Rural Society in Transition
Planning for 21st Century Rural Potentials & Challenges
26 April 2018

Finding a Place for Community Planning in Ireland?

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Presentation

1. To outline the evolution of community planning in Scotland in relation to devising shared outcomes

2. To present research findings which emphasise well-being as a shared policy goal

3. To imagine what roles might be required in re-imagining rural society in Ireland
Project objectives

1. To identify and explain the **legislative, policy and organisational arrangements** for community-based planning across the devolved UK.

2. To identify **how joint-working relations are designed, organised and managed**.

3. To investigate issues of **community engagement**.

4. To examine the **relationship between community planning and land use planning**.

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Exploring New Models of Community-based Planning in the Devolved UK
(with Professor Simon Pemberton; Keele University).
Funded by the Planning Exchange Foundation

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<th>England</th>
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<th>Wales</th>
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<td>Welsh Government Local Government Division</td>
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<td>Delivery level (neighbourhood planning)</td>
<td>Community level (regeneration)</td>
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Community planning: A (very) quick overview

1. Rationalisation of services – “integrated service delivery”
2. High quality public services & continuous improvement as part of a long-term process
3. Joint-working (co-production) – involving a range of actors, organisations, activities, values, cultures & behaviours
4. Strong, cooperative leadership & citizen-centricity
5. An emphasis on proactively engaging communities
6. A focus on well-being in environmental, social & economic aspects
7. Partnership, prevention, people, performance & prioritisation
8. Not just new actors – and new roles – but a rescaling of organisations, relations & an ethos of shared societal goals
9. New performance regimes
10. [Diagram showing inputs, activities, outcomes, short term outcomes, mid term outcomes, long term outcomes]

Put simply

"It is about a group of people that come together to look at unblocking issues and talking about the really difficult stuff that is happening and which needs a group of people to work at a strategic level. There is a clear remit of breaking down barriers, but also working together.

Strategic Local Service Board representative – Wales.

It is the kind of high-level, strategic collaboration that a thoughtful taxpayer would expect to happen anyway.

(SURF, 2016)
Strengthening of statutory basis for community planning

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

It gives a defined purpose for what community planning should achieve for the first time, which is very much about **improving local outcomes and tackling inequality**.

*It places a range of duties on a number of partners* - not just the local authority, but also the health board, integrated joint board, etc., - to support community planning.

*And the involvement of communities is right at the heart of it.*

Local authority strategic officer - Scotland

... a more intricate, sophisticated understanding of local circumstances and a more intense response from partners

Scottish Government representative

Mutual learning & innovation

- Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 sets out how the eleven councils, as lead partners, will *work with statutory bodies and their communities to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the well-being of an area, community cohesion and improving the quality of life of its citizens.*

... the only show in town....

Northern Ireland representative
A transition to well-being

‘...the time is ripe for our measurement system to shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people’s well-being. And measures of well-being should be put in a context of sustainability’

Scotland’s National Performance Framework is ‘an international leader in wellbeing measurement’

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

New mind sets? Well-being & Joint working

• Move away from silo / sectoral services to more joined up working with an emphasis on the outcomes for individuals, families and communities

• Emphasis on early intervention / prevention and person-centred approaches

• Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – strengthens the status of the National Performance Framework highlighting identifying local outcomes for well-being that meet national priorities
Relevance to rural communities?

Community Planning Partnerships are required to identify better outcomes for specific communities, reducing the gap in outcomes between the most & least deprived groups & improving long term sustainability of public service provision.

The [local] articulation of a shared overarching purpose requires the strategic alignment of different scalar actors – often with different priorities /statutory responsibilities.

Understanding place:

– What are local people’s concerns, needs, priorities?
– How can we re-solve issues?
– How will we know if we’ve made a difference?
Rural challenges?

- **Geography:** A highly rural area with many small communities (often separated by water)
- **Demographics:** Ageing, population decline, population density
- **Inequalities:** Health, income, economic deprivation – *access to services* (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)
- **Mapping exercises:** Digital connectivity, fuel poverty, isolation, access to health services, recreation, affordable housing, size of schools, transport (including road safety)

"Major disadvantages: terrible transport links by road and rail..." "Poor bus service, no major shops..." "where I live, the buses are every two hours" (p.17)

Rural challenges?

The biggest concerns that people in Girvan (South Ayrshire) relate to:

- work and the local economy
- public transport

Other issues include:
- Child poverty
- Less good outcomes for young carers
- Prevalence of dementia
- Loneliness & social isolation
Focus for improvement

**Strategic Delivery Partnerships**

1. Integrated children’s services
2. Community safety
3. Health & wellbeing
4. Economy, employment & sustainability

**Iterative process**

**Strategic improvement themes**

1. Closing the poverty-related outcomes gap for children & young people
2. Supporting older people to live in good health

Implications for reimagining rural society in Ireland?

1. Shifts attention away from a relatively narrow focus on individual service providers’ inputs & outputs towards making a qualitative difference in individuals’, families’ and communities’ lives – well-being outcomes
   - Hierarchical – does central government want to take the lead?
   - Is an outcomes / well-being / reducing inequalities focus appropriate?

2. Demands iterative & collaborative processes involving blended data collection, analysis & action across sectors
   - To what extent might inputs, outputs and processes be shared?
   - Is a cross-sectoral, cooperative working practice & culture in place?

3. Ensures strong community engagement
   - Are there appropriate tools, spaces & mind sets for genuine listening?
   - What mechanisms exist for prioritising the use of scarce resources?
A place for community planning in Ireland: Your role?

**Clarity of roles**: local government (councillors/officers); partner organisations; voluntary sector; community groups; individual citizens…

**Alternative roles** - planning for, resourcing & providing / securing the provision of services may involve new service providers, new services, new forms of service

**Leadership roles** – championing integration & delivery

**Organisational roles** – how best to organise roles and responsibilities - both in terms of organisational capacity but also spatially

**Research & analysis roles** – open source; robust

**Evaluation roles** - metrics and methods?

**Initiating role**?

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**Full Report**


Available at: [www.planningexchangefoundation.org.uk](http://www.planningexchangefoundation.org.uk)