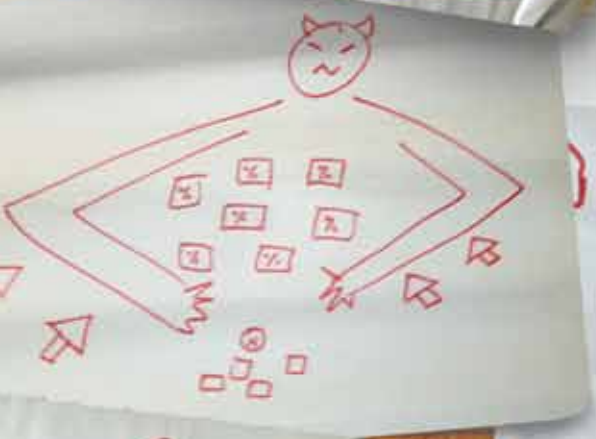
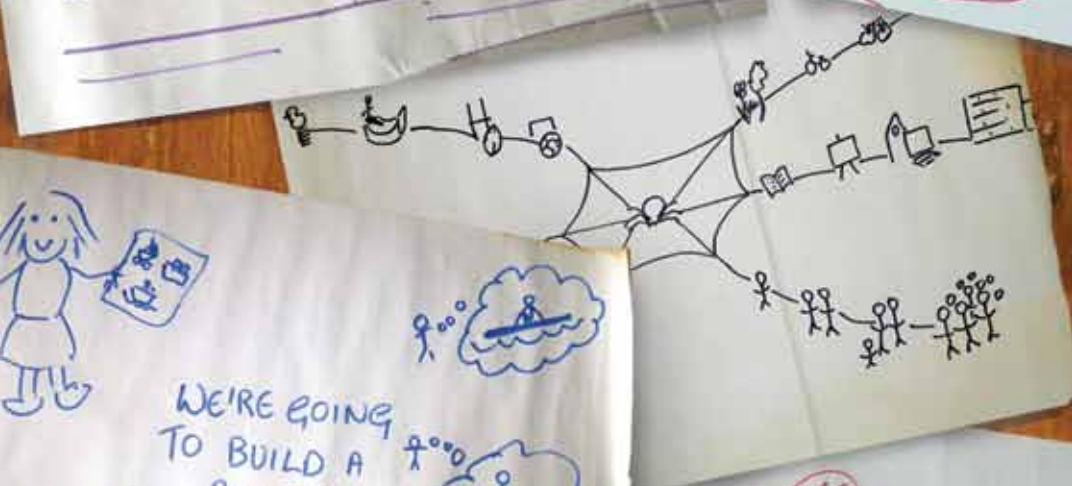




LEADERSHIP OF PLACE

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES BY
CHANGING THE WAY WE LEAD



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INTRODUCTION TO PLACE SHAPING

'Place-shaping' and 'leadership of place' are key concepts for all those in the fields of governance and regeneration. They are central to the regeneration agenda in the current economic climate.

By 'place shaping' and 'leadership of place' we mean approaches to the long term development and maintenance of strong, sustainable and inclusive places. We are describing the creative use of powers and influence to contribute to the well-being of a community both in terms of its economic base, the quality of life of its citizens, and ultimately its social cohesion and identity.

The place may be a local neighbourhood, a small town, or a whole region. Leaders of place may come from multiple sectors and organisations, but they must work across thematic and institutional boundaries for the sake of their communities. They must approach problems considering the long-term, and the needs and ambitions of all stakeholders, rather than engaging in short-term or organisationally-bounded behaviour.

'Leadership of place' is an inclusive model of leadership, based on systems thinking in a spatial context. For leaders it takes delivery of services to the next level, moving from commissioning and providing services, to also acting as leaders of an entire locality, leading partnerships and co-ordinating action across a wide range of agencies and organisations.

The Leadership of Place programme is a leadership development and change culture programme – developed out of collaboration between the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) at the University of Birmingham.

Background

Leadership of place evolved from an initial research partnership, started in 2007, between the Academy for Sustainable Communities (ASC), now part of the Homes and Communities Agency and the Centre for Urban Regional Studies (CURS), at Birmingham University.

The initial research and development programme was undertaken to better understand and explain the critical features and dynamics of strategic leadership in the context of place-based economic development, planning and regeneration activity. It explored the extent to which strategic leadership contributed to securing positive outcomes for urban and rural places in the complex multi-level, multi-disciplinary policy environment of the Knowledge Based Economy.

An intensity of activity took place between 2007 and 2008 engaging leaders from across England and Europe to initiate a discussion about a new leadership of place, and how the new leaders of place could best be prepared for their role.

A Leadership of Place Conference – 'Effective Local Leadership' – took place in Strasbourg in April 2008, hosted by the Council of Europe. It was attended by leaders of Municipalities representing the Balkan States, Malta and Russia.

The research culminated in a mini commission hosted by CURS at Birmingham University in June 2008. Attended by leaders from across England,

leaders made a number of recommendations on how to move the research forward to provide a practical 'leadership of place' model and framework; helping to support them to balance the dimensional challenges that leading places presented.

The journey

Following the mini commission, and responding to the Mind The Skills Gap research commissioned by the ASC, a 'call to action' was made to the sector to address a national drive to address leadership of place.

The journey to a Leadership of Place model to inform a new generation of leadership programmes was on its way. It was envisaged that the model and framework would be used to help develop and support leaders of place over the next decade. It responded directly to the long term leadership challenges identified through the Egan Review, 2004 and the ASC Mind the Skills Gap; Skills for Sustainable Communities, 2007, and built on the initial leadership of place for the 'knowledge-based economy' research, 2008.

The 'Leadership of Place' journey has been set against a backdrop of a changing and challenging political landscape. The development of the Place Leaders' framework has been able to respond to these changes and challenges by providing leaders with a new approach and the prerequisite tools and techniques.

As the HCA has grown and developed the Place Leaders' framework has been able to evolve to support its activities. It has been used to support the delivery of HCA activities, contributing firstly to supporting the Single Conversation process, and latterly the Local Investment Planning process. The Place Leaders' framework has the potential to be used across a wide range of activities, supporting leaders who are under pressure to 'think' and 'act' differently in leading and delivering places.

WHO WE ARE

The Homes and Communities Agency

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the single, national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England.

Our vision is to create opportunity for people to live in homes they can afford in places they want to live, by enabling local authorities and communities to deliver the ambition they have for their own areas.

We achieve this by:

- Understanding the needs and aspirations of people and communities through close working with local authorities on local investment planning
- Enabling local delivery through the channelling of our expertise and investment
- Working effectively with the market, house builders, investors and other stakeholders

CURS

CURS sits within the Birmingham Business School of the University of Birmingham. It is a leading international centre for research, teaching and consultancy in spatial and social planning studies, an academic and policy discipline that encompasses agendas around housing, regeneration, economic development, communities and the governance of public policy.

THE PLACE LEADERS' FRAMEWORK

Place is a key determinant in defining people's experiences of social exclusion, poverty, and socio-economic opportunity; the development of effective place leaders is a public policy requirement that cannot be left to chance or the market.

Just over three years ago the University of Birmingham and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) agreed to collaborate on the development of a place leadership programme that tested out a number of key contentions, drawn from our initial research into Leadership and the Knowledge Based Economy with the Academy of Sustainable Communities, and our established portfolio of knowledge concerned with regional competitiveness and housing markets renewal.*

Our key contentions;

- The development and delivery of competitive, inclusive, sustainable places is a complex multifaceted process. It requires leaders to co-create across horizontal (thematic) and vertical (spatial) boundaries combining and reconciling the interests and understanding of a range of individuals, institutions, communities of place and practice.
- The role of a leader as an individual integrator for betterment of place is a challenge to the prevailing culture, and presents a very different context to that addressed by traditional leadership programmes and practice where leaders are encouraged to build relationships on behalf of their organisations.
- Public action concerned with the shaping and making of place is a fast moving emergent process that, given its local – global connectivity,

is subject to continual risk and uncertainty. If resilience is to be embedded and leaders equipped to respond to the shocks and changes in the system, new approaches to learning and knowledge exchange need to be developed that enable practitioners, politicians, academics and activists to share learning and knowledge, to forge an underpinning rationale for current and future intervention and interaction.

- People shape space to make place therefore it is imperative that we develop our understanding of how people's perceptions help shape and inform place and how these need to be challenged and changed to shape future place and purpose.

Taking forward the programme

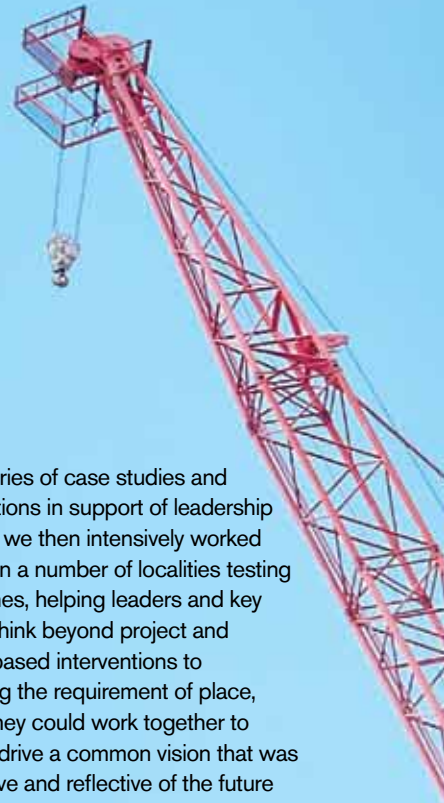
Although starting from a portfolio of research and knowledge, from the outset we very much adopted an open canvas on what the key outcomes might be and what the ultimate programme might look like, with the team accepting that the key first step was to change our behaviours and unlearn past assumptions about what makes for good partnership working and place development. Our aim was to learn from practice, directly engaging with over 500 practitioners, policy makers, communities of place and practice, to understand their key challenges and the kind of responses they were looking for from both policy and their practice/leadership development.

Through a series of case studies and pilot interventions in support of leadership development we then intensively worked with leaders in a number of localities testing out approaches, helping leaders and key agencies to think beyond project and programme based interventions to understanding the requirement of place, to see how they could work together to develop and drive a common vision that was both distinctive and reflective of the future purpose of the place. Our engagement with the sector identified that although key actors and agencies may come together with the stated purpose of shaping place, unless they have critically examined the context and systems within which they are operating, and understood their role and impact, progress can be hindered by the lack of a shared agenda, language and expectations. We therefore sought to shape our interventions and advice around three key components that we believed would underpin any successful place based intervention;

- The need to understand the context of the place: the key drivers and functionality of a given place, the local – global interface;
- The impact of the system as it stands and how this may be shaped to be more supportive of key actions;
- The collective leadership requirement – the balance of key behaviours and core competencies.

In effect we sought to test out the potential to develop whole place, whole system thinking within a collaborative leadership grouping.

*J Gibney and A Murie (2008) Toward a 'New' Strategic Leadership of Place for the Knowledge-Based Economy



A low-angle photograph looking up at a modern building with a glass facade and a red construction crane against a clear blue sky. The building's facade is composed of many rectangular glass panels, creating a grid-like pattern. The crane is a large, red, lattice-structured machine with a long boom extending upwards. The sky is a solid, clear blue.

In effect we sought to test out the potential to develop whole place, whole system thinking within a collaborative leadership grouping.

SO WHAT HAVE LEADERS TOLD US?

Leaders spoke of the challenge of finding a common language and the development of a common purpose. **Leaders spoke** of how situations arose where as a partnership or board there may be an impression that all parties have understood the direction of travel and key outcomes, but the actuality can be quite different, leading to potentially irresolvable conflict and expectation down the line. Equally it was suggested that lack of shared understanding in the boom years did not seem to matter, as for example with residential development the local authority was getting its infrastructure improvements, the government its housing numbers and the profit was such on any development that the private sector could ride the storm of betterment and 'mutual contempt and distrust' could be accommodated.

However other leaders, including community leaders and politicians, highlighted how such a lack of common purpose had led to developments that were incompatible with the housing needs and requirement of local people and in effect shaped a system that was neither sustainable nor desirable. The views of the elite – communities of practice – and perception of the communities of place – citizens on the ground – were seen to be too often out of kilter, as was also the social and economic rationale for intervention.

Leaders also spoke of the pressure, whether self imposed, politically or funding driven, to look successful and 'up your game', which meant that too often visions and future purposes were established that bore little resemblance to the realities on the ground

and did not reflect the very real challenges that were to be overcome.

A number of **leaders spoke** of how the language of growth was for example about high value added jobs when the reality of the skills profile of the residents would suggest that in order to make a step change an intermediate market was required. As one leader put it 'who gets brownie points or best practice awards for investing to be mediocre?' The desire to prove capacity to transform seems to have lost sight of the importance of transition and that pathways need to be identified, be it in housing, employment or skills; and that often the change maker may not be the originator of the initial action.

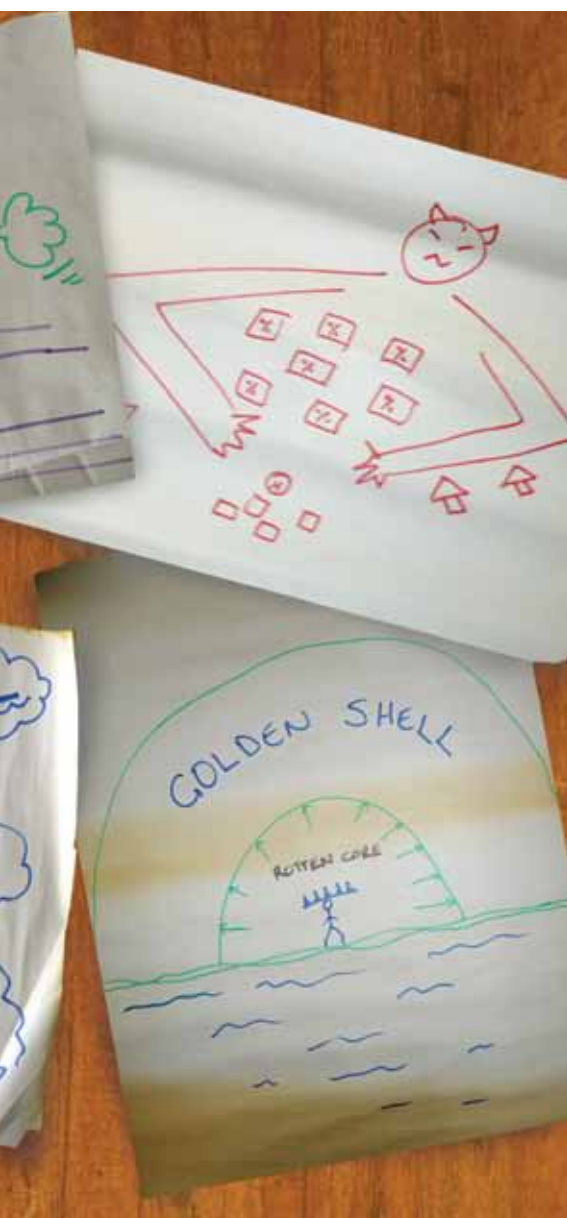
Our review of a number of localities' strategic plans, and engagement with leaders in these localities, highlighted how the desire to respond to the language of growth and promote place had made areas adopt unrealistic ambitions for the place and too often the social and economic rationale for intervention could be lost to political pressure, or assumptions of continued engagement by the private sector and business growth, when any risk assessment could point to over reliance on a given employer, over exposure to a given sector/cluster and risk of closures and job losses. For leaders across the sectors, planning cycles and the 'plan, monitor, manage' approach so favoured by the elites across Whitehall and Europe was seen to be alien to the complexity and uncertainty of the global economy and to the need to understand catalytic action for change in each locality.



Too often the delivery of key targets was seen to drive a given intervention and vision rather than a discrete and distinct understanding of the requirement of the place and people.

Using images to inform understanding

Critically, leaders need to understand how their context, organisational dynamic and personal drivers shape their own role and behaviours, in turn translating this into a combined understanding of the system, context and collective purpose. Securing honest, open and constructive dialogue across sectors can at times be difficult, and the absence of a common language and understanding at the outset can be a barrier to effective engagement. We have extensively used rich pictures, imaging and role association to help leaders develop this understanding.



Local authority leaders pointed to their constant challenge of being accountable to communities and localities, combining a horizontal accountability and understanding of the needs of their localities with the demands of Government and key agencies in terms of delivery of key targets. Too often the delivery of key targets was seen to drive a given intervention and vision rather than a discrete and distinct understanding of the requirement of the place and people. It was evident from a number of our case studies that a key driver for agencies to initially engage was to secure a platform from which to negotiate delivery on key targets, rather than start from the standing point of quite simply putting the questions what is needed to make this a better place – what can I and my agency bring to the table – and importantly am I the right person at the right table?

The tendency for formal leaders and key stakeholders to define outcomes in terms of delivery upon key output measures was seen to be a huge barrier in terms of the capacity to deliver on what was at the time the government's mantra of joined up working, and too often pushed out any reflection on what might be the perception of the community and their measurement for success. Engagement in areas in receipt of significant funding suggested that by the time resources have been deployed to the delivery of key targets, little resources were left to adequately respond to the identified needs and requirements of the local communities. Whilst we have a well developed

understanding of the differential speed of place,* we are less adept at understanding the differential understanding of communities, and nationally driven programmes are insensitive to local culture and the influence key events will have had on the communities' capacity to comprehend change.

Leaders spoke of the sheer complexity and uncertainty of the task – the property led regeneration of many of our cities an early victim of the global financial crisis, and inability to access finance was a key influence upon leaders' capacity to drive and influence interventions during the period of our initial engagement, with private sector leaders in particular suggesting that their 'tool box' was empty – and concern amongst leaders across functions and sectors that they no longer could 'supply the answers'. For many local authority leaders engaged in economic development, the financial crisis and subsequent recession reinforced their global exposure and highlighted the limited capacity they had to influence, let alone control, investment in their areas. It also highlighted key contextual differences for leadership in terms of a North and South divide with the impact of the public sector cuts and slowdown combining to further undermine fragile local employment and housing markets and the delivery of key regeneration programmes.

*E Ferrari and P Lee (2010). *Building Sustainable Housing Markets*. Coventry, Chartered Institute of Housing.

LEADERS ALSO TOLD US

However leaders equally spoke of the sudden impact of other critical, social and environmental influences – be it a tower block fire, the surge of the BNP, an anti social family – all pointing to the complexity and uncertainty of the place shaping process and often very diverse roles and responsibilities of

the strategic leads in local authorities. Leaders talked of the desire to show leadership but too often the day was taken up with the fire fighting and so that capacity to be the strategic and forward thinking leader was lost to the necessity of responding to day to day demands.



This suggested to us that leaders from public agencies travel across a spectrum of leadership requirements and the importance of understanding context was key, with command control responses totally appropriate for the crisis intervention, organisational leadership and process key to service improvement but then potentially collaborative leadership capacity and the networked approach to areas where the sheer uncertainty and complexity of requirement points to the need for common purpose and collaborative action. Crucially in a couple of our learning localities the public agency leaders' inability to understand context and at times apply the command and control response to a collaborative requirement was a key factor in the breakdown of partnership work and delivery on key outcomes.

It is recognised that convention has required organisations/practitioners to come up with the answers but clearly too often these are dictated by Whitehall or an elite's perception of the place, hopefully informed by evidence but rarely tested out in advance by perceptions and understanding on the ground –this is not to say that over the last decade there have not been major attempts to engage or involve communities. New Deal for Communities was a clear exemplar but this has happened within a frame and policy already set by elite, rather than the elite and grounded view coalescing around key understanding of what makes a successful place.

'A lot of people think regeneration is not 'rocket science'; as if making places were anything so simple! When a rocket fails you might have 3 or 4 key variables that destroy its trajectory. Delivering sustainable places involves innumerable variables: people move, buildings and neighbourhoods change their function and are spatially inter-related whilst history and culture alters the symbolic meanings of place – making places is more complicated than 'rocket science'!

DR PETER LEE; CURS UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM



In order to manage uncertainty it is our view that leaders, whether politicians or practitioners, should go into communities and engage with places with questions not answers, understanding that you need an adaptive leadership response – looking to develop place through a process of co-creation, facilitating continuance of input and commitment amongst key stakeholders and communities.

Leaders spoke of the loss of the command control, the requirement to deliver on huge expectation but often without any core means for controlling resources or input – in part relating back to the complexity issue. Leaders highlighted how there was the constant need to reconcile often competing and conflicting demands – as we worked through the programme we increasingly worked with leaders to help them

embrace conflict and uncertainty using it as a means to explore options and negotiate the challenges, rather than as has been the case in the past masking difference. We used collective memory techniques as a means of developing understanding of what had shaped and made a given place, enabling the elites – communities of practice and communities of place – to triangulate through a common understanding of the drivers past, present and future. An area we could only touch upon but one that has been informed by our work elsewhere, is the critical challenge of reconciliation of conflict between current and future generations, ensuring that investment is secured supportive of both and not just those who seem to be loudest or gatekeepers to the change potential, as has been identified in a number of key housing programmes.

Why develop collective memory?

The past is important if old policy solutions are not to be merely re-worked and re-packaged as new solutions, as is often the case. The impression that 'we have been here before' characterises the development of urban policy since the 1960s. But as regeneration policy has advanced, those who have experienced its impacts (communities of place) and those that have been responsible for the delivery of place making schemes and projects (communities of practice) often move away from and stop working in the local area, or retire, meaning that their experiences and potential lessons are lost from the regeneration process. It is vital to chart this 'inside' perspective of what went before, as it provides a much needed reality check on emerging actors.

Stories surround all aspects of our everyday lives. We read them, write them, hear them, and tell them. Our history shows that we can learn a great deal through stories as we attempt to make sense of our experiences in the complex world around us. In applying this premise to regeneration and place-making the reasons for adopting the collective memory approach are twofold:

Firstly: to avoid losing valuable lessons from the past – the use of 'regeneration stories' to depict the experiences of those who have been affected by, or those that have delivered, regeneration schemes over recent decades, is often ignored as new regeneration ideas and schemes are suggested and implemented.

Secondly: the current economic climate and drive towards 'localist' public service delivery means that new resilient, risk-aware models of regeneration are being sought: it is imperative that intervention considers the experiences of the past before planning out future regeneration.

Those guiding place making processes need to be much more attuned to these stories and how the past filters into, and is used, in the present.*

*R Rowlands, J Coaffee and L Trickett (2010) *Collective Memories of Place*

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LEADERSHIP?

Leaders accepted the need for networked collaborative approaches but suggested that whilst they could appreciate the importance of working together, the silos can remain. It is of interest that the networked collaborative approach came much more readily to leaders working in areas which were dependent upon generating their own resources and maximising say collective land holdings/ community assets, than areas supported by major funding programmes – there were clear differentials in degrees of complexity but again the influence of key funders and programme-driven rather than places-understood approaches was identified.

Leaders referred to the constant juggling act, balancing with expectations too often outweighing resources and capacity. The impact of performance management was highlighted, where again although you may have a huge personal drive to work across agencies and deliver whole place approaches, if your individual success is measured by the number of houses or jobs created, too often that drives your priorities rather than any overriding understanding of what would make for a great place.

The challenge of delivering the relational requirement across a range of spatial scales was reflected upon, with leaders suggesting that whilst strong relations can be developed in a given locality with commissioners and providers engaging to secure common purpose, if the

requirement to engage extends regionally, nationally and clearly in terms of inward investment globally, the challenge of distance and different identities can undermine capacity to develop collaborative approaches.

We also talked to leaders about understanding the interface between a range of spatial scales, testing the opportunities of adjacency alongside understanding the risks of displacement and detriment to surrounding localities – the requirement for such a 'spatial literacy' was again seen to be constrained by defined boundaries within the system, with cross authority working too often focused around sharing a bit of the cake for all, rather than truly understanding the key areas for change and opportunity.

Whilst some leaders highlighted the inevitable challenge of working across boundaries given our democratic process, others were more confident, understanding that it is the narrative that accompanies action that had to identify the cross cutting benefits rather than any attempt to salami slice investment to secure some visible output for all. The embeddedness of interventions was seen to be critical in terms of delivering change in the socio economic experience of the local communities. Our work in a number of cross authority schemes and growth areas would suggest that whilst key measures for success can be delivered, for example, high value added jobs or housing numbers, if the

jobs and housing offer are not part of the communities' pathway, long term impact will be minimal – this will be a crucial test of the success of enterprise zones going forward.

Some leaders challenged the concept of collaborative engagement, highlighting what they viewed as their own role in securing change in their areas – others referenced crisis situations and how they hardly had time to engage with partners etc. In the context of the shaping and making of place, we would continue to argue from our work that there is an absolute requirement to develop collaborative cross cutting approaches and leadership groupings that incorporate the range of professional specialisms and technical competencies, 'the balanced score card'. This is not to say that at any given time there is not a single identified leader: the crucial factor is ensuring that the right leader is in the lead at the right time and like a relay race passes the baton on to the next to reflect the changing requirement of place.

A central repose to our original contention was the need to make relationships for the betterment of place, rather than representative structures to reflect organisational structures – nor are we saying that there is no place for governance – just that the successful leadership cohort is seen to be grounded in what will make a difference to the given place/outcome, rather than historic alliance and partnership practices.

Critically for us success would seem to be predicated on leaders' capacity to understand their context and to be sufficiently self aware to understand the impact of their role and how they should adapt it to changing context and requirement, along with having sufficient capacity and freedom to be able to shape a system that facilitates delivery on the change requirement.

For leaders, it is key that they understand the what, when, how, and who with, in terms of the overall change requirement. This phase of our work led us to conclude that leaders engaged in the making and shaping of space need to:

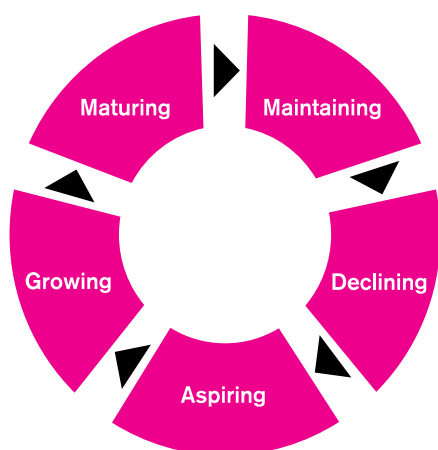
- Lead and work effectively within a constantly changing policy environment;
- Understand the challenges associated with transforming places as well as organisations;
- Lead long term complex policy processes across a range of spatial scales – professional and thematic boundaries;
- Lead by a process of influence – reconciling competing and conflicting interests;
- Have a spatial literacy of the place;
- Have an understanding of how resources can be brought to bear in the shaping of place.



SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PLACE AND PARTNERSHIP?

Our work in the field also suggested that we have to think differently about how we look at places and in particular move away from outdated models that seem to suggest a natural life cycle of place – if we take as an example the approaches to regeneration in the UK over the last decade, much intervention has been based on the assumption that there is a circularity of place development incorporating an ultimate period of decline which is the catalyst for regeneration.

Traditional approach to life cycle of place



But does this model exist? Clearly places are dynamic. They change shape, form, function and appearance constantly and people play a critical role in this evolution. But do they all take this circular path of generation, decline and re-generation? Arguably the model is a representation of places that are in danger of decline. Some of us have gone as far

as to say that it applies only to areas which have declined. A further question is in whose view are places part of this life cycle? When applied to declining places the model becomes one of intervention undertaken by local, regional and national government who identify the downward trajectory and implement intervention(s) to bring about an upward swing.

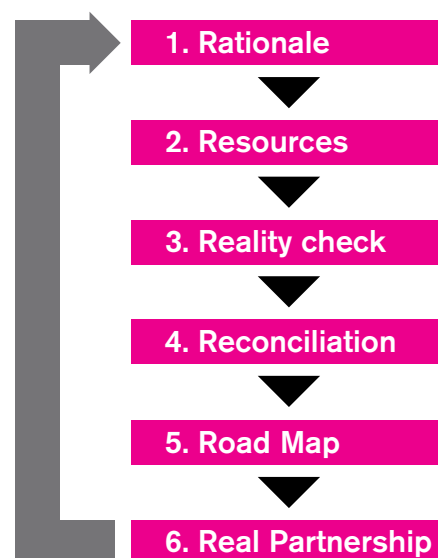
As a model of intervention though the cycle is somewhat flawed. Once place has begun to turn around there is a hands off approach to its management and development. Once structural failings are overcome through intervention, the development is undertaken by invisible hands. Some places will continue to grow and therefore come out of the cycle. Others will be drawn back into decline because of issues ranging from poor timing to poor focus on sustainable maintenance of place. Again, the life cycle is poor in predicting the outcome of place dynamics.

Let's revisit a point from earlier: places are constantly changing. This is irrefutable even if not always obvious. And it is the lack of obvious change that can be the biggest problem. If place makers and shapers rely on a cyclical approach to anticipating change in places, they are both poorly guided as to the trajectory of change and risk wasting resources in tackling problems at too late a stage.

With this in mind we have developed a 6 point pathway for understanding places. Rather than assuming that it is declining

places which need intervention, we take as our starting point any place and the need to better understand it. This takes into account the current position of that place, its economic performance, its environmental and social conditions and, importantly, the relationships and drivers of all local actors. This forms the rationale for monitoring and intervention to ensure that the management of place has firm footings. This process follows logical steps towards real and genuine partnership, where resources are shared, conflict harnessed and a common vision developed through a commitment to a mutually shared vision of that place. Unlike the life cycle, this is an ongoing interactive process whose outcomes are sustainably managed places.

The partnership development process



If we look at each step in turn: Rationale is the rationale for the given intervention and how that fits with the social and economic rationale of the place – the why are we doing? And if we cannot be clear on the whys and the intended outcomes, why do it at all?

Resources: when we talk of resources we tend to think of investment and subsidy requirement. There is a risk in doing so that we focus on what is absent rather than acknowledging what is already there.

We worked through with leaders an approach to understanding the collective asset base, applying a capital accounting model, for example;

- Physical Capital (streetscape, housing environmental conditions etc.)
- Social Capital (networks and groups)
- Human Capital (skills)
- Infrastructure/Institutional Capital (governance and empowerment)
- Productive Capital (economy and jobs)
- Symbolic Capital (perceptions from outside – assets that secure identity)
see: Bourdieu (1986); Putnam (2000)*

In working through a cross cutting asset appraisal, leaders are able to start connecting across spatial scales, better understanding cross cutting opportunity and risk.

Reality check: the reality check is about cross referencing what you are trying to achieve with the resources you have available – so is your original rationale and understanding of what you want to achieve realistic, or is the jump too great and initial stages need to be addressed to capture asset and opportunity? In looking at your assets, where will conflicts lie in terms of maximising these for delivery? On the rationale what does it say about your ability to deliver, how can these be reconciled or are they now identified risks rather than assets?



Once this process of reconciliation and review is complete you are then equipped to understand where you are going and how you are going to get there, so it is possible to develop the road map from which you will then be best placed to develop out who you need on the journey and what the collective leadership cohort should be. In going through such a deliberative process, engaging across your asset base, we would suggest realistic robust and relevant partnership working can be shaped.

However, whilst process, plans and policy are critical to the creation of better places, we would also argue from our time in the field, that it is only when this is overlaid by the right balance of skills and competencies and core leadership behaviours that you can transform place.

*P Bourdieu (1986) The forms of capital. RD Putnam (2000) Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community

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LEADERS OF PLACE

KEY BEHAVIOURS AND ACTIONS

We have established with leaders in the sector that there are seen to be five core behaviours that need to be shared across the leadership cohort.



Challenger

Leaders of place need the propensity to challenge the prevailing culture and develop a mutually supportive system. They approach the process by adopting a whole place approach – the priorities brought to the table are driven by the context of place not individual's organisation's needs. This will require an understanding of the contexts of these places, their challenges and connections and the resources that all stakeholders can bring and share. Leaders of place develop a culture based on co-operation and collaboration and in doing so deliver benefits to organisations working in that place.

Influencer

Leaders of place need to go beyond the rhetoric of partnership and develop a genuinely collaborative approach to place shaping. This will necessitate an abandonment of a command-and-control approach to leading partnerships and the adoption of an approach which develops and builds relationships through the careful use of influence. Leaders of place need to be able to relate to others and identify their own individual drivers as distinct from the drivers of the organisations who sent them. Partnership is developed by identifying the individual and their contribution to the place and further necessitates the development of system based performance management.



Balancer

Leaders of place must recognise and balance the different needs, aspirations and drivers of the communities they deal with. These are both communities of practice represented in the partnerships but also communities of place. As a first step, leaders need to recognise and mediate conflict between communities of practice and place to ensure that shared visions and language can emerge. Secondly, leaders can help the partnership understand the differences and conflicts between communities in the places where they work. Leaders need to understand that difference is acceptable but that how they manage the way in which this difference is balanced, reconciled and celebrated will be critical in delivering a sustainable and acceptable outcome for all.

Questioner

Leaders of place must recognise that uncertainty and conflict are their friends not their enemies, if effectively managed. Uncertainty is often the only certainty at the start of the process. Not knowing what the intervention and road map is at the outset can be an advantage. Following previously followed road maps can end in failure, sometimes repeated failure. Good leaders go in with questions which will help shape a bespoke solution through conversation and innovation.

Learner

Leaders of place also recognise the business case of continuing to develop leadership capabilities for the benefit of the place and not merely organisational interests. The underpinning reason for this is that co-operative, collaborative advantage is gained by individuals and organisations if they think of the wider system and the place. The capacity to share learning and understanding and build in risk whilst understanding that in time of uncertainty and in shaping a new system failure should be learnt from and that we need to get better at talking about practice rather than the continued over emphasis on best practice.

LESSONS LEARNED

In February 2010 Atkins and CLES Consulting were commissioned to evaluate the impact of the programme activity of the HCA Skills and Knowledge Team.

As part of that work they reviewed the Milton Keynes and Cotgrave Leadership of Place case studies and noted:

- Leadership of Place has helped partners to articulate common objectives and outcomes, and secured their buy-in to ways in which they can work to achieve them.
- The model is a highly sustainable one, with clearly defined inputs and a strong emphasis on leaving a legacy that partners are able to take forward.
- The Leadership of Place approach is premised on developing a strong understanding of the local context, in terms of its historical legacy, the nature of local leaders and the relations between them, the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy, and the value of key community assets.
- Leadership of Place adopts an approach that is tailored to the local area in which it is being implemented, and that responds flexibly to the different dynamics at work.

'everyone presented a united front, which had not happened before.'

'I gained good understanding of what we are doing as a Council and what else we could do to make a difference.'

'it has encouraged a broader aspect – thinking about little things in the context of the wider scene.'

'a good example of joined-up partnership working.'

'...by tailoring'... (the programme)...
'to our requirements and running it in-house for staff, we have been able to learn from best practice first hand, and apply lessons learnt to benefit our own communities.'

'it is a master move, and should do an awful lot for, give us confidence. We will have a voice in our destiny... [and] be in a stronger position to influence where we're going to and how we're going to get there.'

'[Leadership of Place] was very important glue in the process.'

'...a really well structured and enjoyable programme which succeeded in meeting the needs of staff in my team.'

TAKING THE PLACE LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK FORWARD

HCA

There is a strong case for HCA area teams to embed the leadership of place approach within their new enabling role, linking it to the investment which has been identified through Local Investment Plans. Work undertaken with HCA partners in Durham, the North East and Rushcliffe has illustrated that the leadership of place approach has the potential to pay significant future dividends both for local partners and more widely for local places and their resident communities.

University of Birmingham

The University is currently looking to develop a series of relationships 'Public Service Academies' with key localities to facilitate the development of shared learning and experiential practice – our aim would be to support localities in the testing out and development of new policies, models of delivery and enhanced business processes helping to shape a supportive system and developing leadership capacity within place based contexts. The transfer of knowledge and development of new and shared understanding would underpin this approach, as would the development of core behaviours and understanding arising from the LoP programme.

Our first national Policy Commission into the future of public services 'When Tomorrow Comes' has recently reported, a key recommendation of which is the development of a twenty-first century public servant who can be working in

any sector but whose engagement is defined by what they bring to the locality. We will look to take this recommendation forward, overlaying the identified core roles of the new public servant with the behaviours and processes that have been developed as part of our work on place leadership to inform our future teaching, continuing professional development, and executive leadership offer.

We are currently engaging within the city and across Europe to develop a leadership series conversing across sectors, and developing leadership practice, drawing upon the context of our cities as our learning laboratories.

Acknowledgements

Development of the Place Leadership framework has covered a journey of four years. During this period there has been collaboration with a wide and diverse group of leaders representing organisations from across the housing and regeneration sector, in England and across Europe. Thanks go out to all those involved for the generous sharing of ideas, thoughts and time, and we believe that the wide variety of input has resulted in a Place Leadership framework which meets the needs of the sector.

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