Rationales for Place-based Approaches in Scotland

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- Glasgow Centre for Population Health
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland
- Improvement Service
- Inspiring Scotland
- IRISS (Institution for Research and Innovation in Social Services)
- Joint Improvement Team
- NHS Health Scotland
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- SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations)

This is one of a series of papers published by What Works Scotland to share evidence, learning and ideas about public service reform. This paper relates in particular to the **Collaborative Action Research** workstream.

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Summary

The aim of this paper is to remove the confusion surrounding what place-based approaches are, the rationales behind their use, the development of this approach to public service reform in Scotland and the future challenges presented by austerity and welfare reform. Key arguments presented in this paper:

- The rationales driving the emergence of new place-based approaches at the neighbourhood level include:

  o The Civic – in the need for higher quality, more responsive services and for communities to deliver more services for themselves
  o The Joined-up - in the need for improved coordination and more integrated services
  o The Political – in the pressure to devolve more power over resources to front-line staff and the public
  o The Economic – in the idea that innovation through place-based approaches can lead to new preventive measures and improved performance

- As the pressure on CPPs to deliver outcomes increases, place-based approaches are becoming a catchall for a wide range of policy objectives with the risk of overload.

- Place-based approaches are currently being tested by Community Planning Partnerships as a vehicle for cost cutting, prevention and asset-based community development. These new features of place-based approaches are aspirational, rather than approaches that have been fully developed and embedded. They remain a key area of innovation.

- The complexity of place-based approaches means that there is a risk that local practitioners and policy makers become distracted away from the challenges of austerity and welfare reform. In low-income neighbourhoods, there is a need for the expansion of welfare services to support mental health, realistic assessments of capacity within communities, and the basic provision of neighbourhood services to enable community development.

Introduction

Neddy Seagoon: What are you doing here?

Eccles: Everybody's gotta be somewhere.

In this quote from the Goon Show, Eccles reminds Neddy Seagoon that 'place' is ubiquitous. Just as 'everybody's gotta be somewhere', so everyone has a relationship to place. It follows that the term 'place-based' can refer to a range of policies and interventions. The definition of a catchall is 'a receptacle for odds and ends or something that covers a wide variety of items or situations'. This paper argues that in the context of increased demand and reduced budgets there is a risk that 'a place-based approach' becomes a catchall in which to put an array of potentially inconsistent policy agendas. These agendas and rationales do not necessarily reflect a shared understanding of what is meant by 'a place based approach' or the evidence on when a localised approach works best.

The so-called Pillars of the Christie Commission - participation, partnership, prevention, and performance - have become core to the Scottish approach to public service reform (Christie Commission 2011). To these four P's we might add a fifth P - for Place. The argument for a focus on place in the redesign of public services is that the orientation towards a locality provides a counter-balance to working in silos while at the same time providing a focus for involving local people in improving public services. 'Place' is a 'magnet for partnership and the basis for stronger community participation in the design and delivery of local services' (Scottish Government, 2011b:10). A focus on place in Scotland, contrasts with England, where the focus of public service reform is on specific service areas or themes such as 'economic development' or 'wellbeing'.

One way of defining place is as 'an area with definite or indefinite boundaries' (The Free Dictionary). In Scotland place has been chosen as a guiding principle for public service reform. It is seen as providing an organising logic for developing strategies towards achieving national outcomes across a range of spatial scales, themes and types of intervention. Community planning is 'the process by which councils and other public bodies work with local communities, businesses and voluntary groups to plan and deliver better services and improve the lives of people who live in Scotland' (Audit Scotland 2016). Community planning is delivered by local Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) of which there are 32 in Scotland, one for each local authority area. Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) work with the Scottish Government on the basis of Single Outcome Agreements (soon to be replaced by Local Outcome Improvement Plans). Most CPPs have been developing new place based approaches at the neighbourhood level, partly in response to targets set by Audit Scotland around greater participation and community engagement and in anticipation of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

The driver for this paper is What Works Scotland's (WWS) Collaborative Action Research, working with CPPs across four case sites in Scotland since 2015 and our reflections on the use of place-based approaches to implement the recommendations from the Christie Commission. The Improvement Service, one of our national partners working to improve public services, recently published a substantial report on this topic based on research with 27 out of 32 CPPs. The size of the report is testament to the increasing prominence of place-based approaches and the problem of definition. The authors of the IS report (2016) note that 'from the outset there would not appear to be one single definition of what is meant by a place-based approach' (2016:6). It is therefore uncertain how staff working for CPPs will interpret a question asking them to describe their place-based approach since there is such a diverse range of activities that could potentially fall into this category. This leads to considerable difficulty in identifying the approaches currently in operation and in understanding their purposes, goals and means.

This paper discusses the confusion surrounding what place-based approaches are by examining the background to these approaches, the rationales for the current focus on place in Scottish policy, the different definitions and defining features of place-based approaches used in Scotland. The later part of this paper discusses the continuities and discontinuities from the past by analysing the new features of place-based working and considering the potential implications of austerity and welfare reform for place-based approaches in low-income neighbourhoods.

Background to place-based approaches in Scotland

In Scotland, as in the rest of the UK, there is nothing new about place-based approaches. They have been around for many years stretching back to the UK Community Development Projects of the 1960s and 70s, which included Ferguslie Park in Paisley (Lawless, 1989). Indeed, the East End of Glasgow was the location of one of the first and largest place-based approaches in UK that experimented with partnership between multiple agencies. GEAR - the Glasgow East Regeneration ran for a decade from 1976 involving £200m of public investment. More recent place policies have included Social Inclusion Partnerships in the 1990s-2000s and, arguably, Community Planning Partnerships since 2003.

The rationale for place-based approaches in the past was the existence of spatial concentration of poverty, the argument being that if poverty is spatially concentrated then so too should be the response to poverty. The shift to CPPs was partly driven by the recognition that SIPs had failed to address the poor quality of mainstream public services provided in low-income neighbourhoods and the recognition that they had had less impact than anticipated on individual outcomes such as employment, education and health. Those individuals who achieved improved economic circumstances tended to leave the area, increasing population churn and causing the benefits to leak out of the area, leading in many areas to the further concentration of poverty (Matthews, 2012).

It was believed that CPPs would be able to re-prioritise the budgets of mainstream services towards low-income neighbourhoods (known as 'bending the spend') and in doing so, achieve improved outcomes for people living in low-income areas. In other words, with the move to community planning there was a recognition that place-based initiatives on their own would not be able to alter the long-term trajectories of low-income neighbourhoods. This rationale for the shift to the 'strategic' approach of community planning is worth remembering given the challenges facing low-income neighbourhoods today.

Despite attempts to improve outcomes through CPPs, the shift to community planning has had little impact on key outcomes such as income, employment, health, learning and safety. Inequalities have been static or become more pronounced and the gap between outcomes for the poorest and the most advantaged has increased (Christie Commission, 2011). Research conducted by Mair et al. (2011) demonstrated the continued clustering of negative outcomes at the micro level in the most deprived areas. They found that negative outcomes are high localized, interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

Renewed attention to public service reform through place-based approaches has recently become more formalized in new legislation in Scotland including the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2013 and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Both acts require public bodies to plan services at the sub-authority level. This use of legislation and regulation to drive public service reform in Scotland contrasts with approaches in other countries where there remains a preference for using softer forms of persuasion and incentives such as providing guidance, setting new standards, creating new governance arrangements or devolving funding (Audit Scotland, 2016).

Matthews (2013) argues that in recent years there has been a 'return to place' in Scottish policy. The current era, marks a renewal of localised approaches to public sector reform with a greater focus on small area geographies and partnership working at the neighbourhood level. The Community Empowerment Act embodies the place-based approach recommended by Christie and increases the focus on localities and place-based communities as drivers of public service reform. The Act, which comes into force this year, requires that each community planning partnership divides the area of the local authority into smaller areas of indeterminate size described as 'localities'. Practitioners working in CPPs also refer to these localities as neighbourhoods. This new legal requirement to sub-divide the authority is underpinned by a commitment to reducing inequality and taking greater account of the needs of those localities experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and poorer outcomes than other areas. As the pressure mounts for radical reform at a local level, the Community Empowerment Act has been described as a potential 'game changer' in the ambition to improve outcomes and tackle inequalities between communities in Scotland (Improvement Service, 2016).

Rationales for a place-based approach

The move towards a greater focus on place and locality is motivated by a number of rationales. Lowndes and Sullivan (2008: 57–59) identify four rationales for the use of 'the neighbourhood' in policy. These provide a useful tool for analysing the drivers behind the return to place in Scotland:

The Civic Rationale - Neighbourhoods are sites of identification and have greater meaning in people's lives particularly in low-income economies with strong bonding social capital

The Joined-up Rationale – The neighbourhood provides a site for innovation in developing 'joined up' local action from a range of stakeholders and agencies to provide more integrated service provision

The Political Rationale – At the neighbourhood level there is the potential for improvement in accessibility, accountability and responsiveness in decision making (see Bailey 2012; Dargan 2009)

The Economic Rationale – Through neighbourhood working there is the potential for effectiveness and efficiency. There are potential cost savings from synergies between related services and reducing duplication. Neighbourhoods are sites where diverse citizens' needs can be more easily identified and so appropriate personalised services can be provided.

Figure1: Rationales for a place-based approach. Adapted from Lowndes and Sullivan 2008

The Civic Rationale

Research shows that in comparison to the 'strategic' processes of CPPs, localised approaches offer a more meaningful focus for local people to become actively involved especially when they involve practical, tangible and visible improvements to housing and the local environment through physical regeneration (Matthews, 2012; Flint, 2006; Hastings, 2009). The Christie Commission's recommendations argued that the sub-local level was the right scale for engaging local communities in the co-design and delivery of public services. The first pillar of public service reform from the Christie Commission is **People**:

'public services are built around people and communities, their needs, aspirations, capacities and skills, and work to build up their autonomy and resilience' (Christie 2011: 23)

The Joined-Up Rationale

A key driver for a place-based approach is to break down organisational and institutional silos and bring public and third sector services together through a shared local orientation in service delivery. Some policy makers and commentators understand a place-based approach as a form of service integration at a local level. Service integration links to the second pillar of Christie - **Partnership**. The Christie Commission argued that:

> Public service providers must be required to work much more closely in partnership, to integrate service provision and thus improve the outcomes they achieve (Christie 2011, vi)

The Scottish Government in response to the Christie Commission gave attention to the role of place as a focus for 'effective place-based partnership' (2011b: 10). The assumption is that by better coordinating services better outcomes will be achieved and that 'place' provides a key focus for integrating and joining-up services.

The Political Rationale

Place-based approaches may be able to offer an opportunity to devolve power away from managers and budget holders at the senior and political level towards front line officers, community organisations and local people in creating new, deliberative spaces. Christie recommended that:

> 'managers and leaders within public service organisations develop and extend empowerment of front-line staff to support their engagement with people and communities to improve service provision' (Christie 2011, 38)

In addition:

> 'Reforms must aim to empower individuals and communities receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use.' (Christie 2011, vi)

The Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy (2014) argued that meeting the challenge of strengthening democracy in Scotland will entail promoting clearer lines of accountability at a local level as well as a more participatory democracy.

The Economic Rationale

Austerity in the UK means reduced budgets for public services over the longer -term alongside rising demand for services from an ageing population and 'failure demand' - demand for public services which could have been avoided by earlier preventative measures (Christie 2011). In the attempt to make substantial savings, the initial focus of public managers has been on reducing management costs and increasing the efficiency of 'back office functions'. As management efficiencies become exhausted policy makers are now

faced with the more complex question of how to disinvest in public services at the front-line and to find ways of 'doing more with less' (Hastings, 2015).

The cost of failure demand claims to be 40% of local public service expenditure (Christie 2011). The third pillar of Christie calls for reforms that focus on **Prevention** to reduce demand in the system. Prevention assumes the ability to prevent predictably negative outcomes and to intervene early in the chain of causation (Mair, 2016). The extent to which place-based approaches contribute to 'prevention' is currently unknown. Much is likely to rely on the ability of front-line professionals to work flexibly and pragmatically with other services, building wisdom over-time on how and when to intervene. Prevention is now regarded as a key feature of new approaches to place-based working in Scotland (IS 2016).

Reducing inequalities continues to be regarded as central to improving economic efficiency and **Performance** (the fourth pillar of Christie). Therefore, understanding the complex nature of inequalities in low-income areas and measuring progress against key indicators at the micro-level is likely to receive greater attention with the Community Empowerment Act and the increased focus on locality planning.

This brief analysis of the recent Scottish policy literature suggests that the four rationales identified by Lowndes and Sullivan (2008) are driving the emergence of place-based approaches in Scotland post-Christie:

- The Civic – in the need for higher quality, more responsive services and for communities to deliver more services for themselves
- The Joined-up - in the need for improved coordination and more integrated services
- The Political – in the pressure to devolve more power over resources to front-line staff and the public
- The Economic – in the idea that innovation through place-based approaches can lead to new preventive measures and improved performance

These rationales are likely continue to be the main drivers for planning services at the neighbourhood level in Scotland and make clear that the drivers for place-based working are more complex and challenging than simply improving partnership working and community engagement through local services. The evidence for 'place' as the right framing for these four policy rationales requires careful scrutiny. There is a risk that place-based approaches become a catchall for policies that may be more appropriately addressed through thematic approaches or at other levels of government.

The problem of definition

The different rationales driving place-based approaches may explain why there is no single definition of what a place-based approach is. In the UK, place-based approaches are commonly associated with attempts to improve the coordination of local services and to

engage communities in efforts to improve services in a local area, although what is meant by 'a place-based approach' remains unclear.

The proposed operational definition of a place-based approach from the Scottish Government Working Group on Place-based Approaches (2016) is:

> *A community of people bound together because of where they live, work or spend a considerable proportion of their time, come together to make changes to that place which they believe will improve the physical, social or economic environment and in doing so tackle issues of inequality.*

This definition does not specify the scale and size of a 'place'. There is an emphasis here on natural communities and the idea that place becomes meaningful and identifiable for people in the context of where they live or work, potentially broadening the notion of place beyond the neighbourhood. The aim of a place-based approach is to address a range of interlinked factors that encompass the experience of 'place' including the physical and environmental 'look' of an area, the social connections between people living there and the economic opportunities available. The assumption is that people can be 'bound together' by a shared connection to a place. This shared sense of place identity provides the driver and catalyst for collective activity. One of the risks of emphasising place-based identity is that other forms of identity are more easily overlooked. The Community Empowerment Act attempts to address this problem by offering a broad definition of community as 'any community based on common interest, identity or geography' (section 1.11).

The emphasis in the Scottish Government working definition is on outcomes rather than the means to achieving those outcomes. Therefore, it seems that any collective activity that seeks to achieve improvements to a place might be understood as a place-based approach. Interestingly, this implies that rather than public services, community organisations and other community bodies with a key role in the locality could lead on these approaches. Place-based approaches are an opportunity for community anchors to gain 'traction' within policy-making (Henderson, 2015), although it remains unclear how CPPs make key decisions on the local leadership and governance mechanisms for place-based approaches.

The IS (2016) report on 'Place-based Approaches to Joint Planning, Resourcing and Delivery-An overview of current practice in Scotland' makes reference to a range of place-based interventions. These include Total Place (a resource pooling and budgeting approach); area committees (a devolved structure used for the administration of funding); local community planning (local partnership working); community regeneration (involving physical regeneration of an area) and locality planning (as yet unspecified). IS (2016) attempt to address the problem of definition by offering a new definition of a place-based approach. The features of this new definition include: partnership, planning, designing, resourcing, and delivering services; targeting disadvantaged communities, addressing issues at a neighbourhood level; making the most of assets and capabilities, promoting self-help and independence; seeking to support families and communities to be engaged, empowered,

connected and resilient; focussing on prevention and early intervention; and enabling public services to become catalysts and facilitators (see p.6-7). The IS research and proposed definition demonstrates the wide range and diversity of interventions and policy aspirations that fall into the catchall of 'a place-based approach'.

Place-based approaches attempt to address complex and wicked problems, which, by their very nature, are difficult to pin down and define in 'space'. However, despite the diversity of definition, there appears to be some agreement across the various definitions in Scotland on the issue of scale. A place-based approach is mostly used by policy makers and others to describe an arrangement for the coordination, design and delivery of public services at the sub-local authority level usually within an area described as a 'neighbourhood' or a 'locality'. The delineation of the area may be determined by public administration boundaries, the spatial concentration of poverty, or by the boundaries of the neighbourhood as recognised and defined by the people who live or work in the area. Indeed, one of the challenges of place-based working can be agreeing boundaries, which are both meaningful and recognisable to local people and at the same time practical and operational for public services working at a neighbourhood level.

Place-based approaches in Scotland today

The regulations in the Community Empowerment Act (2015) require CPPs to sub-divide the local authority area into localities, but allow flexibility in the size and scale of these localities. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is considerable variability in the geographies for locality planning across Scotland. Recent research from IS presents a picture of multi-layered and overlapping place interventions operating at different spatial scales and for different purposes. The IS research shows that:

> 'approaches to place-based working vary not only between local authority area, but also between different places within the outcome local authority area' (2016: 34).

 'Locality planning' at the neighbourhood level is usually nested within other approaches to devolved decision-making and may overlap with other formal and informal local partnerships adding considerable complexity to the landscape of place-based approaches.

The IS report provides a useful overview and shows the diversity of place-based approaches, however, at times it seems to confuse these approaches with methods of service delivery. Personalisation and co-production are not necessarily features of place-based approaches; they are techniques for designing and delivering services and may or may not be place-based.

The range of place-based approaches used by CPPs include: Total Place, area communities, area partnerships, local community planning, community regeneration and locality planning. Most of these place-based approaches are holistic and attempt to address a range of complex and interrelated issues associated with poverty, although some have a specific

focus such as family support, health inequalities, physical regeneration or access to services. Some of these approaches, such as Total Place and community regeneration, target specific neighbourhoods, usually those with the highest levels of deprivation, while others, are decentralized modes of governance applied across the local authority area without targeting specific neighbourhoods. Targeted approaches usually involve setting up a neighbourhood partnership to provide a local response to a specific set of contextual challenges and issues in the target neighbourhood whereas decentralised governance models usually provide a form of local coordination and administration of funding.

The distinct purposes, interventions, and potential outcomes from place-based approaches can easily become blurred under the umbrella term. For example, urban regeneration is a targeted place-based approach, which usually involves investment in the physical regeneration of the housing and infrastructure within a defined area. The approach is time-limited with a specific purpose to transform the social and economic outcomes of the regeneration area. Examples include Clyde Gateway in Glasgow, and the regeneration of Broomhill led by River Clyde Homes in Inverclyde. Regeneration projects may or may not have a formal or informal link into structures and processes associated with the Community Planning Partnership. The difference between regeneration projects and other place-based approaches is even more apparent now than in the past since regeneration usually involves ring-fenced funding allocated for the purposes of physical and social renewal of an area. Most other place-based approaches are no longer supported by external funding.

The evidence from the IS research (2016) and from our own experience in WWS demonstrates significant variation across the range and types of place-based approaches currently in operation. The list in Figure 2 suggests key features of a place-based approach that will be relevant to the programme design and theory of change underpinning the approach:

Investment	The approach involves **additional financial investment** or involves no additional investment and is a vehicle to **reduce public spending** in a defined area
Targeting	The approach is **targeted** on one or more specific local areas (usually the most deprived) or is a form of **devolved governance** with the coordination and administration of resources at smaller spatial scales
Focus	**Holistic** - a broad and interrelated set of issues are addressed or **thematic** – a focus on specific issues such as families, access to services, welfare reform
Leadership	**Community-led** - the process is initiated and driven by independent community or voluntary organisations or **public-sector led** - the process is driven and facilitated by public sector organisations and staff
Governance	**Statutory** – for example in fulfilment of the requirement to produce LOIP and locality plans or **non-statutory** – an informal or a voluntary arrangement which may or may not be supported and incentivised by the government

Figure 2: Key features of a place-based approach

In sum, the landscape of place-based approaches in Scotland is eclectic, the emphasis being on local flexibility rather than systematic coherence. There are no accepted definitions of what a place-based approach is or what it entails. Few of the place-based approaches described have been set up with a clear approach to evaluation and many lack a clear theory of change or conceptual understanding of causal links between inputs, activities and engagements and intended outcomes.

Central or local government often devises the programmes and provides the funding to support. Control over the implementation of the approach is retained through performance management systems, guidelines and monitoring and reporting mechanisms. A shift to decentralisation and greater local flexibility inevitably leads to significant variation in the interventions between and across local areas. The balance between central control and local flexibility is inherently difficult. On the one hand, central control can be unresponsive to local needs. On the other hand, local flexibility in how CPPs meet national policy objectives can create confusion and unnecessary variation. As the pressure on CPPs to deliver outcomes increases, place-based approaches are becoming a catchall for a wide range of policy objectives with the risk of overload at a local level. Greater coherence could be achieved through explicit programme design including clear definitions and specification of the type of approach, its aims, and the inputs and activities that are most likely to meet those aims.

Policy aspirations and fiscal realities

The Scottish Government has remained committed to the principle of place-based approaches since the 1990s. Unlike in the rest of the UK, there been less questioning in Scotland of their assumptions and fundamental value as mechanisms to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes in deprived places. In their comparison of policy in England and Scotland, McGuinness et al (2014) describe in England a laissez faire approach to the concentration of poverty. Public services are operating in a state of 'creative chaos' where is it necessary to innovate to survive. In England, localism provides a vehicle for market based reforms and economic growth. The result is that the UK Government has more or less abandoned policies that target low-income areas.

In contrast, low-income neighbourhoods in Scotland receive greater policy attention and there are concerted efforts to 'learn lessons from the past'. The Scottish Government's urban regeneration policy: Achieving a Sustainable Future (2011) expressed support for the economic growth and regeneration of Scotland's most disadvantaged areas. The Scottish Government's Economic Strategy provides an ongoing commitment to 'inclusive growth' and the need for targeted approaches is reiterated the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Yet, with the exception of a few regeneration projects, place-based approaches, like localism in England, are being used in Scotland as a vehicle for reducing public expenditure. This strategy is strikingly different from that of the past when there was an assumption that area-based initiatives always entailed additional investment over the longer-term (Lawless 2010).

Research from the Improvement Service (2016) demonstrates that post-Christie (2011) there is greater attention to the following aspects of public service reform through place-based approaches:

- **Local assets** - encouraging local people to deliver services for themselves

- **Prevention -** intervening to prevent negative outcomes and reduce demand on public services over the longer term

- **Facilitation -** repositioning public services as facilitators of local activity rather than service providers

The experience of WWS collaborative action research indicates that most of these new features of place-based approaches remain aspirational, rather than approaches that have been fully developed and embedded. They remain a key area of innovation at a local level. In relation to all three of these new features of reform there is a need for a stronger evidence-base on how aspirations can be workable in practice. There also remains a more fundamental question over the aims of Christie and how these can be addressed through place-based approaches in low income neighbourhoods, especially given the current fiscal context.

The fiscal reality in Scotland is that targeted approaches to inequality are reliant on expectation that public services will re-deploy their mainstream resources. The mainstreaming of place-based approaches is reflected in the language used to describe them with the term 'area-based initiative' being replaced by 'place-based working'. Yet as Audit Scotland (2016) has highlighted, so far CPPs have not made the anticipated changes to resource allocation that would be required to achieve improved outcomes and reduce inequalities and much appears to rely on their ability to do so. Since their inception CPPs have been striving to 'bend the spend' towards low-income neighbourhoods with little success. The response from the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum has been to call for a socio-economic duty would require that public bodies consider social and economic disadvantage when allocating resources (SURF, 2016).

The current era of disinvestment may radically alter the purpose of place-based approaches in low-income neighbourhoods as they face the 'double whammy' of austerity and welfare reform. Evidence from the implementation of budget cuts in England indicates that cuts are likely to lead to retrenchment and withdrawal of public services at a local level and the potential for decline in neighbourhood amenities and environmental deterioration (Hastings et al 2015). Welfare reform exacerbates financial insecurity which in turn has a damaging effect on mental health (Curl, 2015).

The evidence suggests that are a number of implications of austerity and welfare reform for place-based approaches:

Mental health response - There is a growing body of evidence to support the case for the expansion of support and welfare services to low-income neighbourhoods as a mental health response to welfare reform (Curl 2015). There are also strong associations between interventions designed to improve the local area and reduce crime an improvements in mental health (Foden, 2010).

Capacity building - Strategies for capacity building will need to be realistic in their assessments of what can be expected from communities given the pressures of in-work poverty and welfare reform. Little is known about levels of latent capacity in communities to fill the gaps in service provision. Capacity is likely to be uneven across places and more limited in low-income neighbourhoods (Hastings et al 2015).

The basic provision of services - There is a need for basic provision of services such as environmental services and neighbourhood amenities, which support and maintain the neighbourhood as a minimum, without which community groups will be unable to run local services. Public services can achieve economies of scale, provide professional expertise and it is clear that not all service gaps can be filled by communities (Hastings et al 2015).

The Scottish approach builds on the legacy of place-based approaches in the past, yet in Scotland, without the investment of public funds that have been a key feature of place-based approaches in the past there is a tension between policy aspirations and the current

fiscal realities. In both England and Scotland, local authorities now have greater autonomy from government and at the same time greater responsibility to deliver economic growth with drastically reduced budgets (see also Pugalis, 2012; Featherstone, 2012; Reform, 2011; Painter, 2013)

The double whammy of austerity and welfare reform means that the most deprived areas face additional challenges and will require additional resources to provide welfare advice as well as funding to prevent environmental deterioration, maintain community amenities and provide community development support for local groups. The focus on asset-based community development and prevention recommended by Christie requires additional investment in low-income neighbourhoods. With the loss of the external investment that was a key feature of place-based approaches in the past, it is not yet clear how these additional resources will be provided.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to highlight the complexity of place-based approaches, the problems of definition, the spaces for innovation and the risk of becoming distracted away from the challenges of austerity and welfare reform. The research examined for this paper and our experience of collaborative action research with CPPs in WWS highlights the need for a clearer understanding of rationales and for critical reflection on whether or not 'place' is relevant and meaningful to all areas of public service reform. What is 'place' good at doing and when do place-based approaches work best? Place-based approaches provide an opportunity for civic and democratic renewal but are also a vehicle for economic disinvestment and these drivers may be at odds. The challenge for public services is to be more explicit about the rationale for working at a local level and to link new ways of working to tangible outcomes. The outcomes anticipated from place-based approaches might not be achievable at a local level, and will be strongly influenced by the fiscal context and decisions at higher levels of government. This is not year zero. We have half a half a century of experience and a vast body of evidence on the place-based initiatives from the past. The challenge for CPPs then is to set realistic and achievable outcomes and goals for place-based approaches and to target resources, without falling into the trap of weakly specifying or over-hyping what place-based approaches can achieve.

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