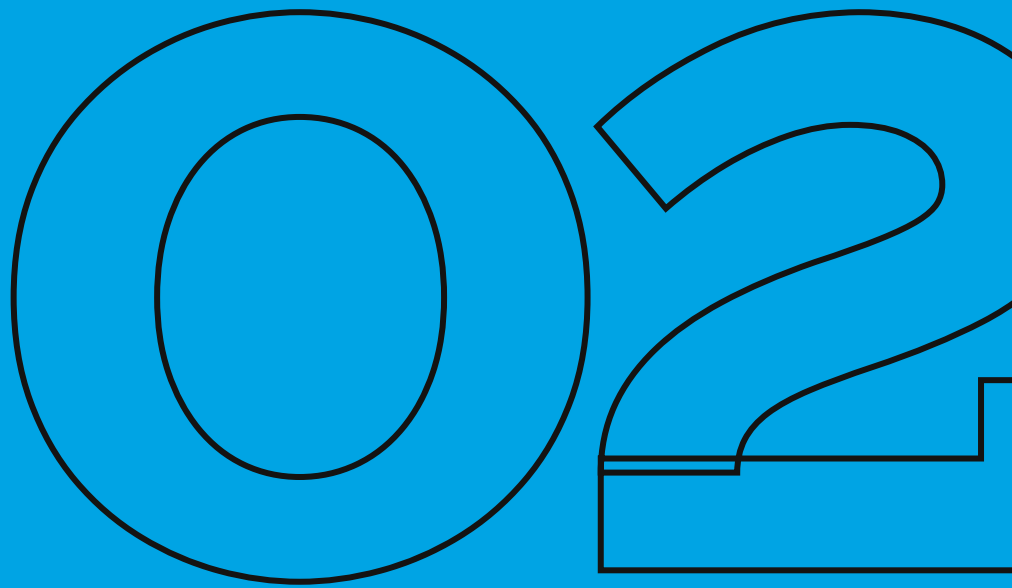




Is this actually co-design?

A two-page reality check for projects using the word co-design.

**Co-design is not a synonym for workshop.
The question is whether people share
meaningful influence over what gets defined,
developed and decided.**

Which description sounds most like your project?

APPROACH	WHAT IS HAPPENING	A USEFUL QUESTION
Informing	We explain a decision, service or plan.	Is there anything people can change?
Consulting	We ask for views on something we have largely framed or designed.	What will we do differently because of the feedback?
Involving	People contribute at several points and can shape parts of the work.	Which decisions are shared and which are not?
Co-design	People affected and people with other relevant expertise work together to understand the problem, develop possibilities and shape what is made.	Where is power genuinely shared?

Co-design does not mean everybody decides everything.

Constraints are normal. Budgets, law, safety and organisational responsibilities still exist. The important thing is that the boundaries are clear and the influence inside them is real.

Six signs you are closer to co-design

- ✓ People affected were involved before the solution was chosen.
- ✓ They can challenge how the problem itself is framed.
- ✓ More than one idea can survive long enough to be explored.
- ✓ People stay connected through testing and iteration.
- ✓ Participation is accessible and appropriately resourced.
- ✓ You can point to decisions that changed because of shared work.

If the destination, route and vehicle are already fixed, you may be asking for passengers rather than co-designers.