Historical

review

of

place based

approaches

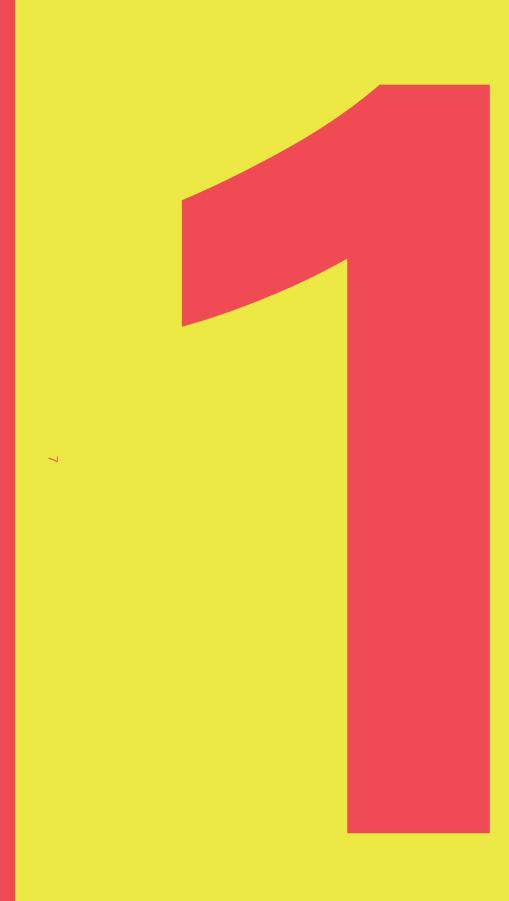Lankelly Chase

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This report presents the findings from a historical review of place based approaches to change. It was commissioned by Lankelly Chase from the Institute of Voluntary Action Research (IVAR). It was written by Professor Marilyn Taylor and Eliza Buckly, based on research carried out by the authors and Dr Charlotte Hennessy in 2016. It provides an overview of analysis and learning from over 200 pieces of literature on place based approaches over the past 50 years – both government and foundation-sponsored – mainly in the UK but also in the US, Europe, Canada and Australia.

The aim of the research was originally to help inform our thinking about the role Lankelly Chase could and should play as a national foundation in supporting localities to change the systems that perpetuate severe and multiple disadvantage.

However, we believe that the findings of this work will also be of use to others in foundation or government roles who are thinking about approaches that are nationally driven but locally delivered.

While potential for learning from past programmes is considerable, it is important to be aware of the following caveats:

- Much of the evidence in the UK to date is based on government approaches; thus the scale of investment has generally been at a greater level than is possible for a UK foundation.
- The political and economic context varies over time: currently austerity measures (including welfare cuts) and changes in the labour and housing markets are affecting the local landscape and the role that local agencies can play.

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- Local circumstances are a key element in the success or otherwise of any approach.
- Context is particularly important when it comes to applying lessons from international experience.

Throughout the literature, multiple terms were used to describe place based approaches led by foundations or national government bodies – for consistency and ease we have referred to all of these approaches under the generic term of place based approaches. The level of place (ward, neighbourhood, town, city) also varies from approach to approach. We have taken the broad definition of place throughout.

What is a place based approach?

The term 'place based', in relation to foundations or national government bodies, is currently used to describe a range of approaches, from grant-making in a specific geographic area to long-term, multifaceted collaborative partnerships aimed at achieving significant change. In most cases, it is more than just a term to describe the target location of funding; it also describes a style and philosophy of approach which seeks to achieve 'joined-up' systems change.

These approaches centre on a recognition of the need to reconfigure relationships between governments, philanthropy, civil society organisations, the private sector and citizens in order to achieve change by developing collaborative approaches to address the underlying causes of community problems. Part of the purpose of place based approaches is to build the capacity of the community to take charge of its own future, to speak for itself, and to build social capital and connections within the community. They are comprehensive programmes or strategies working with a range of partners to address multiple causes of social problem in a locality.

Anheier and Leat (2006); Association for the Study and Development of Community (2007)

The overarching finding is that there is no 'right way' of thinking about place based approaches. However, the review has highlighted several common themes regarding what helps to make place based approaches work:

- Place based approaches **take time** – to understand an area and build relationships – and this needs to be reflected in both practical plans for implementation and expectations about progress.
- **Clarity** about role and rationale is essential – as well as **focus** in order to be realistic about what can be achieved.

- It is important to **work at different levels** in order to link the very local with the wider system in which it is embedded.
- **Relationships** are critical – this includes building effective relationships with partners as well as being aware of relationships locally and how your presence might affect them.
- The challenges of demonstrating **impact** are well documented – much can be learnt but it will always be a leap of faith, to some degree.
- Change needs to be **embedded** in the whole local system and not depend on one or two people.

Key learning from the review

However, when thinking about place based approaches that want to facilitate systems change it is important to remember that it is complex and demands considerable commitment from all those involved. It is tricky and uncomfortable by nature and requires open, trusting relationships through which to address difficult issues. It is, therefore, important to commit to ongoing reflection and adaptation throughout the design and delivery of a place based approach.

Strategic questions for foundations and national government bodies to consider when assessing whether to implement place based approaches

Purpose
What is your understanding of funding place based approaches? What are realistic ambitions and expectations for this work?

Role
What will you offer and how? Where will you fit in the existing landscape/ecosystem? What assets will you draw on and why?

Where to work
How are you defining place and scale in relation to your purpose?

Practical issues to inform the design and implementation of a place based approach

Partners
Who to work with, how and why

Community engagement
Why, how and the importance of sharing power

Timescales, pacing & commitment
The time needed to establish trust and achieve demonstrable change

Impact, evaluation and learning
The importance of developing collectively owned outcomes, - challenges of demonstrating impact and the need for a learning approach

Exit and legacy
Thinking about sustainability from the start.

This report focuses on the implications of the review for those thinking about approaches that are nationally driven but locally delivered. We can identify three strategic areas to consider when assessing whether to take a place based lens, as well as five practical issues to take into account in its design and delivery.

This report

- **Section 2 outlines the approach to the study and the terms used in this report.**

- **Section 3 reviews the rationales, strengths and limitations of place based approaches that emerge from the literature and previous experience.**

- **Section 4 and 5 present the findings as they relate to the strategic and practical questions outlined above.**

- **Section 6 summarises the main learning from the review.**

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This study was a rapid, focused literature review examining historical evidence on place based approaches commissioned by Lankelly Chase in order to help it to understand where and in what capacity it could support systems change in place. Specifically it aimed to gather evidence and insights on:

- The different rationales for place based approaches
- What has worked and what needs to be in place
- How previous programmes have been delivered
- The results/changes achieved
- What contributed to/hindered the above

Place based approaches intersect with a wide range of fields

Place based approaches intersect with a wide range of fields, for example, community development, neighbourhood improvement and regeneration.

To have covered each of these fields in detail would have made the review far too extensive, as well as being beyond the resources available. This does not claim therefore to be an exhaustive review. Rather it aims to provide an informed starting point for thinking about a place based approach building on learning from earlier experiences. There is however, a particular value in carrying out a historical review; political imperatives and a desire to be seen as innovative and distinctive mean that valuable learning from previous approaches is often lost, leading to the 'reinvention of the wheel' and a failure to build on decades of experience.

The review concentrated on research and literature published in English about programmes from the 1960s onwards, primarily in the UK but also the United States, Europe and Australia. Literature searches were run using a number of relevant search terms identified and agreed with Lankelly Chase and which returned over 600 articles. Terms included:

- Area-based initiatives
- Community change
- Community philanthropy
- Community-change initiatives
- Comprehensive community change
- Government area based programme and/or approach
- Government community change
- Local community development
- Local level systems change
- Nationally coordinated local change
- Neighbourhood change
- Neighbourhood initiatives
- Place and community change
- Place and systems change
- Place based funding
- Place based philanthropy
- Systems change in local areas

Following an initial scan of results for relevance based on the research questions, approximately 200 pieces of literature were selected for review from the UK, United States, Europe, Canada and Australia. These included existing systematic reviews and syntheses of evidence or learning, which were used to guide and inform the review, both for efficiency and to ensure the research built upon existing knowledge.

The literature review was complemented by telephone interviews with eight individuals who met one or more of the following criteria:

- Were involved in the management/delivery of earlier place based approaches
- Were involved in the evaluation of place based approaches

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- Had worked on place based approaches in a range of sectors
- Had researched and written about place based approaches

Insight and advice on sources was also sought from colleagues at the European Foundations Centre, the Aspen Institute, Center for Evaluation Innovation and the US Evaluation Roundtable. Finally, the study also drew on IVAR's other work in this area – research exploring the place based approaches currently used by 21 trusts and foundations across the UK (IVAR, 2016) – to underpin analysis.

The evidence uncovered by this review varied considerably both in quality and type. Indeed, there has been much critique within the literature of the evaluation practices of previous place based approaches – especially UK governmental programmes (see for example, Baker et al, 2009; Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions, 2001). The types of evidence included: qualitative data (case studies, interviews); cost benefit analyses; policy reviews; and quantitative data (statistical analysis using national measures such as education results or benefit take-up rates). The majority of evaluations in the review were summative in nature; developmental evaluations were rare and there were few longitudinal approaches that explore change beyond the lifetime of the approach.

Variations in the quality and availability of evidence were expected from the outset. Demonstrating effectiveness presents challenges: attribution (demonstrating that change is the result of a specific intervention); timescale (demonstrating change within timeframes that are usually limited); complexity (change is likely to be multi-layered); and external factors that may affect progress (sometimes standing still in the face of adverse circumstances can be progress).

To minimise these challenges, the review:

- Triangulated evidence from a range of sources where possible – for example multiple reports on the New Deal for Communities; extensive literature on Comprehensive Community Initiatives in the US – to assess the plausibility of the analysis and explanations given
- Used criteria to grade and assess evidence and literature and to ensure reasonable quality of evidence for inclusion
- Made use of systematic and comprehensive reviews that help to reduce bias by consolidating the findings of a number of studies

The range of evidence and variety of approaches used meant it was not possible to compare programmes; the review therefore looked to draw out common learning in relation to the study aims rather than assessing the success (or otherwise) of individual programmes.

The strengths and limitations of place based approaches

The drivers of place based approaches

Place based approaches have been a primary tool used by governments in the UK and internationally since at least the 1960s to tackle concentrations of poverty and disadvantage. Historically, in the UK and US, place based policies have often been triggered by urban unrest and riots which, especially in the US, have had a strong racial dimension (Marris and Rein, 1967; Edwards and Batley, 1978; Stewart, 1999). Civil unrest has also been a driver elsewhere – more recently in France for example (Ecotec, 2006). Spatial targeting (pinpointing geographic clusters of disadvantage or particular characteristics) has often been driven by industrial restructuring in recognition of the 'costs of industrial change' and the loss of the industries around which communities had grown (Community Development Project, 1974; 1977 White Paper; Glickman and Wilson, 2008).

Early place based approaches in the UK include the Urban Programme, the Community Development Projects, the Single Regeneration Budget and the programmes associated with the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal at the turn of the century. More recent examples include Big Local, Big Lottery Fulfilling Lives, Our Place and the Community Organisers Programme. In the UK and in Europe, many of these have been led by government, which has been best-placed to provide the resources

necessary to achieve meaningful change. This was also the case in the US in the 1960s and 1970s, notably with the War on Poverty, which influenced the UK programmes at that time. However, alongside federal funding programmes in the United States (like the Community Action Programme) there has also been considerable work by independent foundations, for example with the Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) of 1960s onwards, such as the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas Programme (Marris and Rein, 1973; Wright, 2001).

In the last few years, UK foundations have become interested in place based approaches as they question their role in the light of cuts in both government funding and services at a national and local level. The effects of displacement, transient populations and increasing deprivation mean that local needs are changing and, while some areas have had considerable investment, others remain poorly served by funders and local government (Taylor and Wilson, 2015). In addition, there has also been a general move over the last decade towards a revival of the 'local' in the belief that 'place matters' (Phillips, Jung and Harrow, 2011). In light of this, it is unsurprising that national funders are exploring the relevance of place when developing strategy and practice.

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The assumptions behind place based approaches

The majority of government-led place based approaches in England have used deprivation levels to target specific areas (Tunstall, 2003) based on the belief that concentrated poverty creates 'area effects' and therefore requires a systems approach. On a similar premise, area-based initiatives have been the primary tool used by the government for urban regeneration for the past four decades (Matthews, 2012). However, the empirical evidence of 'area effects' – particularly for the most deprived communities – has been contested and often suggested to be inconclusive (Atkinson and Kinton, 2001; Duncan, Jones and Moon, 1998).

The rationale or theory of change behind place based initiatives has varied over time and between programmes. Broadly speaking, the underlying assumptions fall into three groups:

- **Communitarian:** The causes of disadvantage lie within the area and the people who live there – a lack of individual skills, capacity and/or motivation, or a 'loss of community'. Programmes with this focus tend to centre on skills training and technical support, community development and promoting self-help.

- **Systems:** The causes of poverty lie in the failure of local systems and services – lack of co-ordination or responsiveness to local needs and preferences. These programmes tend to be government led, focused on strategic partnership working and collaboration and/or managerial solutions. They may concentrate on local agencies and services, or they may promote community empowerment, supporting local residents to have a greater say in local decision making or to take over local services and assets.

- **Structural:** The causes of poverty are structural, resulting from economic change, and related changes in the labour and housing market. These types of programme have focussed on economic and physical regeneration, giving a greater role to business, encouraging investment to bring more jobs into the area, changing the housing mix and designing out crime and addressing environmental degradation. But some programmes – especially more recently - have also focused on local economic solutions – developing social enterprise and keeping money local.

The above categories reflected other distinctions made in the literature, for example between:

The assumptions behind place based approaches

- **Top-down regeneration** (mainly physical environment, economic focus, tendency to be government initiatives in the UK) and **bottom-up community development** (resident-led, more attention to social objectives).

- **People** and **place** – does the intervention aim to improve life for residents (whether or not they stay) or to make the place a better place to live and stay (and more attractive to potential incomers)? Griggs et al (2008)

- **Holistic, broad-based approaches and those that are more focused** – is the intervention starting from place and its characteristics or starting from an issue/model and testing it out in place?

Often, of course, programmes have incorporated elements of each, adopting a holistic approach and the evidence suggests that to be effective this is necessary. For example, in a review of the early area-based initiatives in England, Hausner et al. (1991) were critical of a sole focus on economic and physical regeneration, arguing that it needed to be complemented by social and pre-economic initiatives. They also argued that concentrating on people to the exclusion of place or vice versa could be counterproductive; the first ran the risk that those benefiting from programmes would move out (increased mobility); the second ran the risk that the area would gentrify and existing residents would be displaced.

But, drawing on Scottish experience, MacGregor and his colleagues (2003) argue that it is possible to combine the two – for example with the Social Inclusion Partnership Programme (ODS, 2006). Additionally, emphasis has recently shifted to approaches that focus on the assets an area possesses and how to maximise these rather than focusing on the problems (a deficit approach), which can further disempower residents and local services.

There is undoubtedly a tension between taking a broad-based approach and being realistic about what can be achieved. Writing about the failure of the US Empowerment Zones, Gittell (2001) is critical of the replacement of comprehensive approaches to community development over the years with funding that is dependent on specific projects, despite research evidence that shows the value of broader, non-specific support. The evaluation of SRB (ODPM, 2002) comes to a similar conclusion and counsels against funding projects in 'splendid isolation'.

Limitations of place based approaches

Place based approaches have their limitations. Much poverty lies outside areas that score highly on indices of multiple deprivation and not everyone in these areas is poor. There is also evidence to suggest that, even within areas of high deprivation, further targeting means that some pockets within those areas will not benefit. Baker et al's (2009) review, for example, notes that Knowsley in Merseyside had funding from programmes such as the Single Regeneration Budget, New Deal for Communities and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund but funding tended to go to the same neighbourhoods within the town, with others – scoring only slightly less - missing out.

In addition, resources need to be clearly linked with the aims of a programme. Many early schemes were vague or pursued goals that were inconsistent with resources (Hausner et al, 1991; Batty el al, 2010). The learning is that intentional investment is essential – if you want something to change it needs to be focused upon (and funded) rather than hoping there will be 'overspill' or knock-on effects. For example, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Urban Health Initiative hoped to change the way in which public funding was allocated. To achieve this, the foundation funded staff positions with responsibility for developing new financing strategies (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2013).

Some researchers argue that 'place' is a misnomer in policy development and that policy should focus on supporting disadvantaged people to achieve better individual outcomes regardless of where they live, which might include increasing geographical mobility (Crowley et al, 2012). They argue that place based strategies effectively address the wrong problem because differences between places are primarily the manifestations of differences in individual need. Others note the potential for resentment in non-targeted areas or displacement of social problems to other areas (Baker et al, 2009).

Much of the literature argues that previous place based programmes have failed to address the structural causes of poverty (CDP Information and Intelligence Unit, 1973; Pacione, 1997; Hall and Hickman, 2002; Alcock, 2005). The findings are clear – change cannot be achieved simply at neighbourhood level – local action needs to connect with what is going on elsewhere and with regional and national policy (Miller and Rein, 1974; LGA, 2000; Imrie and Raco, 2003). Perhaps it is this realisation that has led foundations in the US to move away from the notion of 'community' as simply a target population for the purpose of measuring the impact of a strategy, and towards the idea that a place based initiative can actually provide a platform for collaborative learning, improving alignment and introducing changes in larger-scale systems (Murdoch, 2007; Burns and Brown, 2012); although only when consciously designed in a way that connects to systems and structures beyond the neighbourhood level (e.g. city, regional) to enable it to do so. This is in part based on a growing awareness of the complexity and openness that exists between the community selected and its surrounding context.

Context

In learning from other countries and particularly from the US, it is important, as stated in the introduction, to acknowledge context. The US, for example, has a federal system as opposed to the UK's more centralised mode of government and the philanthropic tradition is stronger there, drawing on far greater resources. European approaches meanwhile have often granted a greater role to government than the US and have also had a lesser commitment to resident participation in the past (Atkinson and Carmichael, 2007), tending to take a strategic approach rather than a community based approach (Hall and Hickman, 2002). Even within the UK, Scotland and Wales continue to see a greater role for the state than does England.

Finally, context also changes over time. The ideological underpinning of the UK government has changed considerably since the early programmes of the 1960s. The central and local state took a central role both in these early programmes and in those introduced by New Labour at the turn of the century (albeit with a strong emphasis on partnership). In contrast, the emphasis under Margaret Thatcher and the current Conservative government has been on rolling back the state and relying instead on community effort and the market. Austerity too has played its role both in the later 1970s and since 2010, as governments seek to reduce public spending.

Strategic questions that frame place based approaches

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The literature stresses the importance of clarity from the outset about the rationale behind place based approaches, its purpose and what place based means. It also highlights the need for an approach that can be holistic but also focused.

The findings suggest that previous place based approaches have been hampered by the absence of a clearly articulated rationale for working in place – a 'theory of place' – and/or a lack of clarity about the motivation or starting point for choosing to work in place (Hausner et al., 1991). This can lead to: a mismatch between aims and design/delivery; confusion in the community with which you choose to work; commissioning evaluation processes that do not provide the desired learning.

The literature – particularly that from the US – stresses the value of a theory of change process in achieving this by helping to surface the assumptions and aims behind a place based approach (Connell and Kubisch, 1998). A theory of change approach encourages strategic thinking about the varied elements of a programme and how they connect. This does not preclude flexibility at local level.

Indeed, the literature stresses the need to take local context and knowledge into account. Once the overall purpose is shared and agreed with the centre, areas are then free to develop local objectives and aims.

However, the literature does argue for a degree of focus, and realism about what can be achieved within the resources available. Hausner et al's (1991) review of early area-based initiatives in England programmes criticises them for pursuing goals inconsistent with their resources. But this is a criticism that has also been levelled at more recent programmes too. Even the New Deal for Communities, which represented a considerable investment (c £50 million over 10 years) was considered too diluted in terms of focus and resources (Batty et al, 2010). It is then important to start with realistic ambitions and clear objectives and to clarify what is meant by 'place based'. Programmes may start with an issue but decide to develop their work on it in particular geographical areas (e.g. Joseph Rowntree Foundation's loneliness initiative). Or they may initially focus on a whole place, but after scoping the locality decide to focus on one or two issues of local relevance. There is a similar distinction to be made between place based approaches that start from looking at an area: what you understand about it, what assets it has, how its systems work and approaches that happen to fund or pilot a model in a particular place. In the first, place is the focus; in the second it is the site.

Using a theory of change: Cleveland Community Building Initiative

Cleveland Community Building Initiative (CCBI) in the US used a theory of change process to help surface hypotheses about how different social problems connected. After examining how issues interconnected, stakeholders were able to design responses and approaches aimed at addressing the range of factors preventing individuals from achieving positive outcomes.

Evaluators of the CCBI supported the development of a theory of change by:

1. **Determining who needed to be involved:** the evaluators and programme leaders identified their key stakeholders as the CCBI board and staff members, village councils and council coordinators, and the CCBI executive director.

2. **Eliciting theories of change from the identified stakeholders using a range of methods.** This included: interviews with staff and board members about the short, intermediate and long-term outcomes of the programme; consolidation of interview findings into a draft framework which was adapted and developed by the board and staff - focus groups with village councils involved in the programme. The emerging theories were then shared back with stakeholders for adaptation/refinement.

3. **Examining stakeholders' theories for common and unique elements:** the evaluators worked with the stakeholder groups to compare and reconcile them.

4. **Supporting stakeholders to agree on the theory or theories to guide the evaluation and develop one theory for the initiative.** Evaluators found that the staff and board members' theories were broadly similar and that village councils' theories were able to add detail to the theories of the other stakeholder groups.

Adapted from Milligan, Coulton and York (1997)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Neighbourhood Approach to Loneliness

The Neighbourhood approaches to loneliness (NAL) programme ran from 2010-2013. It focused on four neighbourhoods, chosen for their differing characteristics to understand whether those differences would influence the success of the programme.

The programme took an action research and participatory approach. It followed eight stages in all neighbourhoods, though the programme team adopted a flexible approach so that, according to need or readiness, some neighbourhoods gave more focus to certain stages than others.

The stages were:

1. **Building awareness of and within the neighbourhoods**
2. **Recruiting community researchers**
3. **Training community researchers**
4. **Active fieldwork, collecting comments and thoughts about loneliness**
5. **Analysis of data by community researchers**
6. **Presenting the issues and collecting solutions**
7. **Prioritising**
8. **Solutions implementation**

Adapted from Collins and Wrigley (2014)

In jazz, everybody leads, but you have to listen really intently to know when the right time is for you to step into the leadership role.

And, it requires a different type of thinking so that you're making music and not noise.

Cytron, 2010; p7

What is it that you can bring to a place based approach? What does your money bring and what else do you bring? Indeed, what is your legitimacy in intervening at this level?

Approaches included in the review saw funders operating in a variety of roles – from traditional grant making to being an active player in the change process. The research underscores the importance of clarity about the role the funder will take in a place based approach (Chaskin, 2000). The Community Foundation of Silicon Valley, lead partner for the US Neighborhood Improvement Approach, noted: *"many of the stumbling points of the approach stemmed from lack of clarity and unspoken assumptions about roles and responsibilities"* (Robinson and Barengo, 2005).

A 'theory of money' or philanthropy

The literature highlights the importance for foundations engaged in place based approaches to consider how to deploy assets and resources in relation to both the aims of the work and their organisational values and assumptions:

"One clear lesson from the Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) is that every institution has a history, a reputation, a modus operandi, and a set of constraints that influence how it can engage with local communities."

(Kubisch et al., 2011; p141)

Recent articles in the review talked about developing a 'theory of money' (and now theory of philanthropy, Patton et al, 2015) – the need to assess and review what you think your value is and what your money is meant to do/how you will use it in this approach. For example, the Jacobs Center for Neighbourhood Innovation describes how it chose to use investment incrementally, as a catalyst (Cytron, 2010) while the Comprehensive Community Revitalisation Programme illustrates the use of flexible funding to respond to challenges as they arose (Association for the Study and Development of Community, ASDC, 2007). Incremental funding can also be used to unlock or unblock issues that arise or to facilitate people coming together.

Understanding and deciding upon the role you will play and the way funding will be used also requires a degree of realism and pragmatism about the level of impact you can expect to have. Particularly in the UK, the amount of money foundations can bring to bear is a small proportion of public spending, even with recent budget cuts and austerity measures. But this doesn't mean they can't

make a difference. Rather the learning from place based approaches suggests that it means carefully considering where you can add value and how and what contribution you can make. For example:

- **The scale of funding doesn't have to be large to have an impact** – the way in which grants or funding is given can be just as important, and several studies highlight the value of having small pots of funding with few strings attached. For example, the Joseph Rowntree

- **Foundation's Neighbourhood's Programme (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2005) and Single Community Programme (NAO, 2004). Foundations are not just about money** – reviews of evidence from CCIs in the US (Burns and Brown, 2012; Association for Study and Development of Community, 2007; Pitcoff, 1997) highlight a range of key features that foundations can bring to a locality. These chime with IVAR's research on the current role of independent funding (IVAR 2012 & 2013) and are:

  - **Independence** – with the potential for brokerage, to act as a neutral arbiter, even to challenge and critique. The East Bay Community Foundation (James Irvine Foundation, 2003) described how it moves between playing 'cheer leader or sandpaper critic' to ensure that unpopular issues are not shied away from.

  - **Time and continuity** – foundations are not normally tied to statutory financial years or political whim (which has derailed many promising approaches in the past). This enhances their ability to invest in relationships, collaboration, capacity building and build in sustainability (Piciotto, 2011).

  - **Links to external networks and policy influence**

Beer and Clower (2014) emphasise the importance of facilitative leadership, collaboration, trust and a focus on horizontal distribution of power and hierarchy in place based work (Hambleton and Howard, 2013; Stimson, Stough and Roberts, 2002). Some of the CCIs in the US appear to provide particularly good examples of how this role can work, albeit in a different context.

Decisions about role need to be grounded in understanding about the leverage and authority that a foundation can bring to bear to get the right people on board and how this can best be established. And they also require judgements about what the foundation is best placed to do and what they should leave to others (Cytron, 2010).

The role and contribution of funders

Roles a funder can play
The JRF Neighbourhood Programme

The Neighbourhood Programme was established in 2002. It aimed to enable 20 communities, starting from their own agenda, to gain access to: knowledge and information, and the skills to apply this in their own neighbourhoods; the support they need in this process from peer networks and other agencies; and power, at whatever appropriate level, in order to unlock barriers to their successful engagement with neighbourhood renewal.

JRF played a range of different roles in its work to support these neighbourhoods in overcoming barriers to empowerment. Below we illustrate the needs that arose and role JRF played in response:

- **Analysis: no coherent analysis of local problems and assets**
  JRF role: Action planning and review

- **Engagement: people not engaged, little activity going on locally to tackle problems**
  JRF role: Exchanging knowledge through JRF materials; support from a facilitator; networking and visits; thematic research across areas

- **Capacity: lack of leadership; lack of organisational capacity; low level of skills; low level of resources**
  JRF role: Funding; knowledge exchange; facilitator offering training, mentoring and support

- **Cohesion: community is divided and fragmented, local groups are not working effectively together**
  JRF role: Exchanging knowledge through networking, visits and thematic research; brokerage and facilitation

- **Power and influence: power holders ignore the community; policy is not geared to local need**
  JRF role: Kitemarking; exchanging knowledge through networking and visits; brokerage and facilitation; knowledge generation through thematic research

- **National recognition and policy support: need for policy framework that supports empowerment and help to break down barriers**
  JRF role: Dissemination; regional roadshows; policy influence

Adapted from Taylor, Wilson and Purdue (2007)

The literature acknowledges many factors in selecting an area but suggests that, while it should not be too large and should be meaningful to residents, those considering place based approaches need to think about how to link the area of focus with its wider environment.

Identifying an area

The literature suggests that the selection of an area or areas will be informed by multiple factors: a combination of the aims; theory of place; where you already have relationships and existing knowledge; as well as the characteristics of the neighbourhood, its residents and agencies, and the external factors that affect it (Crowley et al. 2012). This is also echoed in IVAR's current research into place based funding (IVAR, 2016).

Within this, the key question is what does 'place' mean in the context of the funder or

programme? As Section 3 reported, previous government place based approaches have generally identified areas by need, using levels of deprivation as a measure. However, the findings suggest that approaches run by non-statutory bodies and independent funders appear to be more likely to use a combination of factors – for example Joseph Rowntree Foundation's work in Bradford over 10 years was driven by its desire to gain insights on social issues by working in an area with greater levels of deprivation and diversity than the one in which it is based (York) as well as the local authority's openness to its partnership approach (Telfer, 2013). Many of US CCIs choose areas where there is need, capacity upon which to build and where they have existing relationships (or the ability to build them/ routes into the community).

A key tension in the literature is whether to work in cold spots or places where capacity and momentum already exist. This decision will affect what you do and at what stage The experience of previous approaches often argues for the latter (IVAR, 2013) or, if the former, for a period of community development to help communities get to 'first base'. If you are working in more than one area it may be possible to test both.

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Setting boundaries

While the boundaries around a place will always be somewhat arbitrary (people come and go and needs are not restricted to set areas) the literature is clear that they need to be meaningful to local stakeholders (ODPM, 2002; Taylor and Wilson, 2006) and linked to your purpose. In addition, the choice of area can be sensitive locally, especially if it is small, and may cause resentment ('why them?') (Baker, Barrow and Shiels, 2009), so the rationale for the work needs to be communicated and explained carefully to residents and other stakeholders.

Despite these challenges, there is evidence to suggest a strong argument for focus: working in a relatively small area (i.e. neighbourhood level) may make it more possible to measure and to work in an engaged way, building community assets while aiming for broader systemic change.

Working at different levels

Previous approaches have demonstrated that the factors behind place based disadvantage lie outside at least as much as within the areas affected (Baker et al, 2009; also see Section 3; Limitations). Kubisch et al (2010), for example, report that in the US, CCIs have struggled to stimulate the local economic environment as there are too many forces driving economic activity that are beyond the control of neighbourhood approaches. Therefore, alongside the importance of focus emphasised in the literature, it is important it is to think about how to link local interventions with structures beyond the area (ODPM, 2002; Bradford, 2005). Indeed, working at different levels has been a feature of regeneration policy in France (Hall and Hickman, 2002) and was a feature of the UK Urban Programme in the 1980s as well as the later National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. This has been a consistent message since the War on Poverty in the US (Marris and Rein, 1967).

However, connecting neighbourhood level improvements to the larger scale takes time. Several studies have found that it can take a while to raise community eyes beyond the immediate local improvements that need urgent attention to more broad-based action (Storper, 1998; Gittell, 2001; Brown and Feiser, 2007; Hill et al., 2011; Imagine, 2015).

Implementation of place based approaches

Delivery approaches varied greatly with the programmes reviewed – from independent foundations working in a single area, to government programmes rolled out nationwide; from delivery by staff employed by the funder to working with a local intermediary body. However, a number of common themes emerged when it came to learning about the challenges and preconditions for successful place based working. These were: working with partners; community engagement; time and resources; evaluation and learning; exit and legacy.

The introduction to this report noted that one size does not fit all. There is no 'best' design. The important thing is to be clear about the rationale for design choices, ensuring that they align with the ambition for the programme, the capacity to implement and the characteristics of the community (Burns and Brown, 2012).

5

Working with partners and local stakeholders

Foundations may work directly in an area or through an intermediary. But they need to allow time to get to know an area and build relationships. Developing effective partnerships is difficult. Attention to process and informal relationships as much as outcomes and formal structures is crucial. The nature of place based approaches to systems change – with a focus on holistic solutions and joined-up working – puts a premium on relationships.

There is an extensive literature on partnership working that is beyond the scope of the current review. This section highlights learning from earlier place based approaches about working with partners and stakeholders.

How to enter and who to work with

Beginning work in an area requires a commitment to learning about the place and respect for what is already there. The literature suggests that too many past approaches have failed on this count, 'parachuting in' rather than allowing development time to get to know the area, to find out what is already going on, and build relationships with local agencies and residents. In fact, learning from the US (Burns and Brown, 2012) suggests that the sensitivity and skill with which a funder uses local

knowledge is the most important aspect of best practice – more important than using learning from other places and settings.

This is particularly relevant for national funders and others who plan to work in an area where they are not based, as they can be viewed with suspicion, seen as a threat or criticised for not understanding the local situation. In addition, the arrival of money can create unrealistic expectations or even generate competitiveness locally rather than collaboration. Learning from previous approaches, such as the CCIs in the US and the work of Joseph Rowntree Foundation in Bradford highlights the importance of not leading with money – instead emphasising the need to begin by building relationships in and understanding of an area before deploying assets:

"Early on it did hold big conferences with hundreds of people. But all that did was raise expectations that JRF would bring in loads of money. Everyone thought they could get a bit of it."

(Telfer, 2013; p14)

In this respect, Collins and Wrigley (2014) highlight the importance of face-to-face

contact and stress the implications of this for resources and skills.

In selecting partners, it is important to understand who the key players are as well as how the goals of your place based approach align with the policies of the various agencies operating locally (Burns and Brown, 2012). ASDC (2007) found that the most successful CCIs in the US were those that did not invite everyone 'to the table' but selected partners with the capacity, interest and positioning to take on the work at hand.

The evidence from previous approaches is that the local authority and other statutory agencies are essential partners. However, officers and/or councillors may feel suspicious, even threatened, especially in the context of significant cuts to local authority funding. The Community Action Programme in the US (Halpern, 1995; Howard, Lipsky, and Marshall 1994) experienced considerable resistance from local mayors who felt excluded and feared a loss of power in a programme that was designed to support disadvantaged communities to act on their own behalf. Middle managers can also be particularly challenged by change (Kanter, 1985).

Of course, local authorities are not homogenous (Bryant and Bryant, 1982) – there will usually be potential allies, although in the long run, change needs to permeate through the whole organization and senior buy-in is essential (ASDC, 2007). To counter some of the challenges noted above, Miller

and Rein (1974) underline the importance of working at a policy and political level as well as an operational level, while at the same time ensuring that no-one essential to the success of the approach feels left out (Glickman and Wilson, 2008). While in the current economic context, foundation money is unlikely to fill the gaps left by statutory cuts, a focus on what the foundation can offer (monetary or otherwise) is likely to support establishing of relationships and legitimacy.

Style of approach

Determining how you will work with other local stakeholders is as important as selecting who to work with. Burns and Brown (2012) identify the need for any agency engaged in place based approaches to exercise leadership in a way that encourages collaboration and helps other partners to align their efforts towards a shared aim or purpose. Previous place based approaches have noted that one way to do this is to establish and develop a set of values or principles to underpin the programme and its partnership activity. Communities First in Wales and Big Local are two programmes that have taken an explicit approach to doing this (Ipsos MORI/Wavehill Consulting, 2015; IVAR 2013). As noted earlier, it is also useful to establish what each party will bring to the work and the level at which different stakeholders operate, considering who is best placed to do what (Cytron, 2010).

Looking at process, the literature generally suggests that too much time and attention can be given to getting formal structures right and too little to informal ways of working together – yet it is the latter that form the glue and create the trust that make the former work Further learning suggests the value of providing a strategic framework while allowing flexibility for staff on the ground to develop work in a way that meets local need (Hausner, 1991). It is important to give attention to process in the early stages (Greer, 2011; Hall and Hickman, 2002) and allow the time that is needed to develop mutual expectations, agree the levels of commitment required and the mechanisms for accountability and impact assessment. Parkinson (1998) and Hall and Hickman (2002) both point out that the French place based approach emphasises development of relationships over achieving immediate results. Burns and Brown (2012) advocate a

flexible, incremental approach to partnering that invites others in as the work unfolds to allow both the process and selection of stakeholders to grow as the work develops.

Some previous programmes have invested significant time into building relationships at the beginning of an approach – for example, in Communities First Wales the first task in local areas was to gather the right people and develop a partnership before commencing delivery. It is also important to develop structures that work for local residents (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1999).

Collective impact to frame a place based approach

Kania and Kramer (2011) suggest that there are five conditions for collective impact that can also serve as principles when developing place based work with stakeholders:

1. **A common agenda**
2. **Shared measurement systems**
3. **Mutually reinforcing activities**
4. **Continuous communications**
5. **The presence of a lead organisation that brings dedicated staff to coordinate and handle the logistics of partnership working**

People can overcome structures; structures cannot overcome people

Taylor, 2000; p41

Direct intervention or through an intermediary?

Burns and Brown (2012) review of decades of place based approaches by foundations in the US distinguishes four different approaches for a national or regional foundation to adopt when using a place based approach. These range from working directly with a community to working through an existing organisation. Table 1 lists the benefits and challenges of each approach.

Table 1: Working with intermediaries
Adapted from Burns and Brown (2012)

	Benefits	Challenges
Work directly with a community – either as active player or working with grantees and leveraging relationships with residents, community leaders etc	Most relevant for funders embedded in a community. Able to really get to know a community and develop engaged relationships	Roles need to be defined clearly – and with the community. Requires substantial capacity to work in a sustained, engaged way
Create a new community organisation	Can be positioned to align with foundation goals, may help to develop new leadership in an area and organisational capacity in a neighbourhood	Takes time to establish and requires substantial capacity as above. May lack connections to local infrastructure and thus hinder ability to get long-term financial support.
Community intermediary as lead partner whereby funder may define the initial purpose/approach but intermediary shapes, develops and implements	Popular approach in each cci work – longstanding learning about how to do this and what helps/works	Community intermediary needs to be prepared to take on the role and may require capacity building support.
Build on a local organisation already pursuing community change and well-connected, trusted and respected	Quick way to get in and tart working in an area. Helps with building relationships as working through a Trusted intermediary	Needs to be close fit between chosen organisation and funder values and goals

The majority of approaches found in the literature worked with intermediaries to some degree. A complementary model developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Neighbourhoods Programme and the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal in the past and adopted now by Big Local is to develop a regional or national network of 'light touch' facilitators who can support local intermediaries, embodying the values of the central organisation. Other programmes note the benefits of establishing local panels or boards to oversee the work and keep a focus on the vision and values (Hausner et al, 1991). However, it is necessary to be realistic about the degree to which people will want to commit time and effort – both Fair Shares Trust and Communities First in Wales struggled to recruit to local panels (Big Lottery Fund, 2008; Ipsos MORI & Wavehill Consulting, 2015).

Each option has different implications for issues such as control, power, and relationships with residents – for example, Communities First in Wales worked in 142 neighbourhoods over 10-15 years. Each area employed a local coordinator working with a partnership of local stakeholders. The programme had an explicit aim to give room for innovation, which meant devolving control to the local areas. The programme found that establishing and supporting areas to operate to strong community development values developing was one way of guiding the work in a more hands-off manner.

Do not underestimate the difficulty of joining up

The literature is consistent over time and place about the need for culture change if policies to devolve power are to work:

"The absence of integrated working is long-standing, culturally embedded, historically impervious, obvious to all concerned and deeply entrenched in central and local government."

(Stewart, 1999; p105)

Marris and Rein (1967) put the failure of the US War on Poverty down in part to the 'intransigent autonomy of public and private agencies at any level of government' (see also, Gittell, 2001 on US Empowerment Zones). Too often even different government or foundation approaches in the same place fail to connect. A common theme in the literature is the need for capacity building among policy makers and service providers. But even where everyone is willing to work together, there are very real structural barriers to linking up – partners will have different targets and regulatory frameworks to adhere to (noted, for example, in the work

of CCIs in the US and Total Place in England – see Humphries and Gregory, 2010).

People bring their personal views, experience and emotions to place based work. These cannot be ignored, particularly in approaches that focus on culture change and that challenge existing practice and identities. As noted earlier, previous programmes have been impeded by a reluctance to share power (Halpern, 1995). Emotions directly affect organisations – even if not explicitly acknowledged (Fineman, 1993). The human side of change is a gap in the literature on place based approaches but its importance is increasingly recognised in a number of adjacent fields, for example community development (Lackey and Dershem, 1992; Hoggett et al., 2009) and community conflict, such as in Northern Ireland and South Africa (Miller and Ahmad, 1997). Hoggett and Miller (2000) suggest that emotions play out at three levels in collaborative or partnership working – individual, collective and cultural. They stress the need to be reflective and self-aware and to take emotions into account when promoting change in relationships, structures and practices. They also highlight the importance of practitioners who can work with individuals when their emotional needs might cause disruption to group or collective work and who are able to harness this – rather than see it as a nuisance – as a creative basis for collective action.

In addition, foundations need to anticipate and prepare for conflict to arise as well as

taking risks that traditionally they may have avoided but which are critical to community change (ASDC, 2007). The experience of CCIs in the US suggests that it is helpful to develop principles for handling – but not avoiding – conflict early on, as well as being clear about how stakeholders can use the foundation's financial resources and other support to deal with conflict. This applies equally to community engagement, which is discussed in the next section. Drawing on international experience, White (1996; p155) comments that: *"the absence of conflict in many supposedly "participatory" programmes is something that should raise our suspicion. Change hurts".*

"How a foundation engages and treats residents in the initial stages of a grant making program will set the tone for the entire enterprise." David (2008, p1)

There is strong agreement in the literature about the importance of engaging local community members and that this increases the likelihood that an approach will be effective in addressing social problems. The literature consistently argues that it is

> **Community engagement is essential for sustainable change but it can be challenging –especially if programmes are to engage meaningfully with the most marginalised people at local level. It requires time and resources as well as a willingness to work on equal terms with residents. Quick wins can help build confidence and skills, but long-term thinking is necessary to address more difficult issues. Engaging with communities also needs capacity building 'on both sides of the equation' – with professionals and power holders and well as residents – to change thinking and behaviour.**

essential to value local knowledge and that there needs to be a shift of power to local residents if change is to be achieved and sustained. Indeed, this has been reflected in the rhetoric and aspirations of many place based approaches over the years; it was integral to the earliest place based approaches in the US, which adopted

strategies like community organising and leadership development to give power to underrepresented groups and this was reflected in the UK's Community Development Project. At the turn of the century, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and particularly the New Deal for Communities reasserted the need to place 'communities at the heart' of change (although critics feel this emphasis was lost over time). As a result, current programmes, for example, Big Local, have asserted again the need to be resident-led. There are also studies that illustrate the benefits of community engagement on a range of government approaches (SQW, 2005; Pratchett et al., 2009). Conversely the literature also reports tangible impacts on residents who are involved in place based approaches (Miller and Rein, 1974; ODPM, 2002; NDC, 2009).

There is an extensive field of relevant literature on community development, empowerment and engagement that was beyond the remit of this review. Here, as with partnerships, the focus is on learning about community engagement in previous place based approaches.

Rationale and communication

It is important to be clear about the reasons for working with a community and how you will introduce your purpose and role. Evidence suggests that past programmes have struggled when they have not clearly articulated how and why they will work with community members. More recently, Big Local

has been a deliberate attempt to correct this, working to ensure that programme-wide values are clearly linked to the community engagement approach. This has enabled local reps to feel better able to support residents at challenging times (IVAR, 2015).

Reviews of past programmes are also critical of the failure to translate rhetoric into operational terms (Burns and Brown, 2012). There is a need to agree where the responsibility for making different decisions lies and to build in scope for reviewing and modifying the approach as the work evolves and local communities gain confidence and expertise. As with other partners, understanding and communication what foundations and residents each bring and who is best placed to do what is essential.

Power and control

The literature also stresses that transferring control to 'the community' is easier said than done. In fact, over 'romanticising' community members can perhaps be as disempowering in the long term as the failure to share power – they don't have all the answers and cannot be expected to (Miller and Rein, 1967) (see Section 3.3). Although much of the literature makes a distinction between top down and bottom up approaches, it is important not to polarise – but, as noted earlier, work 'on both sides of the equation' and to develop the middle ground, be aware of what each party has to offer and to facilitate dialogue (Wilkinson and Applebee, 1999; Taylor, 2000, Anastacio et al., 2000).

The literature highlights several challenges in terms of sharing power:

- Difficulty in reaching beyond the so-called (but often maligned) usual suspects -community leaders can be exclusive (Hausner et al, 1991), or the demands of participation can simply distance them from the rest of the community (Taylor, 2011)

- Lack of confidence, organisational capacity and technical expertise

- Resistance and sometimes hostility from local communities, who have 'seen it all before' (Alcock, 2005; Matthews, 2012) and/or who distrust external interventions

- Fragmentation and competition

- Unrealistic expectations once the approach is announced in a fanfare of publicity about the money involved

- The risk of labeling an area as needy, problematic or deprived – for many areas, negative stereotyping is a significant issue in its own right (Dean and Hastings, 2000; Taylor, 2011).

Phasing and development

One way of addressing some of these challenges is the use of a phased development approach to working in a community. This is essential in order to engage meaningfully with a community and was a key lesson from the District Partnerships for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland (Greer, 2001). Several

approaches have implemented a development phase or Year Zero (for example the New Deal for Communities) but even a year may be too short, depending on the existing capacity within the community. In colder spots, it is necessary to allow time for residents' confidence and skills to build and for them to prepare for governance roles (the literature suggests, for example, that early US schemes failed to do this). The Local Investment Commission, in Kansas City (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1998) built resident capacity to support meaningful participation, providing support on: how government operates; accessing public agencies; securing resources. Intensive handholding may also be needed to get communities to spend.

Reaching all parts of the community

To do this effectively also requires a phased approach – and this is particularly important for foundations who wish to work with individuals experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage. The literature suggests that it is often necessary to start with the 'usual suspects'. They are usual suspects for good reasons – they are willing to put in the time and effort and may have good links with other community members (although these may not extend across the whole community). But it is also essential to agree with them a commitment to spreading engagement, with a realistic timetable, developing a variety of 'ways in'. In this respect, it is important to engage respectfully with issues of inclusion as part of the funder/community relationship (Burns and Brown, 2012).

Balancing the need for a strategic long-term approach with the need to show results is important for community members as well as partners. This typically involves planning for 'quick wins' - investing in resident-driven short-term projects that enable residents to work together towards tangible goals and demonstrate to themselves that change is possible. This helps to build trust and commitment: 'small wins up front can set stage for long-lasting and broader change' (Cytron, 2010). It might include providing small 'no strings attached' grants (including to individuals with good ideas) to help bring in the harder to reach. However, it is particularly difficult to reach smaller marginalised communities through a responsive mode (Greer, 2001). So, support needs to be provided in the bidding process – programmes where this approach was adopted include the Single Community Programme as part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and Guide Neighbourhoods (CLG, 2005; CLG, 2007).

Previous programmes have also found that different communities/generations relate to place and neighbourhood differently. Forrest and Kearns (1999) found, for example, that minority ethnic communities in their studies looked to city-wide (even global) organisations rather than the neighbourhood and social media will have had its own impact since they wrote. This again makes phasing important - it may be necessary to work with different communities of interest (or generations) separately to start with, in order to allow them time to build the confidence to work together (Taylor, 2011).

Timescales, pacing and commitment

Changing cultures and addressing complex issues that have developed over decades takes time. The need to allow adequate time – for development and exit as well as the main body of the programme – is a consistent message throughout the literature.

Previous sections have emphasised the need to allow adequate time to develop and deliver place based approaches. Research has often found that timescales for building resident confidence and involving marginalised community members are too short, with the result that engagement is superficial (see, for example, Ferris and Hopkins, 2015). Much of the literature on partnership emphasises the need to allow time for trusting relationships to develop and to build confidence, skills and capacity among all stakeholders. This is perhaps the most consistent message of all those in the literature. The main points that have arisen from looking at previous approaches are summarised below:

- **A year zero – or more - for development and design** – will be necessary so that communities and local agencies can be fully onboard.

- **A phased process** – with regular review - is necessary to reach all parts of the community.

- **Long-term aims and commitment** – learning in the US is that 'limited' time frames have restricted progress, by which they mean 7-10 years as a minimum. Clearly this is long-term by UK standards but reflects the importance of committing to an area and the benefits that working long-term can bring.

- However, within the long-term aims, it is also important to **establish milestones or markers of progress** that link to the overarching journey and some '**quick wins'** to help engage and motivate the community. 'Clean, green and safety' issues tend to dominate early agendas. Issues like health, local economy and education tend to come further down the line as do the links with other communities and policy levels that lead to more fundamental change.

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 both learning objectives and how to capture learning.

Another consistent theme throughout the literature is the difficulty of demonstrating impact. As already reported, research suggests a positive impact on the individuals involved in place based approaches – positive people outcomes – but place outcomes or area-level effects are much less likely. Most demonstrable success relates to changes to the infrastructure or physical environment (e.g. Single Regeneration Budget, CCIs, Soziale Stadt, and New Life for Urban Scotland). Impact on more complex issues that are structural as much as area-based – such as employment, the local economy and health – is much harder to prove, especially in the short/medium-term (Ecotec, 2006; ASDC, 2007; Nowosielski, 2012). Place based approaches in the US operating over decades have struggled to shift deeply entrenched neighbourhood poverty (Cytron, 2010) and a recent RSA study suggests that several years on from the end of New Deal for Communities, there is no demonstrable

difference in at least 16 of the 25 areas for which there is data available (with the exception of London, which the study argues is a special case) (RSA, 2016).

Research cites a range of reasons for this, including external factors, population mobility (e.g. those who benefit most may move out), and flaws in programme design (inadequate resources, piecemeal funding, too short-term, too ambitious, too broad). Impact also depends on the starting point for a programme/approach. For example, the evaluation of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Loneliness approach found that the neighbourhoods with most assets showed most impact but those with fewer showed most progress (Collins and Wrigley, 2014). This highlights the need to be clear about what success might look like and what changes you are looking out for as well as the importance of doing this in collaboration with other stakeholders.

The review touches on several factors that make measuring impact difficult:

- **External factors** – such as changes in policy, public spending cuts, loss of major industries, population change (some residents who benefit may move out, more vulnerable residents may move in)

- **Attribution** – can any changes that are observed be attributed to one particular intervention?

- **Timescales** – how long will change take? Griggs et al. (2008) argue that the effectiveness of policy is often judged on interim or short-term evaluations (up to 2 years) – contrasting with the US where early results are often discarded or at least systems left to stabilise before drawing conclusions. The Anne E Casey Foundation, which has been undertaking place based work for decades, has learned of the need to trace change over two or more generations – and allow for mobility of residents (Smith, 2014).

- **Measurability** – changes to the physical environment are tangible and more straightforward to measure as are the outcomes of individual projects. It is much harder to measure systems change, or the so-called 'softer' outcomes. The danger is that what counts as impact is only what can be counted.

- **Complexity** – place based approaches involve moving parts and multiple stakeholders with interests that shift over time – as Cytron (2010) argues, 'simple outcome metrics will not do'. Different stakeholders may also want different things and there may be a tension between national and local objectives.

However, the review findings also highlight the fact that evaluation is not just about impact; many funders are as interested to learn *how* change is achieved and want to capture unanticipated outcomes. A common message from the literature is the importance of ongoing learning and the need to build evaluation in from the start. Earlier, we referred to the value of a theory of change process (Connell and Kubisch, 1998), which involves all stakeholders in identifying the assumptions in which the programme is built and defining what success might look like (in the short, medium and longer term), as well as how it can be measured. Community members are an important part of this process and have sometimes been involved as community researchers, tapping into a variety of creative methods including film and social media. This gives them ownership of the process as well as new skills.

Riding a roller coaster is great fun unless you have motion sickness.

The work of place is as exhilarating as it is messy...

So my advice to philanthropy is, if you have motion sickness, don't get on the ride. It's not for everyone.

(Ross, 2015; p81)

There is a considerable literature on participatory forms of evaluation in international development (Marisol and Gaventa, 1998). More generally, time for reflection and review should be formally scheduled in throughout the programme as part of its structure and processes. Many programmes have also used external reference groups to advise both on methodology and on how learning can be more widely relevant and available.

In the end therefore, taking a place based approach will always be a leap of faith to some degree.

A certain amount of risk is part of any funding programme – certainly if new and imaginative solutions are to be found for age-old problems (Taylor, 2000). Both the experience of Fair Shares Trust and the Neighbourhood Challenge stress the importance of taking risks, accommodating uncertainty and recognising that not everything will work (Big Lottery Fund, 2008; Nesta, 2012). In addition, whilst sharing control and power with local stakeholders is essential for place based working, it may be a new step for some foundations and trustees. They will need to be convinced that risk levels are acceptable and that there are robust accountability mechanisms in place. Accountability is also an important part of stakeholder engagement; everyone involved will want to know that the investment has paid off.

Example of evaluation for learning

The Health Improvement Approach by the California Wellness Foundation undertook an iterative evaluation process. This provided regular opportunities to adapt and make changes to the programme delivery as it was implemented and in response to real time learning.

Every six months, directors leading each of nine partnerships would gather with foundation staff in a facilitated safe space for reflection and critiquing of progress. This process also helped to build the group as a learning network which can share successes and challenges about practice.

Cheedle et al (2003)

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There is very little in the literature about what 'legacy' means; what to sustain and how to exit responsibly. The broad message is that sustainability needs to be built in from the start. There is some learning from the US on these issues but it remains a significant gap; this might be an opportunity for current and future place based research to contribute to.
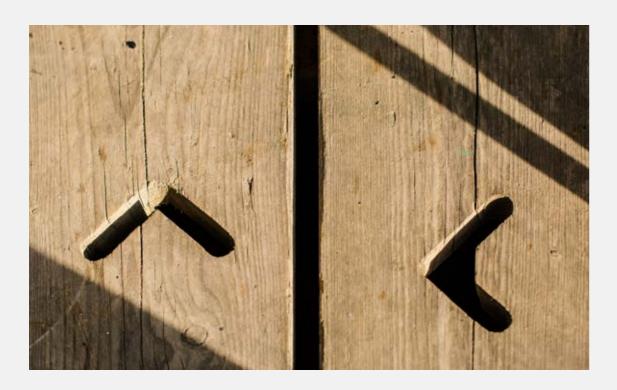
The literature places a strong emphasis on the need to build sustainability in from the start. But there is remarkably little evidence about what this means and what makes for a successful exit strategy. The most obvious reason for this is that most evaluations are commissioned to finish within the lifetime of the project, even if they are published later. By the time a programme ends, policy makers in particular have often moved onto the next big idea and there is little appetite for investing in research to see what has been left from the last one. Indeed, in many areas, new programmes will supersede the old making it difficult to disentangle the effects of one over the other(s). Even where programmes have been followed up later, there is little fine-grained information about what has been sustained and what has not, about population change and mobility and about changing economic circumstances.

This is a major gap in the literature and in our knowledge about place based working which leaves more questions than answers:

- What changes are most likely to be sustained?

- What exit strategies are adopted and which are most effective?

- How does exit affect community participation and leadership?

- What distinguishes areas that sustain change, organisational and community capacity from those that don't?

- How far do successive place based approaches build on what has gone before?

In the absence of this evidence, the most that can be said is that national bodies, including funders and government departments and their partners, need to consider at the start what legacy you plan to leave at the end and how this might be sustained. For example, will you aim to: mainstream changes in local systems; embed ongoing activity in institutions; continue projects; build enhanced community capacity? You also need to consider how you will leave financially – e.g. using tapered funding or an endowment – and be realistic about possible sources of future finance. The NDC had an explicit expectation that funding would be matched at the end of the programme but this did not happen in many cases.

Finally, the challenges of understanding what sustainability might look like and how to plan for and support it are not restricted to place based approaches. Recent IVAR work in this area suggests that understanding sustainability – what needs to be sustained – is a challenge for trusts and foundations more generally in their role as grant makers (IVAR, 2016).

Thinking about sustainability and legacy

The Association for Study and Development of Community (ASDC, 2007) in the US posits two possible reasons why place based approaches talk little about sustainability:

• **Lack of clarity about what to sustain (Programmes? Process? Capacity?)**
• **Funding that focuses on programme activities rather than funding the processes and structures that support community organisation and planning.**

They have begun to draw out some learning about sustainability and what it might look like, suggesting that there may be three aspects:

1. **Institutional – t**he extent to which the structures, relationships and activities of the approach are embedded in the community. Programmes that focus on building and sustaining the capacity of institutions to engage in ongoing work, rather than sustaining particular programmes, may be more likely to leave a community with improved capacity for change.
2. **Financial** – how the approach continues to fund itself after the end of a demonstration period or programme.
3. **Capacity** – the degree to which the approach is able to bring to the community the skills and knowledge needed to continue to support innovative approaches to addressing complex social problems. This may involve building 'change agent capacity' (linked to point 1) – helping a lead organisation to: develop stronger ties with the community; build relationships across sectors; and learn to use data effectively in strategy design and problem solving.

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Place based approaches are wide-ranging in their rationale, aims and delivery methods. However, as this report illustrates, there are a number of common themes that appear to be at the heart of successful place based working. While it was not the purpose of the study to provide a checklist or 'how to' guide for the design and implementation of place based approaches, it has identified eight issues that need to be explored, reviewed and reflected upon at regular intervals as work progresses.

The importance of clarity from the outset about the rationale behind place based approaches; its purpose and what place based means

This includes examining, and being honest about the assumptions and values you bring as an organisation and as individuals. It also highlights the need for an approach that can be both holistic and focused in terms of having realistic expectations about what can be achieved.

The role and contribution of key players

You need to consider what you can bring to a place based approach as a funder and what your legitimacy is for intervening at this level. What does your money bring and what else can you offer?

Identifying an appropriate place to work

It should not be too large and needs to be meaningful to residents. It is also important to think about how the scale of operation connects to wider area structures (e.g. city, local authority, regional, national), depending on what you are trying to achieve or change.

Working in partnership

The nature of place based approaches to systems change – with a focus on holistic solutions and joined-up working – puts a premium on relationships. Whether you choose to work directly in an area or through an intermediary, it will take time to get to know an area and build relationships. Developing effective partnerships is not easy and means paying attention to process and informal relationships, as well as outcomes and more formal structures.

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Community engagement

Community engagement is essential for sustainable change but it can be challenging, especially if you wish to engage meaningfully with the most marginalised people. It requires time, resources and willingness to work as equal partners.
Quick wins can help build confidence and skills, but long-term thinking is necessary to address more difficult issues. You may also need to consider capacity building for professionals and power holders, as well as residents, to work in this way.

Changing cultures and addressing complex issues that have developed over decades takes time

This is a consistent message throughout the literature and needs to be built into timescales for development, delivery and exit of place based approaches. For those pursuing systemic and sustainable change a 10-year commitment is a realistic starting point. Attention also needs to be paid to the emotional challenges of change.

Demonstrating impact is fraught with difficulties

Place based working will always be a leap of faith to some degree but building in learning from the start can help. This should involve all stakeholders, especially community members in defining learning objectives and how learning can best be captured.

Sustainability needs to be built in from the start

But there is very little in the literature about how to exit responsibly. This is a significant gap to which place based work could make a valuable contribution.

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Programme/initiative	Funder type	Date	Country
San Francisco foundation programme	Foundation	1950s+	US
Ford foundation gray areas program	Foundation	1960+	US
Community action program	Government	1964+	US
US war on poverty	Government	1964+	US
Community development project	Government	1968+	England
Urban programme	Government	1968 — 1994	England
The European poverty programme	Government	1975 — 1980	Europe
Enterprise zones	Government	1980s	England
Urban development corporations	Government	1981+	
New life for urban Scotland	Government	1982+	Scotland
Second European poverty programme	Government	1985 — 1989	Europe
Ford foundation neighbourhood & family initiative	Foundation	1990+	US
City challenge	Government	1990s	England
Local investment commission Kansas City	Combination	1992+	US
Comprehensive community revitalisation program	Foundation	1992 — 1998	US
Kvarterloft	Government	1993+	Denmark
Empowerment zones	Government	1994+	US
Village at market creek (San Diego)	Foundation	1994+	US
Single regeneration budget	Government	1994 — 2000	England
Urban	Government	1994 — 2006	Europe
Jacobs center for neighbourhood innovation	Foundation	1995+	US
Cleveland community-building initiative	Foundation	1995 — 1996	US
Partnerships for reconciliation and peace (peace i)	Government	1995 — 1999	Northern Ireland
California wellness foundation health improvement initiative	Foundation	1996 — 2001	US
Hewlett foundation neighbourhood improvement initiative	Foundation	1996 — 2006	US
Robert Wood Johnson foundation urban health initiative	Foundation	1998 — 2005	US
New deal for communities	Government	1998 — 2011	England
Soziale stadt	Government	1999+	Germany
Social inclusion partnerships	Government	1999 — 2006	Scotland
Annie E Casey foundation making connections	Foundation	1999 — 2012	US
Employment zones	Government	2000+	England
Neighbourhood renewal fund	Government	2000+	England

Programme/initiative	Funder type	Date	Country
Single community programme (formerly the community participation programmes): community empowerment fund; community learning chests; community chests	Government	2001 — 2006	England
Communities first Wales	Government	2001+	Wales
Neighbourhood management pathfinders	Government	2001 — 2005	England
Joseph Rowntree foundation neighbourhoods programme	Foundation	2002 — 2006	England
Single community programme	Government	2003+	England
Fair shares trust	Foundation	2003 — 2013	England
Working neighbourhoods pilot	Government	2004+	England
Communities for children	Government	2004 — 2009	Australia
Joseph Rowntree foundation Bradford initiative	Foundation	2004 — 2014	England
Guide neighbourhoods	Government	2005 — 2007	England
Grassroots grants	Government	2008 — 2011	England
Nesta neighbourhood challenge	Foundation	2010	England
Best start LA	Government	2010+	US
Big local	Foundation	2010+	England
Total place	Government	2010+	England
Community first	Government	2011 — 2015	England

Credits