Co-design Checklist

How to use this checklist?

This checklist highlights a concise set of points around the six main phases of co-design projects for designers and co-design participants to shape more holistic co-design approaches and methodologies. Whilst not all questions need to be answered at the outset, they act as prompts for more informed decision-making and conscious evaluation of the process.

Towards Spatial Justice
A checklist for achieving meaningful participation in co-design processes

Brief

- ☐ Is there an opportunity for implementing a co-design approach on the project, whether in full or in part?
- ☐ Are there client or project partner aspirations to co-create a vision or co-produce the brief?
- ☐ Can the project vision and brief be challenged and shaped, and to what extent?
- ☐ Are funding and payment structures adequate to support co-design processes?
- ☐ Has thorough site analysis been conducted and have potential co-design collaborators been identified – e.g. the seldom-heard, youth?
- ☐ Are strategic parameters – e.g. project timeline, budget, site constraints – communicated to co-design participants?
- ☐ Has there been a form of commitment – e.g. community charter, manifesto – that safeguards accountability of co-design processes?
- ☐ Have past lessons and knowledge (RIBA Stage 7) of similar projects been applied?

Team

- ☐ Does the project team reflect the local demographics of the project?
- ☐ Are there local groups and networks that can be brought onto the process?
- ☐ Who are the seldom heard and how does the project reach out to those who may be excluded?
- ☐ Who is best placed to be the facilitator of the process e.g. designer, third-party facilitator?
- ☐ Where do co-design collaborators sit in the team structure? Has their role and scope been defined?
- ☐ Do community-based structures (e.g. community steering group) need to be set up to facilitate communication and decision-making?
- ☐ Have protocols been established and agreed between parties – e.g. meeting cycles, methods of communitication?
- ☐ Has a fair, transparent and accountable decision-making process been established?

Design

- ☐ Do co-design participants have relevant skills to participate in the design process?
- ☐ Is relevant skill-training provided to co-design participants?
- ☐ Has jargon been eliminated for accessibility and language been considered and adapted for the co-design process?
- ☐ Are channels of communication open and accessible for co-design participants?
- ☐ Has the design process – e.g. cycles of testing and feedback – been outlined and agreed with co-design participants?
- ☐ Is the co-design process iterative?
- ☐ Do technical design decisions take into account co-delivery opportunities?
- ☐ Has a Social Value Action Plan been developed?

Planning

- ☐ Does the local authority have knowledge of local networks and contacts that can contribute to the co-design process?
- ☐ Is there an opportunity to build on existing local initiatives and networks and to address wider local strategic ambitions?
- ☐ Are planners brought into the co-design process?
- ☐ Does the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) capture the process, knowledge and value generated from the co-design process?
- ☐ Is the co-design process and outcome safeguarded post-planning permission?

Delivery

- ☐ Is there scope for co-delivery of project at procurement and construction phases?
- ☐ Is relevant skills-training provided to co-design participants?

Use

- ☐ Is the project handed over to users, co-design participants and relevant bodies with appropriate and sufficient support for use, stewardship, management and/or operation?
- ☐ Have the knowledge and tools base generated from the project been passed onto users, co-design participants and local bodies?
- ☐ Has post-occupancy evaluation been planned or conducted to inform future projects?