18th West Midlands Co-production Network Event hosted by Solihull Council

7 September 2016

Growing Citizen Power At Neighbourhood Level: What Do Local Councils Know About Their Local Communities?

Traditionally, local councils have invested resources to get the buy-in of local people into local services provided for them. Co-production means a transformation of the role of local councils to "buy into the offers from local people and community groups". This means that local councils require information, tools and systems:

- to identify what local people are doing already and are prepared to do to improve priority outcomes in their neighbourhood
- to connect local people with each other to strengthen peer support
- to identify how the local council and other service providers can support local people to be more effective

The workshop invited network members attending the Solihull network event to identify available solutions, assess their pros and cons, and brainstorm how to overcome existing obstacles to growing Citizen Power at neighbourhood level.

Feedback from group work: Tools needed to identify community offers and connect local people

Group 1

- Mapping streamlined for everyone to access
- Take priorities from community
- Incentives systems – benefits of being involved

Group 2

- Where are the assets in organisations and community?
- 'Art of conversation' – talking to each other
  - Establish shared agenda, common ground
- People themselves – bring them closer to resources
- Identify concrete projects to work on
- Identify who to talk to – and through what medium?
- TRUST – brokering
- Establish win-win situations

- Specific tools:
    - Appreciative enquiry
    - Use resources differently
    - Public budgeting
    - Asset mapping
    - Use pre-existing communities/networks

Group 3

- Voice – key
    - Promoting value of co-production
- Social media – to gain views
- Community hubs – views – contact database

Group 4

- Power dynamics – equalising and sharing power
- Relationships between government/council/charities and communities
- ABCD – asset-based community development – connecting people
- Specific tools:
    - Personal networks
    - Asset mapping – strengths of a community
    - Connecting tools – Facebook, Twitter, social media generally
    - Allies within own organisation and other organisations
    - Harness how communities actively respond to issues
    - Lessons from Indonesia – sharing good practice, e.g via books
    - Minister of Empowerment for civil servants
    - Modelling support, not competition

Group 5

- 'Be heard' website – all West Midlands consultations in one place to be used by others – help shape/plan
- Connect local people with each other
- How can councils share their capabilities for building support?
    - In-house and contracted-out
- Feed-back on outcomes/actions to the community
    - 'We said – we did' campaign
- Not just 'digital by default'
- Promote 20 Common #
- Investment in going out into communities

- The Village Talk – PocZero – Bring people together for co-production, linked to Birmingham Investment Hub
- Coventry – Network City – 4 neighbourhoods
    - Purpose: increased collaboration
    - Tools on 'how to' or about 'what'
    - Talking across the city!
- Acknowledge barriers to access and participation
- Indonesia – Smart Cards (including Health Cards)
    - Tie into basic needs support, e.g. along with state provision of staple foods