detach a part of your LEGO prototype, swap it with an alternative design, and play with it to see if it works.

However, for the purposes of prototyping, any LEGO toys you can find will help you to create rough concepts or use LEGO characters to simulate a resident's journey.



## Three simple methods of prototyping

### Cardboard prototyping

Cardboard prototyping is a common low-fidelity method to prototype and test physical objects and environments that are part of a service experience – for example, a community garden or a new park.

Cardboard prototyping has a lower entry point for people to take part in than other common prototyping methods.

The prototypes are built quickly, using cheap paper, duct tape and cardboard mostly.

Depending on the scope, the prototypes can be small-scale, actual size, or even bigger than life. Similarly to paper prototypes, cardboard prototypes are created to be thrown away.

This makes it easier for those who created the prototype to let go and embrace necessary changes. Also, when testing with residents, it allows them to feel more comfortable about suggesting changes.

A great way to start with cardboard prototyping is to build many smaller scale versions before switching to full size, for the simple reason of speed.

The larger the scale of your cardboard prototype, the more you are able to test, it would encourage and enable a deeper exploration and iteration of the design solution.



## Three simple methods of prototyping

### Paper prototyping

Paper prototyping is a common low-fidelity method to prototype and test more digital based concepts such as websites or apps.

Paper prototyping is simply sketching with a pen or pencil and paper. If you can draw rectangles, then creating a paper prototype is easy.

By bringing your idea to life visually, it helps you resolve the key features and understand how people would experience them.

It is also a hands-on activity that can be done with residents, colleagues and possibly senior management inviting them to co-design with you.

### Questions to reflect on during prototyping

*Are we all aligned on the idea now we have made it tangible?*

*What else can we learn about the idea?*

*What is missing?*

*What potentially needs to change or be built upon?*

*What prototypes do you want to create to support your learning ambitions?*

*What methods are you going to deploy to capture your learning along the way?*

*What environment are you going to test and learn in? E.g. offline in a managed environment where residents are invited in? Or live in real scenarios, where you track what happens?*

*Is there a timeframe to complete the prototype by?*

*Is there any budget and human resource requirement for the prototype?*

*What's the communication plan that supports the experiment?*



## Case Study: Whittington Hospital

### Co-designing an pharmacy with patients using cardboard

Whittington Hospital is one of the UK's busiest hospitals, and its outpatient pharmacy wanted to simplify the process of patients being able to access the help they need without long waiting times and a lack of communication.

Previous efforts to improve the situation, such as user questionnaires, had resulted in poor levels of patient participation and provided no clear insights.

To address these issues, Whittington Hospital worked with the Design Council, architectural codesign experts Studio TILT, and service design agency Commonground on a co-design approach focused on working with patient, staff and management groups to collaboratively create a space.

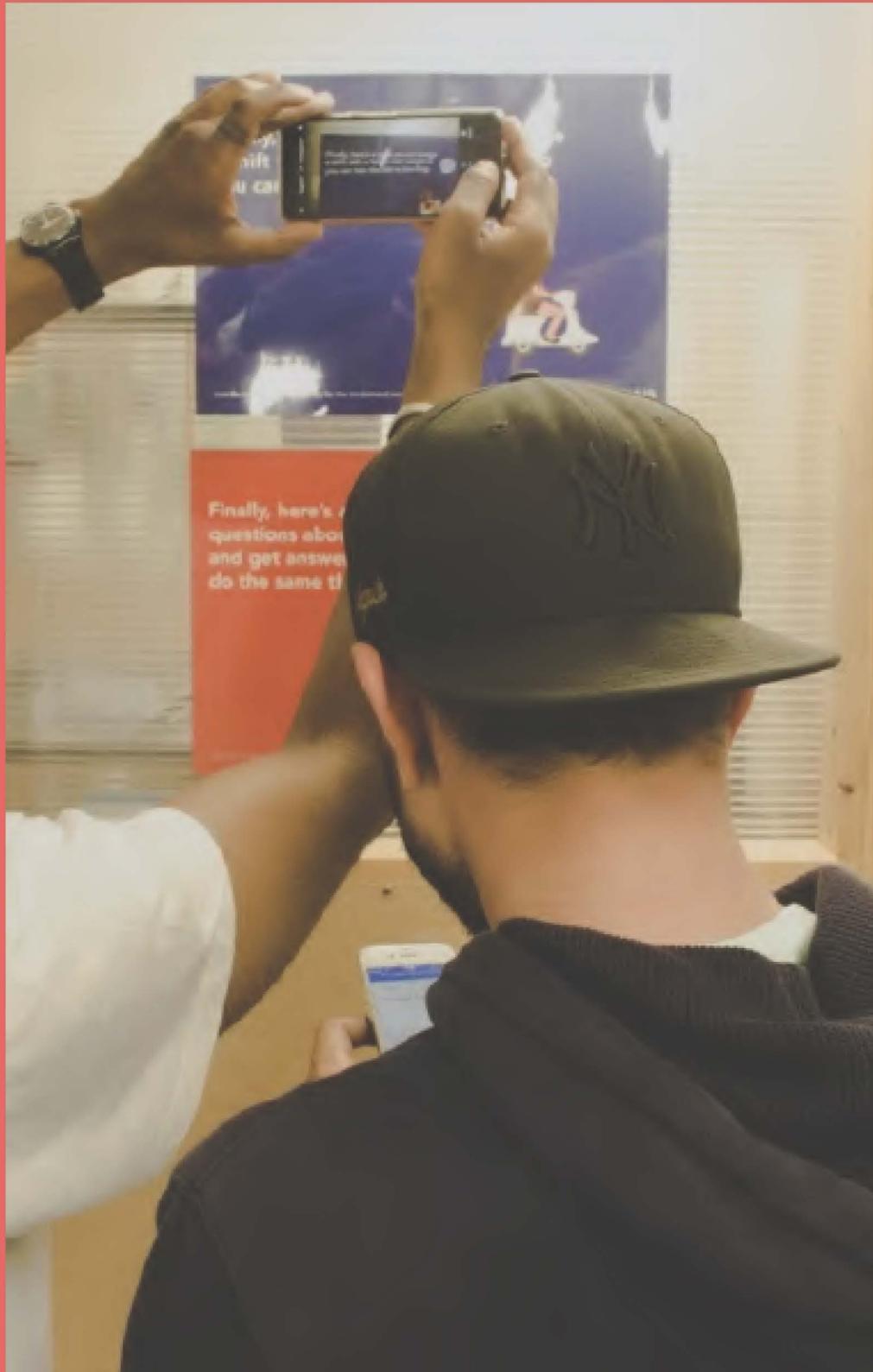
Through workshops, they came up with new ways for how the space could work and created cardboard models to try out their ideas.

These ideas were tested in the actual pharmacy at half scale. This gave both the workshop attendees and other visitors the opportunity to experience the changes and give feedback.

After taking feedback on board, the designers finally tested the new pharmacy layout and process at full scale, which helped to really understand what users needed from the space and what they did and didn't like.

As a result, the queue of patients at the registration area has been shortened, prescription tracking has been introduced and new areas for confidential consultations have been created.

The work has measurably improved the patient experience, boosting staff morale and increasing sales at the pharmacy.



# Feedback & Evaluating



### What is this stage?

This stage is all about testing your prototypes, getting feedback and looking to make areas for improvement.

Key activities at this stage include:

- Planning & conducting tests for your prototype
- What you want to learn from a test
- Improving your prototype



## Planning & conducting tests for your prototype

To test your prototype, sorting any logistics related to it is the first place to start.

This may include the booking of a physical space, inviting residents to take part in testing and finding and briefing colleagues who could help out with testing.

To conduct tests with residents, you want to identify areas of the concept you want to test with residents and create a list of tasks for residents to complete during the test.

For the time of testing, you may want to have a colleague or yourself moderate the test and a colleague to take notes.

If possible, try to video record the session for later analysis.

### What you want to learn from a test based on resident + colleague feedback

*Is the concept understood as intended?*

*Does the concept address the resident's issues?*

*What parts of the concept are working well and where do we need to improve?*

*Is the concept feasible and viable?*



### Improving your prototype

As you conduct your tests, you will gather learnings from the feedback give to you about the prototypes.

Based on what you learned, ask yourself *how would we further work with residents to evolve or change the focus of the concept?*

Your prototype may fail during tests due to a number of factors.

However this is not a bad thing, because you would have learned why residents are not taking a learning to your prototype, or why the feedback is negative.

Channel your learnings towards creating a better prototype than your last.



## Case Study: Beyond the Castle

### Reimagining an urban green space in the city of Lancaster with the local community

Beyond the Castle started in 2012 with the Lancaster University leading a co-design project that generated a wealth of ideas, key values and themes for the site through a series of creative community engagement and design activities.

The goal in this co-design project was to help identify a shared aspiration and identity for the City Park site beyond Lancaster Castle and the Priory and to explore the future potential of the site as inter-generational multi-use space.

This co-design project was supported by professional designers but also more than 2500 citizens were involved at different steps of the project. Around 700 of these citizens made active co-design contributions.

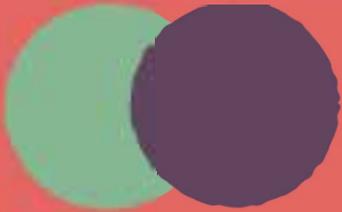
Examples of co-design activities included an awareness-raising event where a corner of the central shopping square in Lancaster was transformed into a representation of the area '*Beyond the Castle*'.

Passers-by were invited to document both the things they did in the area and how it could be improved on a three-metre model of the area.

An interactive co-design exhibition was also held allowing citizens to shape how the urban space could be reimagined by constructing their own ideas using cardboard boxes.

The learning and insights generated from this led to a successful £59,000 funding bid to the Heritage Lottery '*Our Heritage*'.

From May 2014 - Jan 2016 the project has evolved to focus on archaeological investigation and development of site understanding, landscape management, development of digital tools, all underpinned with a strong community engagement programme.



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