



**Outcome 1:  
Children in Essex  
get the best start  
in life**

Chris Martin  
Integrated Commissioning  
Director (West)

# Why is this important?

**Supporting children and their families from conception through birth and the early years of their life will give all children the best possible opportunity to succeed.**



**Ultimately... We want children to thrive, have fun at school and be able to make a positive contribution throughout their lives.**

**We are...**

**Setting our  
sights high**

**Being  
ambitious**

**We want to transform the way support for families with young children happens** - creating positive changes that are **widespread**, **high impact** and **long lasting**

**We know this will be challenging** - only possible if all those working across the early years system have a **single vision of what needs to change** and how it could happen

**We need different parts of the system to work together** - **aligning** their **resources** and **activity**

**This will  
require big  
shifts in...**

**Culture and  
practice**

**Mindsets and  
beliefs**

**Starting with family capability and how to build it** - thinking carefully about the contribution **families** and **communities** might be making, e.g through peer support, mentoring

**Embedding the principle and practice of early intervention** - **anticipating** what families need and supporting them **before they really struggle**

**Thinking about the kinds of support families need, not just how it is delivered** - not all families want to access or need formal 'services'; what else can we facilitate? Should there be a greater focus on the **support and skills parents need**?



## We will be working differently with families

**We know that parents are children's first and most enduring educators.**

Everything we do should be about **building the capacity and capability** of parents to **support themselves** and to **support one another**

**But professionals currently largely work on a deficit model** - they see the presenting problems and step in when things go wrong, rather than **starting from people's strengths** and finding ways to **build on them** as a route to **preventing problems** occurring

**We are  
thinking  
differently  
about the  
workforce**

**We know we need to create a system where professionals can **do what needs to be done**, rather than what is on their job description**

In particular we want to;

bring about **more consistency, integration** and a **clear focus on shared outcomes** that are framed by a **clear vision**

take hold of and make better use of the **diverse experience** in our current workforce

create **rich personal and professional development**

## **Get it right and we will..**

**Achieve better outcomes for children whilst also saving money. As professionals become better informed they will feel more confident to step in early and prevent problems from developing.**

CHARLIE, BASILDON



**As we begin to align our work more closely with what families really need, we will enable and facilitate highly effective peer-support approaches.**

# The case for change in Essex

## **Financial imperative:**

- We have less money to spend than before
- We spend money on some things that are not effective
- We spend too much on firefighting, to detriment of prevention/early intervention

## **Outcomes imperative:**

- Results are not as good as they need to be
- Public expectations continue to rise
- Some problems are 'wicked' and need solving systemically

## **Opportunities imperative:**

- Citizens and communities have insights, capabilities and energies as yet untapped
- New collaborative potential to unlock around integration of health and social care
- Proper outcomes based commissioning opens the door to radically different solutions



# The case for change in Early Years

## **Evidence from research:**

what happens in the first two years of a child's life has a significant bearing on their future

## **Our current performance:**

outcomes for young children in Essex have improved and most children are well-prepared for school, but we need to do more and different to continue improving as resources diminish

MATT & GEMMA, HARLOW



## **Families tell us that:**

despite everyone's best efforts, they don't always get the right help at the right time

# Policy and strategic context

## **Raising aspirations and attainment in**

**Early Years:** supporting the delivery of the strategic aspirations included within the Essex Children, Young People and Families Partnership Plan (CYPFPP) 2013-2016 and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Essex 2013-2018

**Joined up strategies:** sets the foundations for our work with partners to describe and address Child Poverty through the Child Poverty Strategy 2014-2017

**Strategic Review of Early Years:** grasping the opportunity that exists to re-define the Early Years Workforce [across Essex]

**Family Centred policy:** seeking to deliver an approach to working with families that is 'strengths based' and builds upon existing skills and resilience

**Investment in building community resilience:** has the potential to develop and extend far beyond Early Years and Childcare to enable the type of community mobilisation described in the 'Who Will Care' report (2013)

**Addressing child poverty:** an issue that cuts across commissioning for People and Place and will enable ECC to explore opportunities to counter the destabilising impact that temporary accommodation [and worklessness] have on families

# Key facts and figures

**School Readiness:** In 2012/2013 Essex exceeded the national average across all three Prime Areas of Learning and Development

**Finance:** Spend on Early Years services in 2014/15 is £72

**Good Level of Development (GLD):** 53% in Essex compared to 52% for England and 41% in the National Pilot (2012)

**Foundation Stage Profile (FSP):** Move from the bottom quartile in 2011/2012 to the top quartile in 2012/2013

**Performance of boys:** the gap between boys and girls is 17% overall and 18% when measured against writing

**Government targets:** Central government will increase the target for Free Early Education Entitlement for two year olds from 20% to 40% under Phase 2

**Worklessness:** Increased in Essex in 2012, but declined in other East of England authorities. The proportion (and number) of workless households with dependent children decreased between 2008 and 2011

**Temporary accommodation -** in 2013 the number of households living in temporary accommodation in Essex was 1,017. This has reduced since 2008, but is still an issue. Estimates are that temporary housing costs the taxpayer over £500 million each year

# What action are we taking?

**An ambitious, strategic, broad-reaching **review of early years.****

**A collaboration between the local authority and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs).**

**The review will identify opportunities for:**

- **innovation across the system, especially co-production with families**
- **removal of duplication of resources and roles**
- **determining what a common understanding and model of child development should be**
- **skilling up the workforce to deliver new approaches**

## Through the early years review we will...



- **Enhance the quality of engagement with families**
- **Use meaningful understandings of everyday family life in Essex to help design the future offer**
- **Commit to co-production with both families and staff**
- **Adopt a 'bottom across' approach, seeking the contribution and engagement of front line workers in response to the stories of Essex families**
- **Ensure that there is a significant up scaling of peer and network support in order to fully realise the potential of parents and carers to support each other as volunteers.**

# Early years review

**In scope but not end product**

Children's Centres

Family Info Service

Health Visitor  
Transfer

FNP & MESCH  
(links to school  
nursing/midwife)

Foundation Stage  
School Readiness

FiF 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector

Sufficiency and  
Sustainability  
(Early Years  
Childminding)

**Money**

**Engagement**

**Workforce**

**Research &  
horizon  
scanning**

What sort of support do parents feel they want/need in early years?

How do parents most want to access this support?

How does that citizen vision fit (or not) with formal 'services' as currently conceived/experienced?

What capacity/energy/aspiration do parents and communities have that we need to be more conscious of? How could it be encouraged/harnessed?

What do parents feel about being supported to be more independent, and supported to support each other? Is this possible? What would it need to look/feel like?

**We are also are testing an  
approach to innovation...**

## **Principles that will define our success and the way we work**

### **Focus**

We stay relentlessly focused on citizens' outcomes and experiences as the only measures of success

### **Believe**

We strongly believe that most citizens want and are able to own their own outcomes and be masters of their own destinies, and that we should promote and support independence wherever possible and appropriate

### **Commit**

We are deeply committed to listening to citizens and communities, and to involving them directly in understanding problems, designing and testing solutions, co-producing outcomes

### **Innovate**

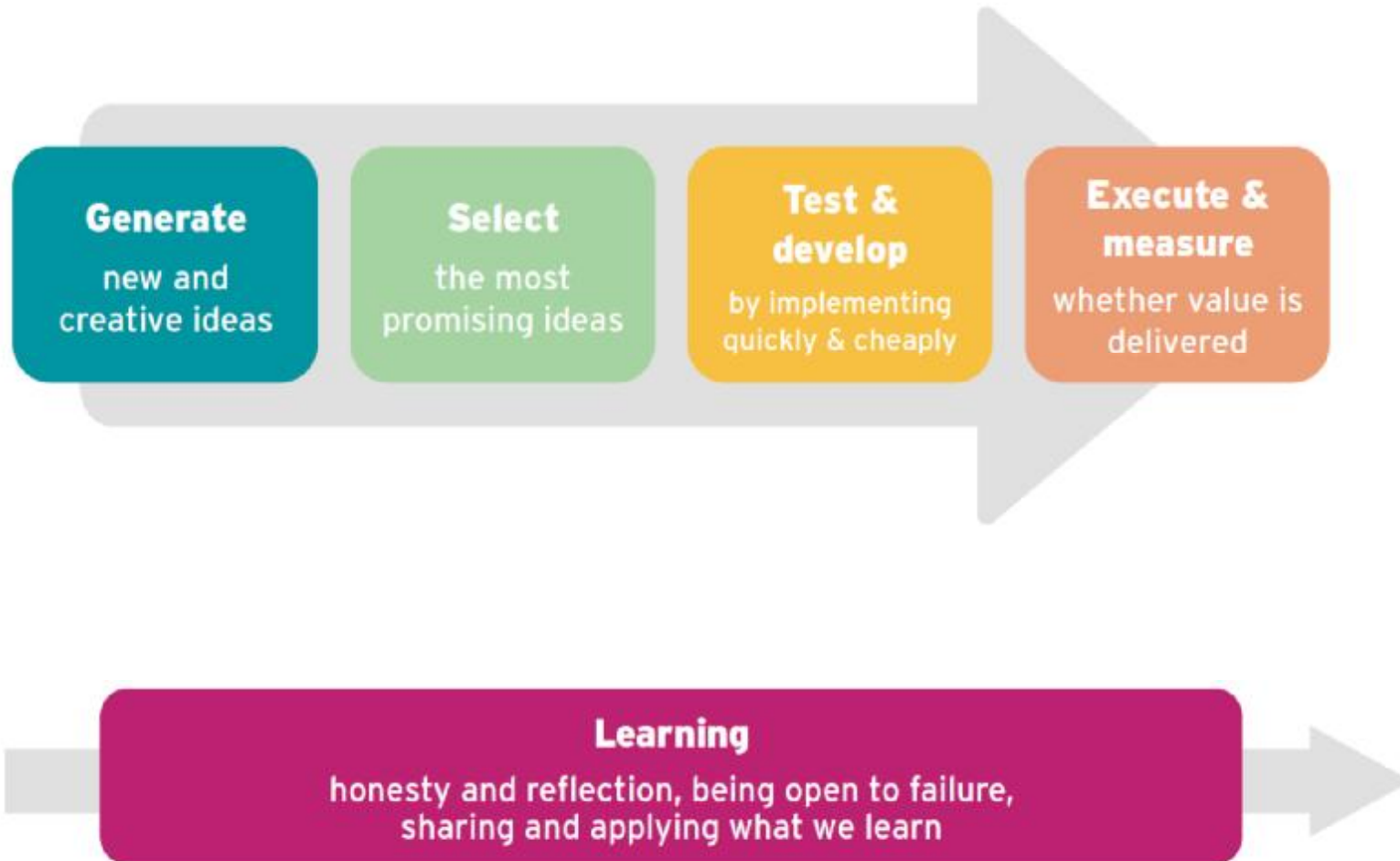
We intentionally seek out opportunities to innovate as a core part of what we do

### **Collaborate**

We respect and care about each other's work, and take every opportunity to solve problems together - even when this feels like it adds complexity

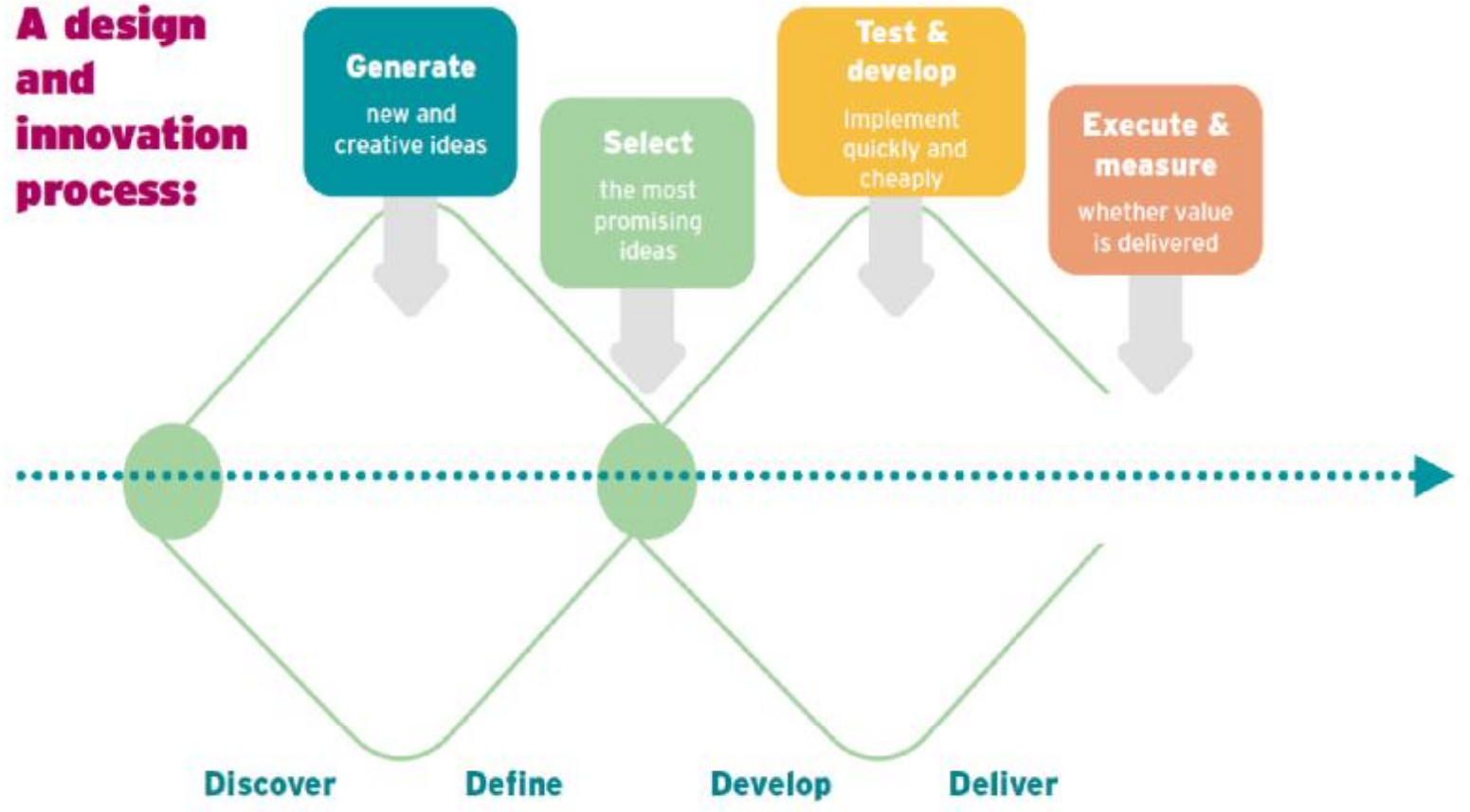


# What does it mean to 'innovate'?

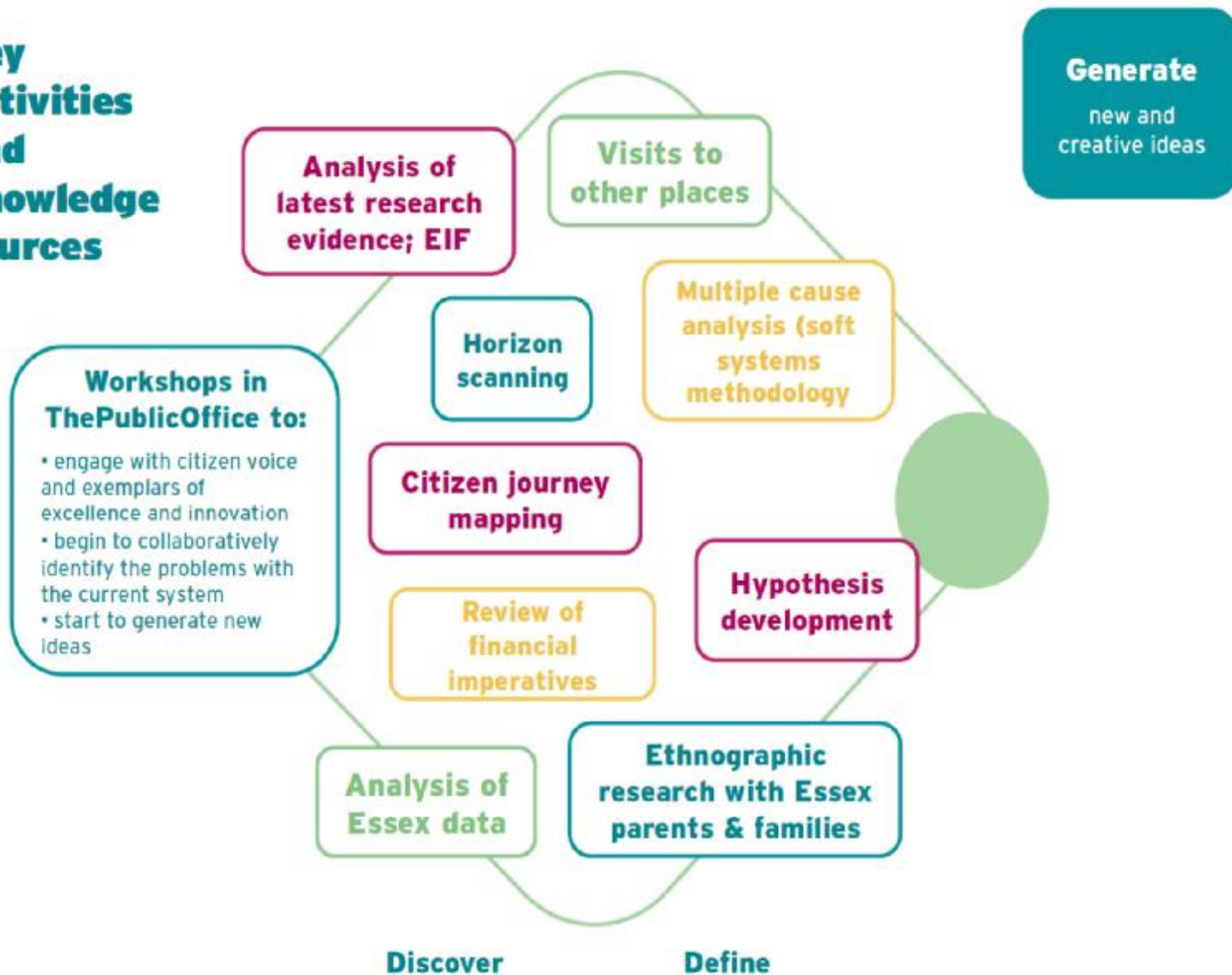


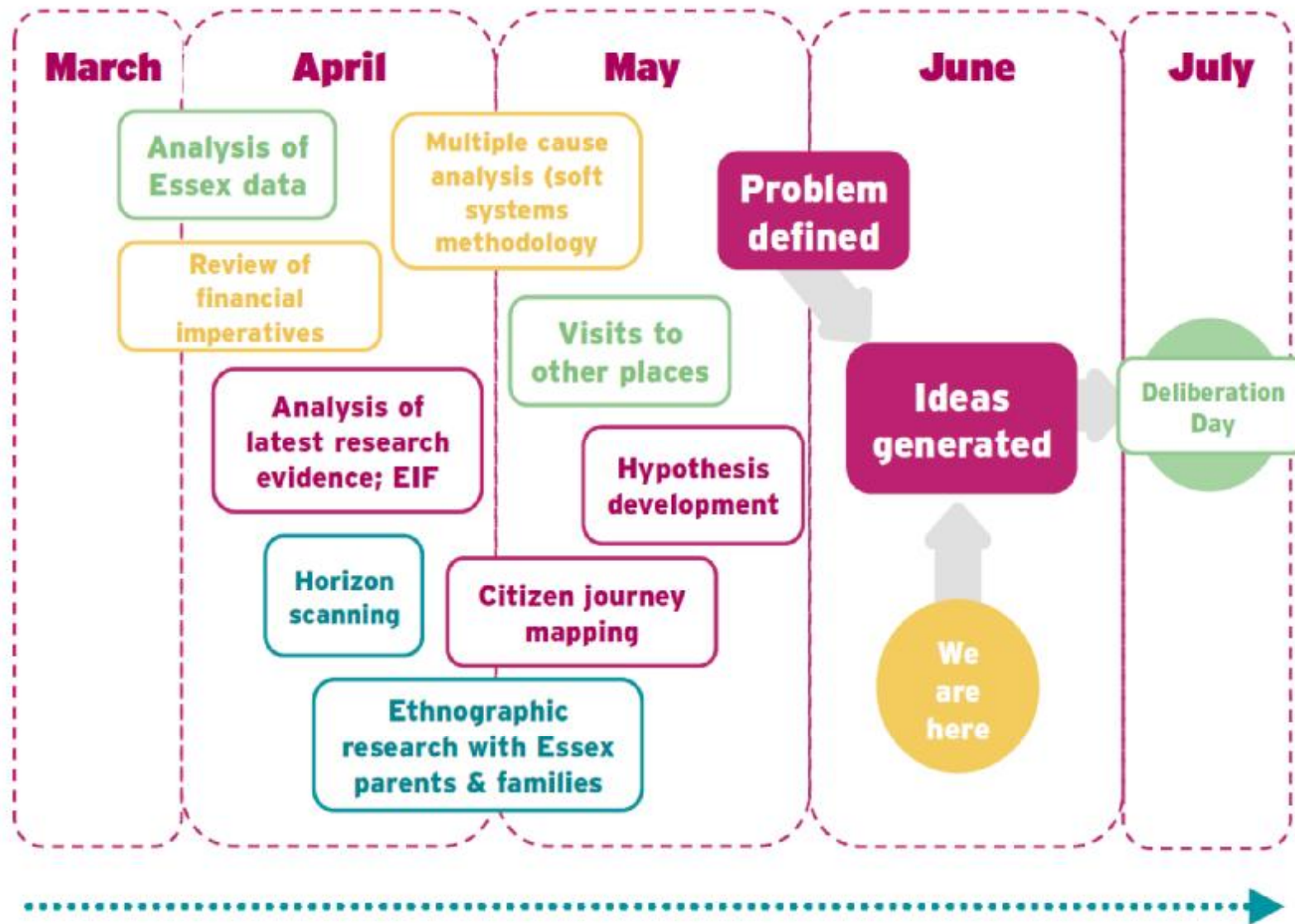


**A design and innovation process:**



## Key activities and knowledge sources





AMY & GREG, CLACTON



**Focus on...**  
**Ethnographic research in  
early years**

JO JINGLES



## Why ethnographic research?

- Deeply immersive and exploratory
- Meets people on their own turf
- Reveals behaviours and patterns that other methods won't pick up

# **Our ethnographic commission**

## **We commissioned ethnographic researchers to:**

**Explore the lives and experiences of young families**

**Understand experiences of existing support, needs and preferences (including use of public, private and third sector provision)**

**Understand the hopes and aspirations of families, and perceived enablers and blockers to achieving goals**

**What did we learn?**

**Some disruptive insights**



MATT & GEMMA, HARLOW



**Parents  
are  
isolated,  
lonely and  
struggling  
to make  
friends**

**WINDMILL CHILDREN'S CENTRE**



**Sessions  
for  
parents  
are well-  
attended  
...  
but not  
by  
parents**



**There are few places where young parents feel comfortable**

**“The boys don’t have many friends.  
They don’t get invited to parties like  
other children.”**

**Amy & Greg**

**"The person I have felt closest to is  
the health visitor.**

**As the boys grew up I missed that  
contact... I don't have that many  
people I can talk to."**

**Suze**

## **We are asking ourselves...**

### **How could we help to facilitate:**

**Better friendship and support networks?**

**Activities that build the confidence and skills that parents need to nurture and stimulate their children?**

**Local environments that are welcoming for mums and dads?**

**More parent entrepreneurialism?**

**What will success look like?**

## **Parents will feel...**

**They know where and when to get help if they need it**

**They trust the professionals they connect with**

**Their own skills and abilities are valued and being supported**

**Interventions and services are high quality**

**They have easy access to trusted and valuable support from other parents if they need it**

## **Professionals will know...**

**Where our children and families are, what they need and how we can best support them**

**They are able to build trusted relationships with families**

**They are supported to do their job and to work well with others in the best interests of children and families**

**Children have good levels of development in key areas and are ready for school**

**Children develop and achieve well by the time they are five**



**Success  
from a  
parent  
perspective  
Early years**

I have people to talk to openly about my child who listen and understand

It's important to me that my child does well at school and enjoys the opportunities it brings

I can go on parenting training with my friends and it helps my confidence

We took up the free daycare offer and my child loves nursery

My Health Visitor, staff at the nursery, the Children's Centre & school all say the same things

There are people who will support me and I know where to go when things get tough

Other parents support me with advice and I like it when I can support new mums or dads

I know where to access help and advice on how best to support my child's development

We play together at home and read stories. I feel close to my baby

I have a really kind and supportive group of friends

My school and nursery work together to make sure they know my child

Professionals are interested in what I think about services and my experiences

**Success  
from a  
parent  
perspective  
Child poverty**

This is my flat, we have our own bathroom and we don't have to share with strangers

I don't have to worry about where we be moved to next

Other parents support me with advice and I like it when I can support new mums or dads

I work part time around school and I am doing ok at managing my monthly budget

We have a good routine now and always make it to school on time

The people around us are friendly, they have children and we often talk

I feel like I can keep my child safe from harm

If I have money worries I have someone I could speak to and get help

I have time to think about what we eat as a family and the kids are getting more adventurous

My child seems settled at school and he has friends who live nearby

My child does to nursery and it fits in with when I go to work and school

I talk to my child and we enjoy reading at home

**We need to focus on building the resilience of families and reducing their isolation**

**No-one wants or needs *more* services** - families aren't getting the best value from the ones that already exist

**Top insights**  
(things we learned that we ignore at our peril)

**It's all about relationships** - professionals and families need to build their relational capability

**There is poor collaboration and connection between public services** - this doesn't make sense for families and limits the impact of what professionals do

# Our new early years system

## Our new system must... Work with and for families across Essex

### We will...



**Look first at families' strengths**  
especially those of parents (both Mums and Dads) and take time to understand their needs fully



**Focus on preventing problems**  
before they occur and offer flexible, responsive support when and where it's required



**Build the resilience of parents**  
and communities to support each other



**Work together across the whole system**  
– aligning our resources so we can best support families and 'do what needs to be done when it needs to be done' (not necessarily what is on our job description)



**Base all we do on evidence**  
of both what is needed and of what works, and be brave enough to stop things that aren't working



**Be clear and consistent about the outcomes**  
we expect, and judge what we do against them

### We will know our system is successful if it delivers these outcomes:



#### Children...

- Are physically and emotionally healthy
- Are resilient and able to learn well
- Are supported by their families, their community, and – when necessary – professionals to thrive and be successful
- Live in environments that are safe and support their learning and development



#### Parents...

- Are supporting one another in their communities
- Know where to get help if they need it
- Have trusted relationships with practitioners, neighbours and other parents
- Are well informed about how best to help their child develop, and motivated to make great choices



#### Communities...

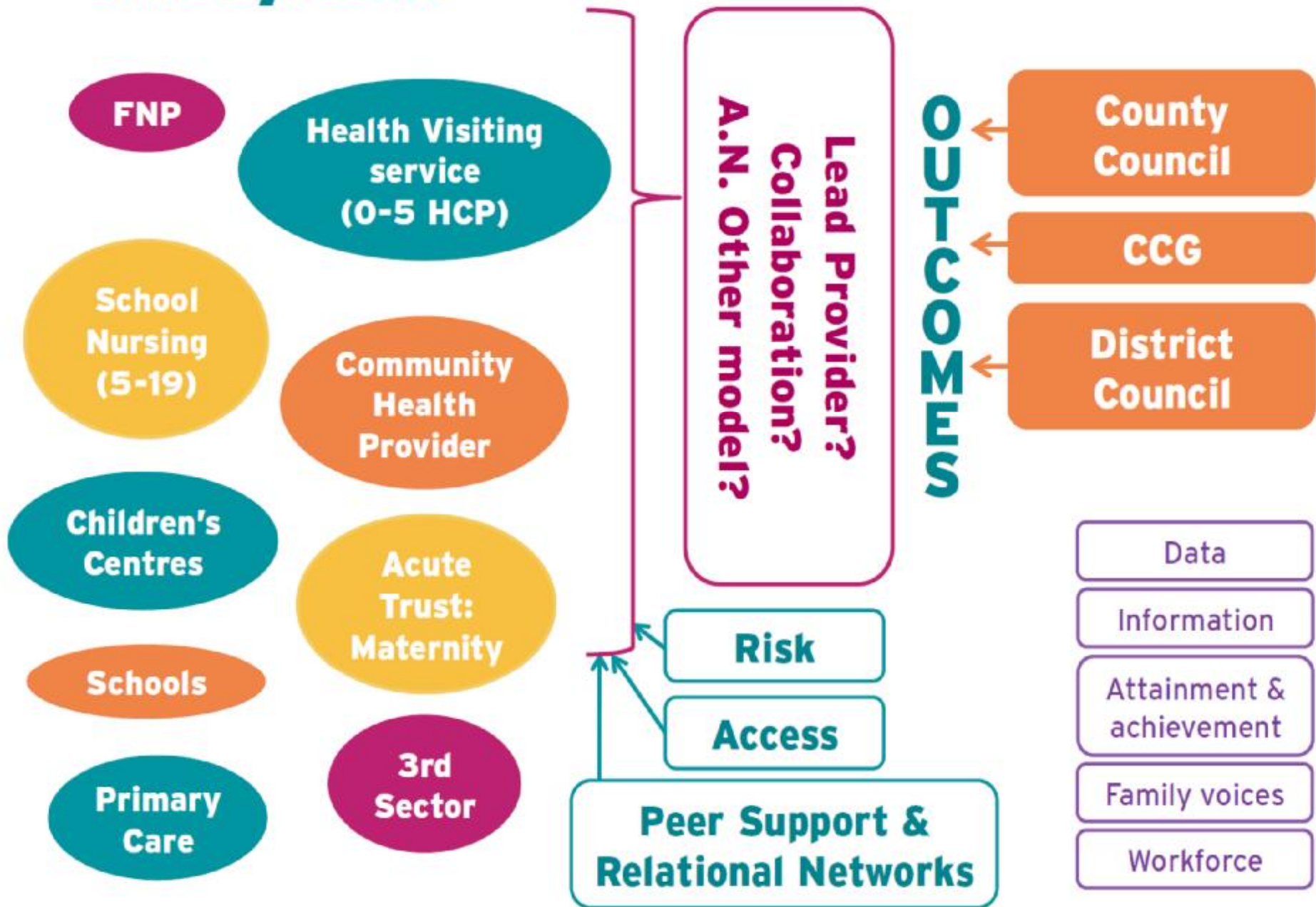
- See it as their collective responsibility to support parents and young children
- Are providing sustainable support through individuals, community groups, businesses and voluntary organisations
- Are seen, understood and valued by practitioners as being 'part of the solution'



#### Practitioners...

- Focus first on families and their strengths
- Work closely with families to understand what they need, and build trusting relationships
- Have a shared vision and understanding of outcomes and success
- Are skilled, knowledgeable and are co-creating and co-delivering approaches that work

# The system?



## The four big ideas

### Transforming Children's Centres

- becoming less about buildings and more about people
- responding to evidenced need and targeted
- owned and driven by families and communities, with support from professionals

### Transforming the workforce

- building a strengths based approach
- building relational capability
- establishing a common core of understanding
- working towards a shared vision

### Alternative approaches to commissioning for outcomes

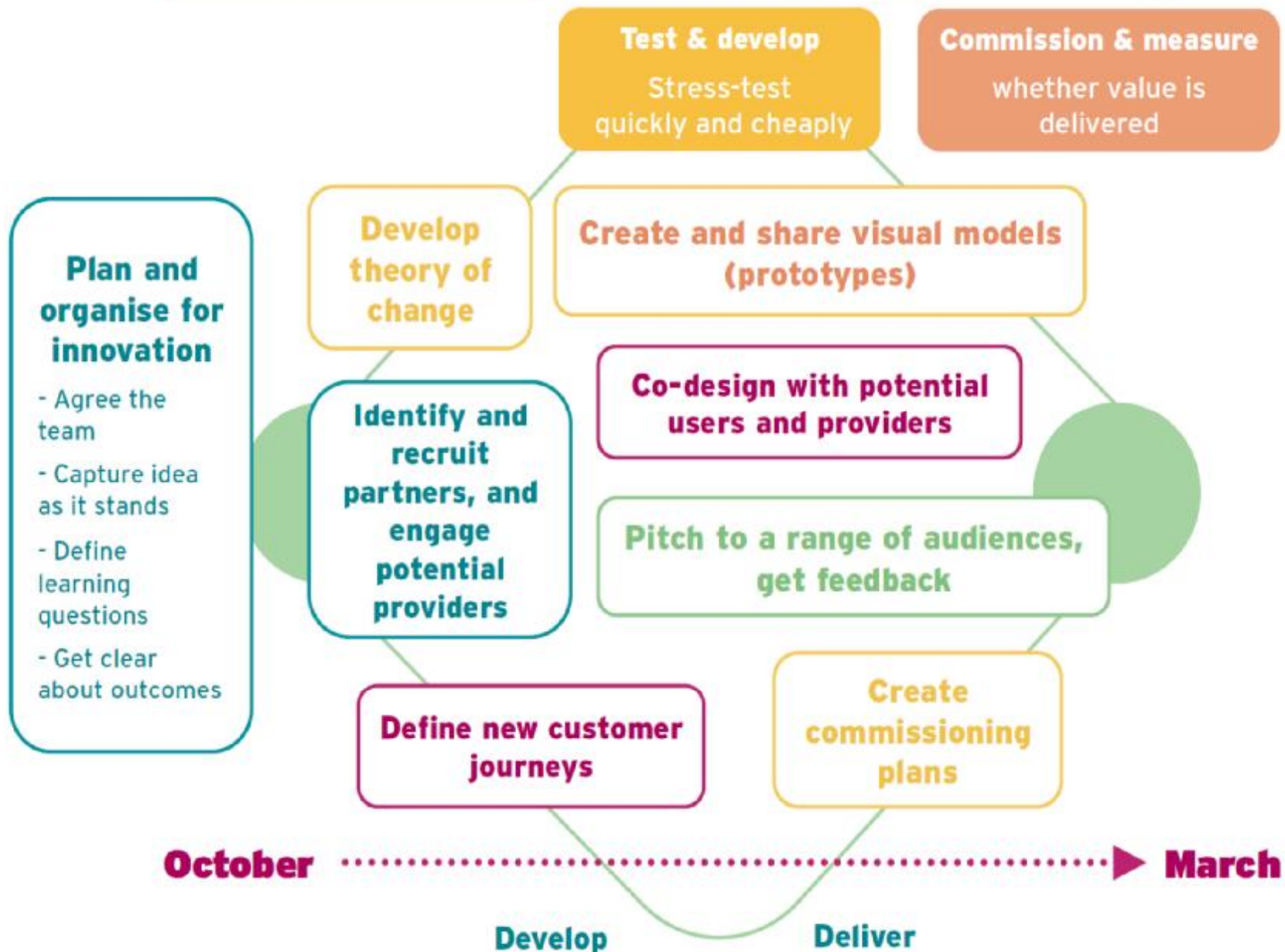
- based on a deep understanding of families' needs, current performance and evidence of what works
- building community capacity
- working with new providers (including communities)

### Peer support and unleashing community capacity

- working to parents' strengths and building their knowledge and resilience
- working to
- co-creating and co-delivering approaches that work

# Learn, assess, refine, adapt

honesty and reflection, being open to failure, sharing and applying what we learn



# What will we do and how will we work?

**We mustn't be tempted to take the ideas into a dark room and work out plans to deliver them - to get sucked into the current way of thinking, working and doing.**

We need to maintain a learning mindset and approach. Diamond 2 is about developing, adapting and refining the ideas in preparation for commissioning. We will measure our success in this phase by what we learn, not by what we 'do'.

Learning happens by;

- setting out the idea clearly
- testing assumptions about the idea (how and why it will achieve the outcomes we are expecting)
- identifying what we don't yet know
- deliberately setting out to find the answers (taking the idea out to and co-designing with potential users, providers, partners, experts)
- applying new knowledge and insights

A core team of 'innovation sponsors' will:

- ensure quality and levels of ambition
- advocate and make connections
- provide coaching support to 'innovation leads' attached to each of the four 'big ideas'

ThePublicOffice team will provide support by:

- facilitating and enabling the leads in each area to get the right stuff done
- offering coaching, guidance, tools and guidance on the overall process



# **Things that need to happen next**

- 1. Actively engage and secure commitment from all innovation leads and sponsors**
- 2. Clarify the current 'state of play' with each idea - what progress has been made since Deliberation Day?**
- 3. Create an up to date/stake in the ground articulation of each idea that focuses on key features and intended outcomes (as per 'our system must' poster) and becomes a tool for communication and engagement**
- 4. Bring all innovation leads and sponsors together ASAP for a 2-3 hour intensive learning and planning session**