

Thinking Room
making good ideas happen



Most organisations want to be innovative, creative and productive. Yet despite this it is often a struggle to create the right conditions and culture to support radical change. As our world becomes simultaneously less predictable and more complex, we need to spend increasing amounts of time and effort thinking about new ways to tackle the challenges we face.

In the following pages you can read about our approach to harnessing innovation and how we are developing it in the future.

We call it Thinking Room.

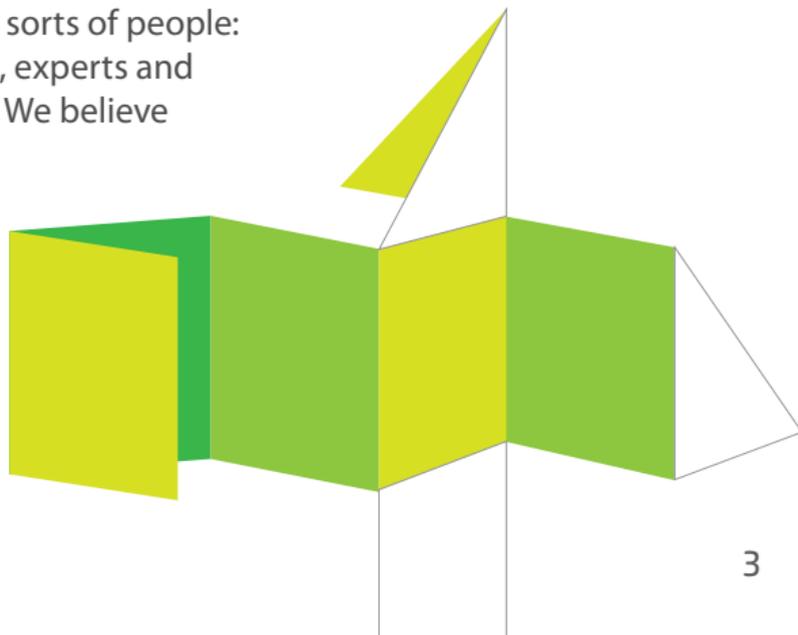


Thinking Room is our approach to innovation.

It represents our collective thoughts and experiences on change – how to do, how not to do, what's fun and enjoyable.

Our ideas will change with time as they are tested and refined, as we build our collective wisdom about what works across Cornwall from our experience working with citizens to make change happen.

To create this we have brought together all sorts of people: designers, strategic thinkers, policy makers, experts and members of the general public. The result? We believe that this approach makes a difference.



Why good ideas matter

What is innovation? We think it is often misunderstood so we prefer the phrase '**making good ideas happen**'.

We all have ideas but do we think we have the right mandate, motivation and responsibility to deliver them?

Your idea could be ingenious, something that could make a real difference.

Thinking Room is about making good ideas happen by understanding how we nurture and create the conditions for your good ideas to flourish.



Relish the change

Change is a part of life.

We are facing a period of unprecedented uncertainty in the global economy, socio-political upheaval and fundamental environmental challenges, the need for 'change' is increasingly the only constant.

Our ability to understand and manage change is therefore critical to our prospects. Change is often seen as being difficult to achieve, high risk and prone to failure. Generally accepted advice includes 'don't give up', 'deliver whatever the cost', 'it's going to hurt, but it will be worth it in the end'. Often we strive to understand how we can make the end results of change better.

Let's ask ourselves how can we make change more enjoyable?

fundamentally redesigned their service delivery in the past two years.



Photo courtesy of Dyson.com

Participation is powerful

Innovation and change starts with people.

Bringing together different expertise and intelligence around the needs of stakeholders and end users makes common sense.

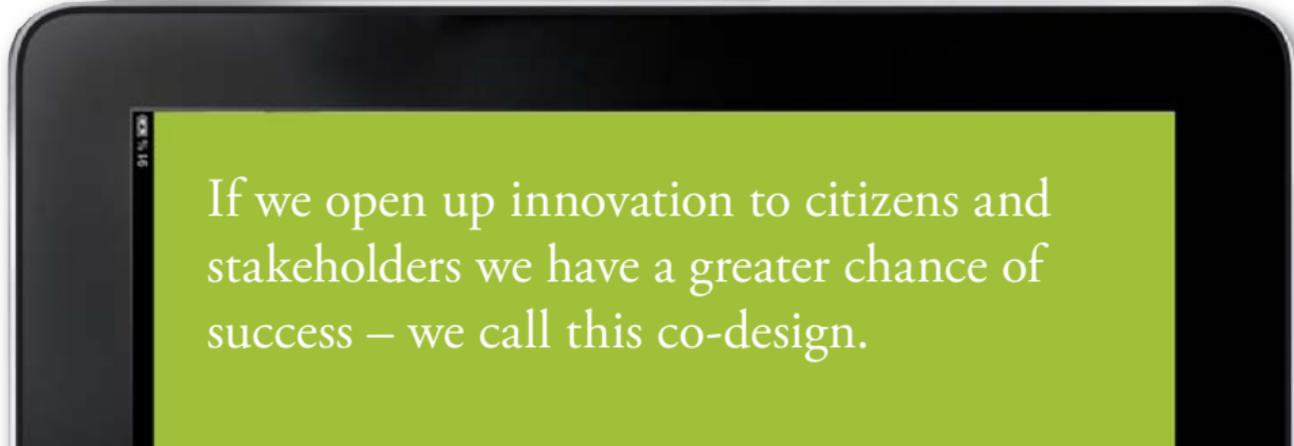
Greater interaction and participation of individuals working collectively and generating new expectations of what's possible is both an exciting and challenging prospect.

“Some of the most transformational, radical innovation will come from the bottom of the pyramid not the top.”

Charlie Leadbeater, leading author on innovation



Technology is a great enabler. Experts and professionals face criticism that delivering pre-determined agendas of the few on behalf of the many can inadvertently exclude the views of the silent majority, undervaluing their contribution. Experience tells us invoking change in this way can undermine good intentions or worse still have a counter productive effect.

A tablet device is shown at the bottom of the slide, displaying a quote on a green background. The quote reads: "If we open up innovation to citizens and stakeholders we have a greater chance of success – we call this co-design." The tablet has a black bezel and a small vertical label on the left side that reads "STUDIO".

If we open up innovation to citizens and stakeholders we have a greater chance of success – we call this co-design.

A common process

Our approach goes from the 'what' to the 'how'. Regardless of the size or complexity of the challenge or problem we use four distinct stages to bring new ideas to life. These are: discover, define, develop and deliver. This process has been benchmarked internationally by the Design Council across the public and private sector as a common innovation methodology in a range of organisations from Starbucks to Sony.

We have been focusing our thinking around collaborative approaches, co-design, co-development and co-production – and we have lots of tools for making these kind of activities work and 'stick'.

“Keep it simple and do it now”

Tom Henderson OBE, Founder of Shelterbox

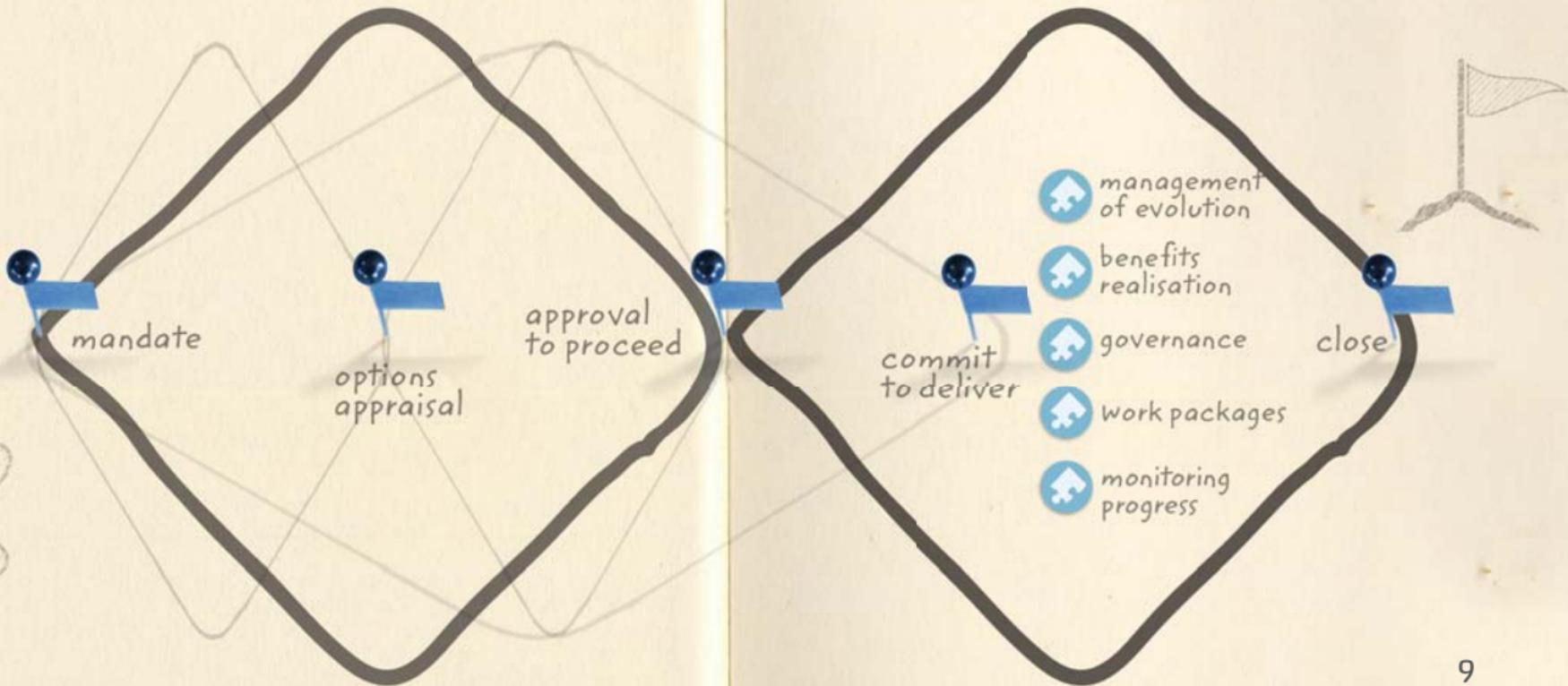


discover

define

develop

deliver



Discover the challenge



Ethos

The opportunities for change are endless. Can we expect to achieve the right solution if we haven't stopped to ask the right question? Too often we race to the answer by defining a solution based on our personal, expert or anecdotal experience. The purpose of this initial step is to invite and encourage constructive challenge, to set the creative direction and to bring in new perspectives. Its about learning together in order to build a picture based on real world insights.

Workshop personas, courtesy of
Sea Communications

What is it?

This stage is about understanding the issue and gathering data, both qualitative and quantitative to better understand the current picture and need for change. This means creating an initial understanding of the nature of the challenge and building advocacy and engagement with the issues. It is more than research, it should look at best practices elsewhere. This includes bringing together new policies and much, much more in order to explore early scenarios. Tools and techniques in this stage provide the opportunity to fully engage with all interested parties.



Define the idea



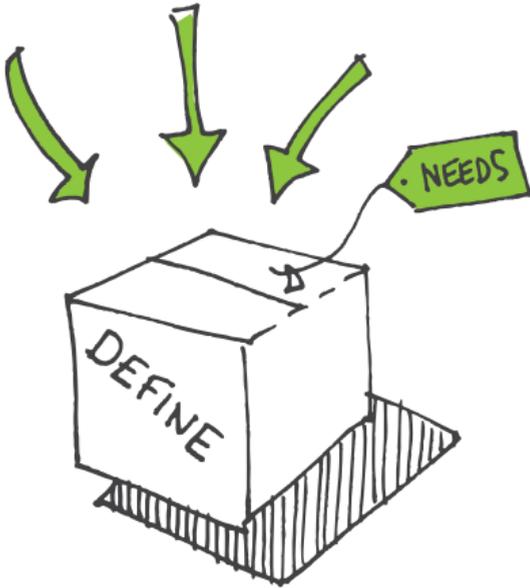
Ethos

After fully understanding the question, and the potential areas for further development with a wide range of stakeholders, it is important to define a direction. The crystallisation of ideas generated in the earlier discover phase is crucial to obtain resources to make the good idea happen.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES
AFFECTING PEOPLE
AND COMMUNITIES
IN CORNWALL?



Define



What is it?

This stage involves coming up with ideas and planning the execution of the strategy. Co-design can be undertaken with end users so they 'own' the solutions. Defining the solution will include describing the activities that you plan to undertake, the eventual outcomes and benefits expected and the time, cost and quality within which they will be delivered. This stage may conclude with completion of a business case and leadership sign off.

Develop the change



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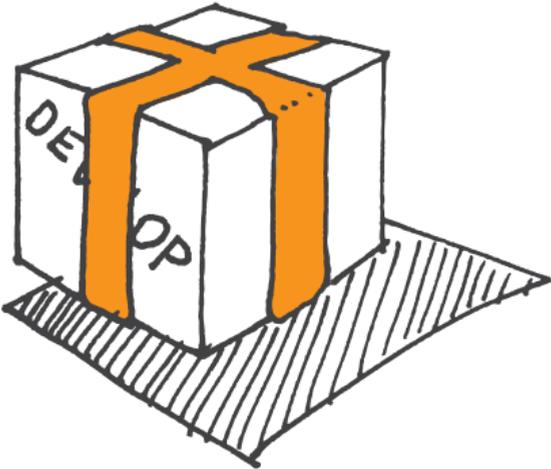
In order to maximise the chances of success, the change must be well managed. Before this can happen, the idea needs to be developed into an understood and manageable change. In the previous stage ideas were defined, this is the stage to develop those ideas into deliverable pieces of change. Having obtained support for the idea it is likely that at this point there is momentum behind the change developing into a reality.



Co-development session for
Thinking Room

What is it?

Whatever the change, it is likely to need the collective effort of several different disciplines to carry out. This is the stage to fully engage and commission those disciplines to help make your good idea happen. In doing this you will further define the scope, understand the constraints and continue to develop your understanding of the change.



Deliver the solution



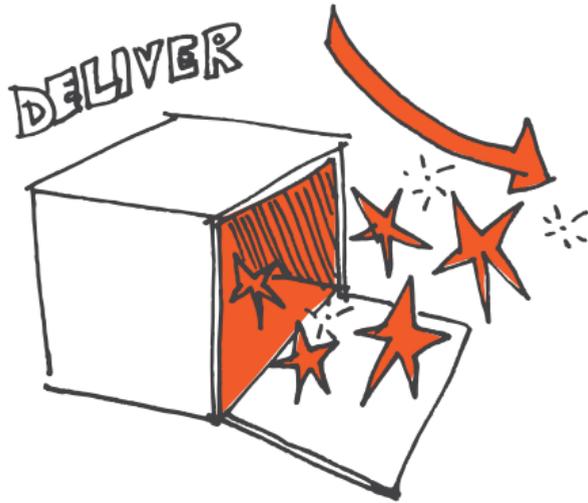
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Painting the picture from the plan. At this point, you understand the change, the rationale and the stakeholders. However a series of potentially complex tasks need to be co-ordinated and dependencies understood before the solution is delivered. This is where project management tools can help.

Energy Generation Playground



Deliver



What is it?

The appropriate use of well understood control methods enables effective communication, with all parties understanding the role they play in the end solution. If the unexpected happens, managing the evolution of ideas through this phase will be critical to limit 'scope creep' and deliver what was envisaged. At this point specific mechanisms to understand benefit realisation need to be implemented to ensure project success.

About Thinking Room

Thinking Room is a cross-sector innovation unit that combines user-led design techniques with best practice project management to make good ideas happen. Thinking Room has been developed by Cornwall Council.

To find out more email:

thinkingroom@cornwall.gov.uk

“We want to be the best place in the UK to live, work and play with the best value public services. We can and will succeed, providing we **innovate**”.

Kevin Lavery, Chief Executive, Cornwall Council



Get in touch

thinkingroom@cornwall.gov.uk