

Neighbourhoods and Communities



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Governance, neighbourhoods and service delivery in
Scottish local government, 21 August 2008, Hamilton.

Challenges and political choices



‘Neighbourhoods can’t do everything; we need to concentrate on what they are best placed to do – and on how to manage the inevitable trade-offs they throw up. We need to develop a conception of [...] “a good political life” at the neighbourhood level and then explore in detail the implications for citizens, representatives, leaders and public servants.’

Lowndes and Sullivan (2007: 20)

Our research focus...



- How might we start to design local authority institutions for neighbourhood governance so as to deliver public value?
- And how are we to understand the implications for local stakeholders of 'designing in' particular elements of different rationales?
- About mapping different institutional designs and their implications; what they enable and what they constrain.

What do we mean by a neighbourhood? It's messy



- The absence of a blueprint, with different political dynamics, geographical constraints, histories and capacities;
- Differences across a single authority;
 - ✓ Size of the population covered
 - ✓ Focus on areas, wards or neighbourhoods;
 - ✓ Balance between influence and devolution;
 - ✓ Role of members;
 - ✓ Degree of formality of structures.*

(*Adapted from Young Foundation, 2007, *Transforming Neighbourhoods*)

Mapping Neighbourhood Strategies ^[i]



- **Localised management**
- **Neighbourhood management**
- **Community empowerment**
- **Devolved governance**
- **Participatory governance**
- **Mixed models**

- [i] P. Hilder (2006) *How Local Government Devolves and Why. Part 1: Why work in neighbourhoods and communities? Mapping the Territory*, London: Young Foundation with LGA and IDeA, p. 8-17.

Meeting strategic objectives – different rationales



- Civic rationale: citizen participation and active communities
- Social rationale: citizen well-being and stakeholder collaboration
- Political rationale: accessibility, responsiveness and accountability
- Economic rationale: efficiency and effectiveness

(Lowndes and Sullivan, 2007)

An array of risks and challenges



- **Accountability and performance**
- **Institutional capacity**
- **Neighbourhood capacity***
- (* See Young Foundation (2007) *Transforming Neighbourhoods*)

Meeting Strategic Objectives



- Short-term funding and limited resources;
- Limited community capacity;
- Complexities of institutional capacity, not least:
 - ✓ Different skill sets for officers and members;
 - ✓ Tensions on pivotal middle managers
 - ✓ Neighbourhood working embedded in middle-line and strategic apex.*

(*Adapted from Young Foundation, 2007, *Transforming Neighbourhoods*)

Institutional complexities

– so far...



- Strategic and coordinating capacity (and the necessary level of resource) is often located outside neighbourhood management
- Neighbourhoods concerned primarily with relatively small-scale but significant social and environmental changes – service shaping
- They tend to be operational and community development in orientation
- They can lack capacity and resource



Tentative conclusions

- Are neighbourhoods and initiatives around neighbourhood management fuelling in practice tensions between the strategic and operational?
- What is the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of particular services at the neighbourhood level?
- Are we placing too heavy a set of policy expectations on neighbourhoods?