

Place-based Working in Scotland Guides

Curated by the Corra Foundation and sponsored by Scottish Government.



Scotland's Place Leadership Summit

Context of place-based working and the summit

- Problems we face
- The leadership we need

Place leadership can come from anywhere in communities, from the head of a local authority to an individual with a burning issue. Communities all over the world are at the forefront of innovations to tackle global issues from widening inequalities to climate change.

We live in an increasingly uncertain world. The twenty first century faces unprecedented global and local challenges: climate change; austerity; Brexit; and economic fragility and widening inequality, being just some.

These challenges are intertwined and complex – often called ‘wicked problems’ – and will take a sustained, coordinated and holistic response from all citizens to tackle effectively. As the quote often attributed to Einstein goes: **“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results.”** It is our responsibility to be place leaders and support others to be so to enable things to be different. Using place as a focus allows us to align our actions around a sustainable vision for the future, working with local organisations, communities, private and public sectors to make a better future for everyone.

The Place-based Working Project has developed a general view of what ‘good’ place work is in Scotland. We have worked with a Cross-Sector and Guidance Group during the past twelve months to develop guides to understanding what good place work usually entails, which is summarised in this pack. Our understanding of place work, however, will continue to evolve, so this collection of guides is at best a starting point to connecting with a wider group of place leaders across Scotland and that developing story. Also, each place has a unique context which means no two efforts will ever be the same.

For us, working in a place-based way means creating new value that can't otherwise be created, centred on communities, through collaborations involving communities, the third sector, private sector and government.

Content

Part 1 The Place Principle	Page 4
Part 2 What is place-based working?	Page 5
Part 3 Why do place-based working?	Page 6
Part 4 How do I work in a place-based way?	Page 7
Part 5 Measurement and Learning	Page 8
Part 6 The Policy Landscape and Scottish Context	Page 10
Part 7 Additional Tools and Resources	Page 13
Appendix 1: List of useful organisations and websites	Page 14

The Place Principle

A wide range of Scottish Government policy makers alongside local authorities and other public and third sector organisations have developed a **Place Principle**. Coordinated and collaborative place-based ways of working are needed at a local level and more widely across public services to tackle inequality. Solutions need to deliver across a wide range of economic, physical and social outcomes and involve utilising available resources from across different budgets.

In essence, the Place Principle is: work collaboratively with communities to best use resources in solving problems for places.

The principle was agreed in February 2018 by Scottish Government and COSLA. In much the same way as the Town Centre First Principle, the Place Principle provides a call for focused activity and thinking from those engaged in tackling issues in places.

The Place Principle - A principle for taking a place-based approach

We recognise that: Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose, and are at the heart of addressing the needs and realising the full potential of communities. Places are shaped by the way resources, services and assets are directed and used by the people who live in and invest in them. A more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enables better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.

The principle requests that: All those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive growth and create more successful places.

We commit to taking: A collaborative, place-based approach with a shared purpose to support a clear way forward for all services, assets and investments which will maximise the impact of their combined resources.

What is place-based work?

Place-based work is a collective process, focussed on a place, to achieve outcomes that are impossible without new thinking and collaborative action.

There are many different ways place-based work happens. Community led, professionally generated, focussed on one issue or all issues in a place. Each place has a unique context which means no two efforts will ever be the same. For us, working in a place-based way means creating new value that can't otherwise be created, centred on communities, through collaborations involving communities, the third sector, private sector and government.

Place-based work can solve problems that can't be solved incrementally or by one person or organisation acting alone. It can produce more than the sum of its parts by generating novel approaches, bringing in resources or tackling root causes.

This way of working is not 'about' a particular issue or problem. Though it can be. It can also be about improving a whole place economically, socially, environmentally. Experience shows that place-based working often begins focussed on one thing and ends up taking on lots of things. It is the *way* of working that is important. Accepting no one person or organisation holds the answer and so *forming a group of people and organisations that agree* where they will work and what it is they will work on. *Agreeing collectively the resources* they are sharing or aligning to have an impact. *Identifying* how they are going to *know if they have made a difference* (having progress and outcome measures). Being prepared to be *working for some time* (years) and accept that the work is *very likely to change* as they go.

There are no special rules or magic tools. Each place and its communities have a unique context that means a different starting point, needs and direction.

There are, however, some common qualities of good practice that apply:

- Community centred
- Collaborative vision, decision making, resourcing, measurement and actions
- Long-term and evolving thinking, aligned with economic and political need (locally, regionally and nationally)
- Honest, trusted, inventive and persistent participants who negotiate and bring about change.

We developed these qualities based on the literature, case studies and work with a cross-sector group of place-practitioners in Scotland.

Why Use 'Place-Based Work'?

Why work in a 'placed-based' way? The core reason is frustration – what is being done now is not working and hasn't been working for some time. The other main reason is usually urgency – either a crisis or 'crisis of opportunity' which obliges a collective re-think and re-organisation of how things are being done.

Place-based work is not for the faint-hearted. It takes great effort for it to work successfully, although it can (and often does) begin small. The effort in bringing together participants, building trust, addressing a collective purpose, resource issues, power differences, conflicting and different goals, measurement challenges, all over a long-term process, is considerable. To begin with there is going to be uncertainty whether any collaboration can be formed with an agreed purpose, or whether that purpose can be realised. Someone will have to start investing time and effort without a clear chance of success. It is, therefore, an entrepreneurial as well as a collaborative activity.

When place-based working works, however, there is considerable potential for new value to be created. The reasons for this are:

- The participants will see new opportunities that were obscured because they weren't seeing the whole system or working at that level
- They will be able to take those opportunities because they can use their resources more effectively and have the trust and governance arrangements needed to manage them
- There will be new resources identified and harnessed through taking a broader approach
- Good ways of working will spread faster and can be scaled more easily
- Better places are attractive and will draw in new resources
- Better places will evolve positively because that's how evolution goes; good place-based work nudges that evolution and learns from it.

In sum – take the 'place-based' route because you are going in frustrating circles, and you and others can't face doing that anymore. But know that the route out of that loop is uncertain and will take a lot of effort – you will have a mountain to climb. The view from the top, however, could be spectacular.

How do I work in a place-based way?

Place-based working involves context-specific collaborations to develop new innovations or ways of working in a place so there are no set rules in how a partnership should form or run.

The eight sessions during the conference show the range of starting points and themes that place work incorporates, from community-led change and regeneration to Scotland's Improvement Districts and city and regional growth deals.

There are however several common features along the journey of place work:

- Identification of place
- Mapping the 'system'
- Agreeing a vision
- Agreeing measures and indicators for success and judging progress
- Forming a delivery plan and group and agreeing timelines
- Deliver
- Measure and adjust
- Celebrating successes.

At all points a partnership should be thinking about who to involve from communities and what national agencies and wider stakeholders could be brought in, what they will be looking for that will draw them in (their motivation) and how to ensure on-going attachment to longer-term processes. The above are not necessarily in order – sometimes it is back and forth or starting in the middle. With celebrating successes, it is important to do that at the earliest opportunity and often.

Measurement and Learning – Are we there yet?

Place-based work is never the same in two places or at different times. Only the principles of any approach are likely to be consistent between places, and even then, they may need careful assessment. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of a collaboration are as important as the measurement of impacts. Measuring and learning in place-based work and sustained change is challenging – ‘real-time’ understanding helps adaptation.

Key to effective implementation is tailoring any given evidence gathering and learning approach to the context and, where appropriate, bringing together data from different sources to develop a broad picture of what is going on – understanding the ‘system’ of the place and how it is working.

Assessing a Place and Building a Shared Understanding

Working with other organisations means bringing together different strengths. For example, community groups may be well placed to engage with locals, while other organisations may want to use national data to understand the wider context or trends affecting the locality. Articulating and agreeing **shared values and goals to build a common understanding** of how to get there is a vital first step.

Some specifically created tools that might be useful:

*Place Standard*¹: useful tool to generate localised knowledge about a place. From physical landscape to sense of belonging.

*Building Stronger Communities*²: aimed at supporting community groups to self-reflect on their capacity.

*Inclusive Growth Diagnostic Tool*³: a mapping tool that uses local authority data to identify key trends and is adaptable to local priorities.

Articulating the Logic Behind the Work

Understanding the vision communities have for their places also shows where change is needed and provides a starting point to understanding what actions and activities a partnership will work towards.

“Demonstrating impact is fraught with difficulties. Therefore funding place-based approaches will always to some extent be a leap of faith. Building in learning from the start – perhaps through a theory of change process – is essential and should involve all stakeholders, especially community members, in defining... learning objectives and... capture”(p54, Nabatu & Evans, 2017).⁴

¹ <https://www.placestandard.scot/>

² <http://www.scdc.org.uk/what/building-stronger-communities/>

³ <http://www.inclusivegrowth.scot/resources/data-and-analysis/2018/06/inclusive-growth-diagnostics/>

⁴ <https://lankellychase.org.uk/resources/publications/historical-review-of-place-based-approaches/>

*Logic Model*⁵: visualisations of the logic behind an initiative or partnership to help with evaluation.

*Theory of Change*⁶: similar to a logic model but with more detailed links about what is expected to cause specific outcomes.

Identifying and Agreeing What to Measure

Capturing evidence about what has been achieved or not, and *what is different and why* is central to developing a culture of learning and adaption. Any evidence collected needs to be meaningful to all those involved in the collaboration (p 17, Cook, 2017)⁷.

For quantitative and statistical measures we recommend finding out what data is available at your particular locality size by searching EKOS' excel of data sources,⁸ and discussing with local authority and other public service organisations what data would be possible to use.

- *Understanding Scottish Places*⁹: is a useful online platform where you can view and audit the social and economic profile of towns.
- Internal statistics and records: records could include attendance, list of activities, use of services etc.

Qualitative measures are particularly useful in measuring change in place work as they can capture the how and why of changes, rather than only that something happened. Qualitative data can also sometimes be represented by numbers and change over time – for example place standard data.

Agreeing an Evaluation Framework

Evaluation methods should be included to aid ongoing learning and adaption. Typical evaluation approaches for dealing with the complexity of place-based change include:

- **Developmental Evaluation** – short explanation from Impact Evaluation (https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation)
- **Capabilities Approach** – blog from Children's Neighbourhoods Scotland (<https://childrensneighbourhoodsscotland.com/2018/02/22/using-the-capabilities-approach-at-childrens-neighbourhoods-scotland/>)
- **Contribution Analysis** – guide from Scottish Government (<https://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/175356/0116687.pdf>)
- **Asset-based Evaluation** – guide from Evaluation Support Scotland (<http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/398/>)
- **Action Research** – guide from IRISS and Research for Real (<https://www.iriss.org.uk/tag/research-real>)

Agree a mechanism for implementation and sharing data

After a suitable framework is developed and agreed, how it will be implemented needs to be agreed. You need a manageable framework- it's not about measuring everything.

⁵ <http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/media/uploads/resources/supportguide1.2logicmodelsjul09.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.theoryofchange.org/>

⁷ <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/OutcomeBasedApproachesinPublicServiceReform.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.corra.scot/place-based-working-project/>

⁹ <https://www.usp.scot/>

The Policy Landscape – Navigation Tips and Where to Find Them

The Public Policy ‘Ecosystem’ Supporting Place-Based Work and the Place Principle

The language of place-based work broadly lines up with the policy and institutional landscape that exists in Scotland, and with developments that have been foreshadowed to be put in place soon. Frequently the origins of these can be traced to the ‘Christie Commission’ and its call for:

- Public services to be built around people and communities and designed with them
- Public services working together to achieve outcomes
- Prioritising of prevention, reducing inequalities and promoting equality
- Public services that improve and are open.¹⁰

The most significant legislative requirements that support the above principles and place-based way of working are:

- Community Empowerment Act (provides legislative authority for the National Performance Framework, Community Planning Partnerships and Local Outcome Improvement Plans, Community Participation Requests, Asset Transfer and Right to Buy Land ¹¹
- Land Reform Act (provides for the Land Commission and the Right to Buy (public) Land ¹²
- Public Bodies (Joint Working) Act (Health and Social Care Partnerships)¹³
- Procurement Reform Act (providing for Best Value and Community Benefit procurement, rather than lowest cost – based on quality, cost and sustainability)¹⁴
- Currently being considered are the Planning Reform Bill (including aligning Spatial and Community Planning, and introducing a Right to Community Planning)¹⁵ and a Review of Local Governance currently being consulted on ¹⁶

¹⁰ See, for example the report by SPICe for Scottish Parliament: http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB_11-52.pdf and for the report itself: <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/06/27154527/0>

¹¹ <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/>

¹² <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/land-reform> <https://landcommission.gov.scot/>

¹³ <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Policy/Health-Social-Care-Integration>

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Procurement>

¹⁵ <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/planning-architecture/reforming-planning-system/>

¹⁶ <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/local-governance-review/>

Each of these legislative building blocks are often supported directly or indirectly with guidance or assistance provided or funded by the Scottish Government or other public bodies (links to each organisation's website are listed in the resource section):

- For example procurement reform is supported by the [P4P Network](#) supporting the third sector to participate in procurement, and [Cooperative Development Scotland](#) or community engagement is supported through a [National Standard](#) or the [Empowering Communities Fund](#).
- Working to develop leadership capability in the public sector is Workforce Scotland and its emphasis on the need for collective leadership – reflecting the requirements of good place-based working practice.¹⁷
- Within the Third Sector there are many organisations that similarly support communities or help deliver on the policy objectives outlined above, for example [SENSCOT](#) or [CEIS](#), [SCDC](#), planning advice through [Planning Advisory Services](#) and [Partners in Planning](#), supporting towns and regeneration through [Scottish Towns Partnership](#) which now administers [Scotland Improvement Districts](#) (formerly Business Improvement Districts) and [SURF](#).
- Within the Community Sector there are additional support and umbrella organisations that have been driving place work for a long time, particularly around support and guidance for community ownership. In particular [Scottish Community Alliance](#) is a valuable starting point as they provide a comprehensive list of community organisations, including but not limited to [Community Energy Scotland](#), [Development Trusts Association Scotland](#), [Woodland Crofts](#), [Community Land Scotland](#) and the [Scottish Federation of Housing Associations](#).

But there are many more organisations that can give specific or general support, covering aspects of place work nationally or locally. There are also many consultancies that can provide support provided that there is the resource available to contract them.

There are also public bodies that own and manage significant land or other resource for the common good that have policies supportive of place-based work:

[Scottish Canals](#); [Forestry Commission](#); [Crown Estates Scotland](#); [Scottish Natural Heritage](#); [Historic Environment Scotland](#); as well as Local Authorities and NHS and educational institutions like colleges and universities.

[Highland and Island Enterprise](#) and [South of Scotland Enterprise Agency](#) have or will have remits that support place-based work. [Audit Scotland](#) and the [Improvement Service](#) provide support and critique of performance in the public sector, the later for Local Authorities.

This is not anywhere near an exhaustive list of public organisations which may be supportive, and inevitably particular divisions of larger organisations may have a more active place agenda than other parts.

¹⁷ https://workforcescotland.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/166310_sct0118805900-1_ingage_booklet_p3.pdf

There are also broader policies and support for place-based work, and still others being developed:

For example, recently the [Scottish Centre for Regional Inclusive Growth](#) was established and inclusive growth featured prominently in the programme for government 2018/19:

“So, our core purpose is clear: we will grow the economy in a sustainable and inclusive way to increase wellbeing. We want all of our communities, both urban and rural, to flourish economically, socially and environmentally.”¹⁸

Community Wealth Building was mentioned in 2017/18 programme for government and is being explored by officials in Scottish Government.¹⁹

Resources to undertake work, funding especially, are often available:

There are funds to support community’s development covering many conceivable needs – regeneration, social or environmental projects.²⁰ There are sources of advice and direction to funding sources, for example [Scottish Towns Partnership’s Funding Finder](#), produced on a regular basis, or [Funding Scotland](#) provides free searches of funding possibilities and [Directory of Social Change](#) provides access to funding streams across the UK, but for a fee. [Association of Charitable Foundations](#) provides a yearly analysis for the UK of funding allocation across the top 300 funders. There are also many funders and grant givers; [Corra Foundation](#), [BIG Lottery Fund](#), [Foundation Scotland](#) or [Robertson Trust](#) are large funders, but there are many others, some with focused grant giving, for example [Sustrans](#) have a range of grants for infrastructure for walking, cycling and placemaking (see, STP’s Funding Finder: (https://www.scotlandstowns.org/funding_support)).

The policy and support environment in Scotland is extensive and supportive of place-based good practice. If there is an issue, it is more that the landscape is complex and dense and therefore difficult to navigate; perhaps an irony being that it is difficult to collectivise an approach and draw in the partners and resources available.

¹⁸ <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/delivering-today-investing-tomorrow-governments-programme-scotland-2018-19/pages/6/>

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/09/8468>

²⁰ The difficulty for place work is that often the resources are thematic and time-limited in ways that constrain a broad and adaptive approach to a place. Funding drives behaviour, in that groups working in place will measure what funders oblige them to, and prioritise obtaining further funding over impacts and outcomes measures – see EKOS’s report: <https://www.corra.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/EKOS-Measurement-of-Place-Based-Working.pdf>. Our investigation of place work in Scotland suggested there were few examples of collaborative funding in places that worked well, and that considerable work had gone into coordination in those successful examples.

Some resources for place-based working

All resources are easily accessible by searching their names.

Reading:

1. [Place-based Approaches to Joint Planning, Resourcing and Delivery](#): an overview of current practices in Scotland (Improvement Service)
2. [Rationales for place-based approaches in Scotland](#) (Bynner 2017).
3. [Transforming communities? Exploring the roles of community anchor organisations in public service reform, local democracy, community resilience and social change](#) (Henderson, Revell & Escobar, 2018).
4. [Place-based Working; Learning from six Scottish case studies](#) (Davidson Knight and Rush, 2018).
5. [Measurement of Place-based Working](#) (EKOS Consulting, 2018).
6. [Historic Review of Place-based Approaches](#) (Nabatu & Evans, 2017).
7. [The Dawn of Systems Leadership](#) (Senge, Hamilton & Kania, 2015).
8. [Building Collaborative Places – Infrastructure for Systems Change](#) (Randle & Anderson, 2017).
9. [How Can We Build Capacity for Collective Leadership for Scotland?](#) (Scottish Leaders Forum, Workforce Scotland, 2018).
10. [‘Collective Impact’](#) original article in Stanford Social Innovation Review (Kania & Kramer, 2011).
11. [Community Wealth Building & Basic Principles](#): a one page guide to distil the basic principles.

Additional tools and frameworks that are not in the measurement and learning section:

1. [World Towns’ Framework](#): promotes four principles - unique identities of place; local economies; governance; and the environment.
2. [Place-based Summary Checklist](#): collection of key questions and issues to consider.
3. [Open Space Technology](#): an approach to collaboratively problem-solving complex issues within events.
4. [Town Centre First Principle and Toolkit](#): a call of action to encourage vibrancy and diversity in town centres, with ideas and examples.
5. [Scotland’s Improvement Districts](#): a mechanism local businesses can use to collaborate to improve and strengthen local economies.
6. [Community-led Action Planning Toolkit](#): website support for communities to develop local action plans.
7. [Keep it Local. Economic Resilience Framework](#): intended to be used by local authorities and other local businesses to assess how they are encouraging economic resilience and maximising the local benefits of public sector procurement.

Appendix 1: List of useful websites and organisations.

P4P Network: <https://p4p.org.uk/>

CEIS: <http://www.ceis.org.uk/>

SENSCOT: <https://senscot.net/>

SCDC: <http://www.scdc.org.uk/>

Partners in Planning: <http://www.partnersinplanning.scot/>

Corra Foundation: <https://www.corra.scot/>

Scottish Canals: <https://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/>

Crown Estates Scotland: <http://www.crownestatescotland.com/>

Historic Environment Scotland: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/>

Audit Scotland: <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/>

Funding Scotland: <http://fundingscotland.com/p/www-about>

Scottish Towns Partnership's Funding Finder:
https://www.scotlandstowns.org/funding_support

Big Lottery Fund: <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/>

Robertson Trust: <http://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/>

[Foundation Scotland: https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/](https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/)

Scottish Community Alliance: <http://www.scottishcommunityalliance.org.uk/>

Community Land Scotland: <http://www.communitylandscotland.org.uk/>

Cooperative Development Scotland: <http://cdsblog.co.uk/>

SURF: <https://www.surf.scot/>

National Standard: <http://www.voicescotland.org.uk/Seven-NS/>

Planning Advisory Services: <https://www.pas.org.uk/staff-team/>

[Scotland's Towns Partnership: https://www.scotlandstowns.org/](https://www.scotlandstowns.org/)

Scotland Improvement Districts: <https://improvementdistricts.scot/>

Forestry Commission: <https://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/>

Scottish Natural Heritage: <https://www.nature.scot/>

Highland and Island Enterprise: <http://www.hie.co.uk/>

Improvement Service: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/planning-for-place.html>

Scottish Centre for Regional Inclusive Growth: <http://www.inclusivegrowth.scot/>

South of Scotland Enterprise Agency: <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/consultation-new-enterprise-agency-south-scotland/>

Association of Charitable Foundations: <https://www.acf.org.uk/>

Empowering communities fund: <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/empowering-communities-fund-projects-supported-2018-2019>

Directory of Social Change: <https://www.dsc.org.uk/funding-websites/>

Community Energy Scotland: <http://www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk/about-us.asp>

Development Trusts Association Scotland: <http://www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk>