



Community Planning & Well Being

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What does the research tell us?

- Despite devolution and associated regional approaches, similar barriers evident in implementing community planning across England, Scotland and Wales (Pemberton and Lloyd, 2008).
- Limited capacity for UK regions to formulate new policy initiatives (Laffin, 2007)



Four key barriers (Sinclair 2008)

1. Partnership working (Taylor, 2006)
 - Unease and potential friction
 - Long time to establish trust and mutual recognition
 - Equal participation Vs community leadership by councils
 - Who can claim to represent local interests?
 - Challenges lines of accountability



Four key barriers

2. Integration of partnerships (Audit Scotland, 2006)
 - Adopting partnership as an integral element of everyday operation?
 - High level strategic relationship but less well integrated at managerial and operational levels
 - Co-terminosity is the single most critical success factor (Goveas, 2006)
 - National policy directives Vs local priorities



Four key barriers

3. Community engagement (Carley, 2004)
 - Opportunity to significantly extend local participatory democracy
 - Effective engagement is challenging and considerable progress is required
 - Role of the voluntary and community sector representatives: greater influence Vs loss of autonomy



Four key barriers

4. Central control Vs local autonomy
 - Degree of freedom and decentralisation Vs regulation and centralisation that central government accords local government
 - Double devolution and new localism
 - More efficient outcomes may be achieved through less central control.
 - Future performance improvement initiatives should devolve more decision making to local providers (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006)



Research concludes

- Discernible impacts of community planning difficult to attribute – process more than product
- Too much riding on community planning
- Its future success will be influenced as much by developments across the wider reform agenda as by any factors intrinsic to community planning itself



Lessons for Northern Ireland

- More work needs to be done on departmental buy-in: horizontal and vertical lines of accountability
- Working across different geographical boundaries (co-terminosity problem)
- Can LAs act in *primus inter pares* role – central departments perceive local government as marginal players?



Lessons for Northern Ireland

- Councils' relative status could limit their capacity to exercise leadership and influence at the community planning table
- Dominant role of central departments during Direct Rule now substituted by centripetal tendencies of Stormont and political profile of local ministers
- Statutory organisations are good on process but tentative on target setting and long lead-in times to secure commitment.



Lessons for Northern Ireland

- Voluntary/community sector argue 'community' planning is a misnomer
- Opportunity to renegotiate central-local relations – local areas agreements based on key priorities of PfG and locally determined priorities.



Better Public Services

- One aim of community planning is a commitment from organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services
- Political message coming from devolved government is that devolution has been good for people of NI in terms of a more peaceful society and a better quality of life – what is the evidence for this?



Better Public Services

- Looking back over the last 10 years, do you think that Northern Ireland is better, worse or just the same in terms of the economy, health care provision and education provision?
 - 58% felt education provision had remained same or got worse
 - 64% felt health care provision had remained the same or got worse
 - 55% felt the economy had remained the same or got worse.
- Could community planning make a difference?

