



JOHN TIBBITT

PLANNING IN SCOTTISH  
CITIES: THE PLACE  
PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

## Planning in Scottish Cities: The Place Principle in Practice

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### **The Place Principle in Scottish Planning Policy**

Developed collaboratively with a range of organizations, the Scottish Government with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) adopted 'the Place Principle' in May 2019 as the basis for its approach to revised planning arrangements and to support public service reform. The principle is intended to overcome organizational and sectoral boundaries to encourage better collaboration and community involvement based on a clear vision of place, in the belief that shared understanding of place will bring improved outcomes for people and communities.

As used by the Scottish Government the place principle emphasizes that:

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

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

This paper is concerned with the ways the adoption of the place principle is reflected in current planning and community planning practice in Scotland. It will explore how the concept of place is developed and operationalized in major Scottish cities through the planning processes created in recent legislation in Scotland. It will consider the use of the concept in the various components of the planning system and the links between spatial planning and community planning, seen as vital in delivering better community outcomes. It will look at the way place is represented within these planning processes with some examples of initiatives in Scottish cities to give practical expression to the concept. This will lead to some observations about issues and challenges which arise in delivering policies for 'successful places' and assessing the outcomes achieved.

The paper draws on official documents, on reports and research, and to a limited extent on the experience of the author and others from direct participation in elements of the processes and initiatives described.

### **Legislation**

This centrality of the role of place in local planning processes is reflected in the Community Empowerment Act passed by the Scottish Government in 2015 and progressively implemented since then, and in the Planning (Scotland) Act of 2019.

The Community Empowerment Act 2015 aims to strengthen the community voice in decisions about public services and make it easier for communities to own and manage community assets of land and buildings. It makes provision in 11 areas to encourage community empowerment. Of relevance here is the development of processes for community planning through community planning partnership (CPPs), the extension of the community right to buy land to the whole of Scotland, the establishment of processes for asset transfer from public authorities to community ownership, and the provision for community organizations to make participation requests to participate in decision-making about local issues and public services.

The Act also introduces Local Place Plans (LPPs) which provide an opportunity for communities to influence land use and development in the places where they live. Whilst guidance has still to be issued about the scope of these plans, LPPs are intended to stimulate debate about the future of places and can focus on community aspirations as well as needs. LPPs are intended to capitalize on local knowledge and to sit alongside local authority Local Development Plans (LDPs) as described below. Support and training resources will be available to assist community bodies in preparing their plans.

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 determines the structure of a modernized planning system for Scotland. It defines the purpose of planning as being 'to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest' and adds that anything which contributes to sustainable development or achieves the national outcomes within the meaning of Part 1 of the Community Empowerment Act 2015 is in the long-term public interest. The Scottish Government sees this legislation as being central to strengthening the planning system's contribution to the development of inclusive growth, to delivering housing and infrastructure and to the empowerment of communities. The provisions of the Act include the preparation of national and local development plans (LDPs), a revised range of permitted development rights and the opportunity for increased community involvement in the planning process.

Taken together these provisions offer a range of processes for the determination of land use at national, regional and local levels and for community participation and direct involvement in the use of community assets. They emphasize the key concept of place-based planning and stress the importance of community engagement and empowerment which go significantly beyond conventional consultation procedures. The next section provides more detail of the planning procedures which have resulted from this legislation.

### **Scottish Planning Procedures**

#### Scottish Government Planning

The Scottish Government provides a National Planning Framework (NPF) which establishes the overall objectives which local plans made by local authorities are required to address. The framework currently in preparation, NPF4, brings together spatial and thematic planning, taking into account regional spatial strategies prepared by local authorities. It sets out a series of outcomes to be achieved including meeting housing needs, improving health and wellbeing, improving inequality and eliminating discrimination and meeting targets for reduction of emissions. The preparation of the plan includes a 'call for ideas' from organisations and individuals, and responses are published.

### Local Authority Planning

Within the NPF, local authorities in Scotland as planning authorities are required to produce an array of plans. Each of the 32 councils (and 2 national parks and 4 city regions) must produce a Local Development Plan (LDP) in consultation with the Scottish Government and local stakeholders. These allocate sites for new developments such as housing and light industries and identifies land for protection. LDPs are 'map-based' but required to reflect the unique characteristics of the places and communities they cover. LDPs also set out policies which guide decisions on planning applications. LDPs can have 3 parts: a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) which is required of the 4 largest city regions and deals with cross-boundary issues, LDPs from each local authority, and supplementary guidance which gives more details of plans in the LDP providing it has included public consultation.

Plans must be adopted or revised within defined timescales. The process of producing a LDP involves the initial release of a Main Issues Report which provides the main opportunity for early engagement with communities and other stakeholders to inform the content of the plan. There follows a Proposed Plan which is the settled view of the council after taking account of the views expressed on the Main Issues Report, which is again consulted upon. Planning authorities must submit a statement to the Scottish Government showing how they have carried out their community engagement in relation to these plans.

### Community Planning Partnerships

Community Planning is intended to drive public service reform in Scotland by bringing together local public services with the communities they serve and provides a basis for partnership working across agencies that targets specific local circumstances, and in this sense is essentially 'place-based'. Partner agencies work together to improve local services and focus on where collective efforts and resources can add the most value to local communities and ensure they meet the needs of local people, especially those in most need.

All those services which come together to take part in community planning constitute a Community Planning Partnership (CPP). Each of the 32 council areas in Scotland has a CPP. CPPs are responsible for producing two types of plan to describe their local priorities and planned improvements. Local outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) span the whole CPP area, whilst Locality Plans cover smaller areas within the CPP area, and usually focus on areas which will benefit most from service improvement. Each CPP produces at least one Locality Plan but there is no fixed number and some produce many.

CPPs can organize themselves in whatever way they think will help them work well. They consist of set of statutory partners (Local councils, NHS, Police, Fire service, Skills development Scotland, Scottish Enterprise and the Department for Work and Pensions) and usually also include representation of universities and colleges and the third sector. They also include some community representation, although this is achieved in different ways as will be seen below. CPPs need to ensure all partners are clear about what they have agreed to do and where responsibilities for actions lie. Typically, city CPPs are organized at 3 levels, a central board, area boards (in Glasgow these are referred to as sectors and in Edinburgh as localities) and smaller local or neighbourhood groups. The legislation also requires CPPs to develop a special focus on districts with their area where people experience poorer outcomes and to develop local locality plans for these. Most CPPs are supported by an array of other partnership groups with a focus on thematic issues such as community learning, health and social care and equalities.

Government policy puts community participation at the heart of community planning and applies in the development, design and delivery of plans, and in their review, revision and reporting. The Scottish Government is clear that community participation in community planning should go beyond more conventional consultation. CPPs and community planning partners must act to ensure the participation of communities throughout. The issue of how this participation is facilitated is one to which this paper will return.

### The operationalization of place

The common purpose of these various planning processes, whether 'map-based' or 'place-based', is to create successful places. The pursuit of these objectives takes is in a context where there is no universally accepted definition of 'place' or of a 'successful place' to guide these planning processes. Writers commonly conceptualise places as 'spaces with meaning'. Spaces become places when meaning and purpose are attached to them, for example when a street becomes a neighbourhood or when a public space becomes a site for purposeful social and cultural activities. For Jacobson, place is a 'context-specific' and 'meaning-rich'. Place is a physical location which is 'coloured with personal experience'.

Places are experienced at different levels from local neighbourhoods to towns, cities and regions. Places at each of these levels differ widely in their character and the economic, social and cultural opportunities they offer. Places are also dynamic and subject to constant change as patterns of employment, technology and demography also evolve. A successful place will have attributes embracing sustainability, inclusive growth and supporting the health and wellbeing of its residents. A successful place is one which is accessible, active, comfortable and sociable (PPS, 2011).

Just as there is no universally accepted definition of place, so there is no single approach to the making of places. Making places is both a process and an outcome. Approaches to placemaking draw inspiration from the ideas developed by researchers such as Jane Jacobs and William H Whyte who both emphasized the importance of putting people at the centre of city design and development. Their work focused on the social and cultural importance of lively neighbourhoods and inviting public spaces. In her now famous phrase Jane Jacobs urged citizens 'to keep eyes on the street' while Whyte drew out key elements for creating a vibrant social life in public spaces. Prompted by the activities of high-profile organisations such as PPS it has been demonstrated how adopting a collaborative community process is a most effective way of creating and revitalizing public space.

Whilst the term 'placemaking' is frequently used by people and organisations committed to community-led improvement, it is also a term often used by planners and developers to promote the desirability and quality of their developments. It is increasingly used by design professionals and developers to describe features of the built environment which are not rooted in public participation. As more professionals come to call their work 'placemaking' it is important not to lose the integrity of the process. It is not only the physical aspects which determine a quality place. Place should also serve people as a vital community resource where function is paramount.

It is against this uncertain background that the planning systems outlined above must proceed. Their task is to establish appropriate land use and physical structures in a form which can capitalize on a local community's assets and aspirations, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's opportunities, health, happiness and wellbeing. The Scottish Government has produced a series of guidance notes to support the development of place-based approaches to planning practice. The guidance consistently stresses the need to develop places which are vibrant, effective and sustainable. There is also an increasing number of tools available such as the Scottish Place Standard which can profile places based on a series of indicators spanning different aspects frequently associated with the idea of a successful place. Central to cities' approach to their task is an understanding of their notion of a successful place: if they are to be able to assess their achievement of this objective, they need to be clear about the components of places, or what might be called the 'placeness' (see Relph, 1976) which their actions are to address.

### **The representation of place and community engagement in planning processes**

In their planning procedures, Scottish local authorities and planning partners must fulfill the requirements of planning legislation and reflect the guidance provided. As has been noted already, they are required to submit their plans for approval by the Scottish Government at several stages in the planning process, including the ways in which they have engaged with communities during the procedures. Most commentators on best practice in placemaking stress the importance of significant community involvement. This section will explore two aspects of this community engagement; first how communities of place are represented in the planning arrangements of cities in Scotland, and second the nature of the contribution allowed to communities within these arrangements.

The representation of place in both city planning services and within the community planning process in each council area is described below.



City planning services typically rely on conventional consultative arrangements as the means of involving community members and organisations in the development of local plans and in the assessment process for specific development applications.

Consultation with community groups is required at specific stages within the planning process from preliminary notification to final planning application. Some cities have codified these steps: Edinburgh for example has adopted a 'Planning Concordat' (soon to be replaced with a broader 'Development Concordat') to guide developers' engagement with communities. Some community bodies such as community councils are classed as 'statutory consultees' whose views must be sought and taken into account in the consideration of significant local development projects.

For the formulation of major development plans city councils will usually undertake extensive consultation programmes including road shows, public meetings, web-based surveys and direct consultation with significant community groups and other stakeholders. The consultation usually takes the form of an invitation to respondents to comment on broad aspects of the vision for the future city and a series of more specific objectives intended to deliver the vision which are likely to range widely over issues of land use, community infrastructure, transport and active travel and supporting inclusive growth, economic development and innovation and culture

The representation of place in community planning procedures in the 4 major Scottish cities presents a more varied picture. As described earlier, there is typically a three-tier structure to Community Planning arrangements, and it is immediately apparent that communities are represented in different ways within these structures. At Board level in Edinburgh 'communities of place' are directly represented through the inclusion of the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils in the Board membership in addition to third sector organisations. Similarly, Glasgow has Strategy Board and a Safe Glasgow Board which both have representation from the voluntary sector organisations such as Housing Associations whilst Dundee and Aberdeen Partnership Boards have procedures for electing a limited number of individual residents.

At locality and neighbourhood levels there are further significant differences in the way 'place' is represented. Edinburgh has divided the city into 4 localities each having a locality group responsible for delivering Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) but which include only limited community representation drawn from neighbourhood networks (see below) in its locality. Glasgow has three geographically defined 'sectoral' groups with more substantial community representation from voluntary sector groups.

At neighbourhood level Edinburgh has established 13 neighbourhood networks across the city which are much looser groups intended to provide a forum which enables local people and organisations to come together to identify and share needs and possible responses within their areas. Such responses might be through community action or through public services. The role of these networks is still evolving.

Within each of its 3 sectors, Glasgow has local area partnerships, usually based on city electoral wards, which are intended to review and influence implementation of Glasgow CPP and Glasgow City priorities and can develop local action plans and oversee the local small grants scheme. They have a membership drawn from local groups within the area boundaries.

Dundee has adopted a rather different approach. It has established a Local Community Planning Partnership in each of its 8 wards to give a local focus to the overarching Dundee Partnership. Each LCPP is tasked with developing and delivering local community plans and prioritizing actions that public services and community groups have agreed to take forward. The LCPPs provide a platform for consultation and debate among partner organisations and community members and may establish working groups on specific themes. Each ward has a Communities Officer, and each LCPP is chaired by an officer of the city council. There is a communities regeneration fund available by ward (see below). The city has also designated several smaller areas of the city as community regeneration areas, 4 of which are coterminous with community council areas and 5 have neighbourhood representative bodies.

Aberdeen has further variations to its community planning structure. There is an overall Partnership Board and a management group to take business forward. There are 3 locality partnerships which oversee the delivery of locality outcome improvement plans and work with community representatives for the improvement of local places for residents. In addition, there are themed outcome improvement groups focused on specific service issues.

Interestingly, Aberdeen has established the Aberdeen Civic Forum as an additional partner within its CPP. Its main purpose is to enable and support communities in Aberdeen to participate in CPPs and to bring 'the voice and views of communities' to every level of decision making. The Civic Forum consists of Community Councils, communities of interest and community groups from across the city and welcomes anyone to participate in discussion and projects. In addition to its contribution to a wide range of consultations locally and from the Scottish Government, the Forum has established a community empowerment group to review and progress provisions within the Communities Empowerment Act. This has included the development of a charter to guide the use of Participation Requests.

### The nature of community collaboration and engagement

The foregoing section has demonstrated that the 4 main cities in Scotland all include community representation in some form within their planning and community planning processes, although the extent of representation varies considerably between cities and between the different levels in community planning structures. Community representation is drawn both from voluntary sector organisations and communities of place groups such as community councils and housing associations. This section will now look at the nature of collaboration with communities which follows from this presence.

As has been indicated above, typically community input to local development planning and development decisions is through the required consultation procedures within planning legislation. Usually, community organisations and individuals are invited to comment on planning options developed by city councils, although there are indications that consultation programmes are becoming more extensive and multi-faceted and making use of a range of media channels. The use of community-initiated Local Place Plan provisions is still in its infancy.

Community participation at the top level of community planning partnerships is not extensive, and even where communities of place do have a presence at Board level it is usually only as one member of a large partnership meeting, and community groups can find it hard to muster the expertise and resources on which to base their input. The Aberdeen Civic Forum offers an interesting solution to strengthening the community input at this level. At more local levels, in most Scottish cities community involvement seems to be more extensive and participative in the formulation of local priorities and delivery of local projects and outcomes.

### Examples of place-focused initiatives

Despite this variation in the ways community participation in physical planning and community planning processes occurs, there are some good examples where clear place-based initiatives have been taken. By way of example, 3 are highlighted below.

### Pilot place standard applications

The Place Standard tool referred to earlier was developed in collaboration with NHS Health Scotland, the Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council and Architecture and Design Scotland and was launched in 2015. It is intended to provide an accessible approach to establish 'place-making' conversations between service providers and communities. It has been widely used: by December 2018, all local authority areas and one national park in Scotland had recorded some use of the tool with most applications relating to local authority planning or the preparation of Local Development Plans. Several of these applications have been written up as case-studies as guidance for further applications.

### Place Briefs

Edinburgh planners are developing a series of place briefs as guides for prospective developers in the re-development of key sites in the city. A Place brief is non-statutory guidance which sets out high-level principles which should influence the content and design of development proposals. These principles are based on community priorities and council requirements for the part of the city in which the development is located. The preparation of Place Briefs is informed by consultation with local people, organisations and stakeholders and has involved public exhibitions and on-line surveys to allow the identification of features of the area which proposed developments should address and respect. There are examples where a Place Brief has been influential in protecting local heritage, encouraging social housing and green space, and helping join up access routes and cross-city paths for active travel.

### Thriving Places – Glasgow

In its Thriving Places initiative Glasgow CPP has produced local plans for 10 neighbourhoods which are the most deprived relative to the rest of the city. The initiative currently supports a Community Connector in each neighbourhood and is intended to bring local community groups, services and organisations together to address local priorities. Community Connectors are employed by organisations that already have a presence in the area and have good links with local people. A Steering Group of people from each neighbourhood meets as often as necessary to keep each local programme of activity on track and assist the Community Connector to involve appropriate community resources.

### Participatory budgeting - Dundee

There is an increasing interest in participatory budgeting amongst local authorities in Scotland and some well-established examples. Whilst most have focused on the distribution of small grants to local community groups, Dundee has piloted a city-wide programme known as Dundee Decides backed by more substantial community regeneration funding (Dundee City, 2018).

## **Policies for places**

### Community empowerment

There are then some significant examples of ways in which place-based initiatives consistent with the application of the Place Principle have been taken forward in the fields of planning and community planning. The extent to which this community engagement indicates significant community empowerment to initiate and determine the nature of local community plans and service provision from public agencies remains problematic. Two research studies of Community Planning Officers (CPOs) carried out in 2016 and 2018 highlight some important issues for the delivery of community planning and community engagement (Escobar and Wheakley for What works Scotland 2019).

Supporting community empowerment is one of the primary aims of the 2015 Community Empowerment Act. Nevertheless, whilst CPOs in the surveys valued community engagement and saw it as a vital aspect of their work, there was less evidence that they were widely organizing activities which were co-produced or community led. Both CPOs and community members sampled in the study thought that community participation did not have a marked impact on policy or decision-making.

The studies also drew attention to issues of inclusion and diversity. There were worries that community engagement processes tended to repeatedly involve certain groups and individuals rather than a cross-section of the relevant communities, and replicate power structures within the communities. For those community members who did engage consistently, there was a danger of 'consultation fatigue'. A lack of diversity can limit the value of community engagement for policymakers and may lead more community members to be sceptical about the level of impact from participation. Nevertheless, the 2018 survey did point to some positive impacts from the Community Empowerment legislation in relation to the assessment of local outcome improvement plans and participatory budgeting. There are indications that place-based engagement is increasingly a feature of CPP and planning processes but recent best value quality assurance investigations indicate that more clarity is still needed.

### Character of community engagement

Whilst these indications are welcome, it is also important to look at the character of that engagement. Engagement is a term which embraces many differing relationships between organisations or groups ranging from minimal contact at one extreme to joint working and even merger at the other. The idea is captured in the concept of 'ladders of citizen engagement' (see for example Arnstein 1957) which order levels of increasing engagement on the following lines:

- Informing: provide information to enable people to understand development proposals
- Consulting: obtain feedback on proposals and alternative options
- Involving: working directly with people to develop proposals or options
- Collaborating: working in partnership on all aspects of decision-making, options and preferred solutions
- Empowering: final decisions in the hands of local people.

Evidence and experience would seem to suggest that community engagement by local authority planning services is typically at the lower levels of the ladder although there are examples of moves for greater community involvement. Community Planning procedures at local area level more obviously collaborative, if rarely at the empowerment level, although at management or Board level engagement is still typically on the lower rungs.

### Promoting Placeness

The extent to which communities are represented in planning processes and the quality of the collaboration which is occurring should provide the building blocks to improve the demographic credentials of these processes. Both the essentially physical development focus of planning services and the mainly service improvement focus of community planning should collectively promote the commitment to the improvement of places and the delivery of community empowerment sought in the recent relevant legislation. Whilst planning and community planning clearly is 'place-based' it is legitimate to ask if this focus leads to an enriched sense of place as an outcome or is it confined to spatial development and distribution of service provision.

As has already been seen, the concept of place is complex and variously understood, making the operationalization of place in place policy and assessment of outcomes rather problematic. Cities have the objective of creating sustainable and vibrant places which allow opportunity and social and cultural activity, but there is still a need to return to the basic question of just what constitutes a 'good' or 'successful' place as an objective of policy and practice interventions. Some further 'unpacking' of the concept of place is required.

Recent years have seen a rapid growth in the writing about place from many different disciplinary standpoints. For a wide-ranging review see Marco Antonsich (2008). For the purposes of this paper, it will be useful to set up a model of place against which to assess practice and outcomes from planning systems. The model suggested is based closely on the phenomenological approach developed by Seamon. He advocates an understanding of place which neither interprets place only as an objective environment separate from experience or only as a subjective 'lived' experience. Rather, he contends that place can be understood in terms of 3 dimensions:

- the geographical which encompasses both the natural environment and human-made elements such as buildings, street furniture, pathways and land use.
- people- in-place which relates to the human worlds unfolding in the geographical dimension including actions and activities and events, intentions and meanings, and
- the spirit of place which refers to the unique ambience and character of a place, for example, the Edinburgh-ness of Edinburgh as a whole or the Leith-ness of the Leith district within the city.

These dimensions act as a people-place triad in which each dimension interacts with the other to generate the complexity and richness of place and place experience. People/place interactions can be associated with the form, function and meaning of places (see Hashemnezhad et al 2013). Form relates to the general perception and understanding of the spatial and built features of the environment in which people find themselves. Function relates to the perception people have of the 'space capabilities' to meet and obviate needs, whilst meaning derives from the satisfaction with and attachment to place.

This kind of formulation of people's interaction with aspects of place provides a basis on which to 'map' policy initiatives to build and sustain a strong sense of place and 'placeness' and to relate one initiative to another. It is the perception that form encourages and sustains a range of activities and responses to needs that leads to positive perceptions of a sense of place and place attachment, and perception of a place as 'successful'.

Numerous studies have pointed to design features associated with a well-functioning place (see for example PPS). Places should be accessible and well connected. Places should be walkable, not dominated by traffic and supportive of active travel. Places should have open spaces, green spaces and street furniture to permit a range of activities, encourage social interaction and support health and mental well-being. Places should be safe. Places should have facilities providing access to a range of public services and information. Places should have provision to encourage employment opportunities.



Activities provide reasons for people to use and return to a place. Activities can make places special or unique and provide place identity. Where there is nothing to do, places are empty and unused. Ideally activities should be diverse and accessible to people of all ages, and to individuals and groups. Activities should be available throughout the day. Places should be welcoming and clean.

Places should not only provide the opportunity for productive social interaction but also provide the opportunities to meet a range of needs such as access to suitable housing, health and welfare, employment and income support and learning. Concepts such as community hubs or community anchors, and of the 20-minute neighbourhood are examples of attempts to address these issues in a place-based fashion.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of place for policy actions to address is the spirit or ambience of a place, to encourage place identity and place attachment. Some aspects can be addressed by encouraging developments which reflect or complement the existing character of buildings and public spaces and discouraging those which contribute little or may even destroy valuable features or character of a place. Place identity might be encouraged by promoting heritage or encouraging activity around a particular focus – a book town or a craft centre or other creative industry for example. Ultimately any policy initiative to influence the spirit of a place will depend on the actions and perceptions of community members. Any agency actions should be based on clear understandings of community expectations, and on community empowerment to determine the scope and format of support from public services. It is vital therefore that policies are in place to ensure the effective representation of community views and support is available from community education to allow these to be properly articulated.

### A holistic approach to place

It has been argued here that each of the aspects of place -form, function and spirit – are interrelated, and it out of their interaction that 'placeness' emerges. This requires both a flexibility on the part of public authorities in their approach to service provision and supporting places and in their willingness to learn from and respond to community perceptions about place in terms of its social needs and the opportunities it provides for social interaction and economic and environmental sustainability. There are excellent examples of cities and communities building mutual learning. One such as the EcCoWell principles for learning cities and communities developed by the Pascal International Observatory and applied in several places around the world.

## Conclusions

This paper set out to assess the application of the Scottish Government's Place Principle through recent legislation creating revised processes for community planning and reform of the planning system. Both are focused on the outcome of building successful places and are working in a context where there is no universal definition of place or of a successful place, except in the most general terms.

The paper has looked at the planning structures which have been created in 4 Scottish cities, to see how place is addressed in those systems, and the ways communities of place are represented within them. It has also looked at the character of the engagement which typically occurs between the planning systems and place communities. It must be concluded that generally communities of place are not well represented in the top tier of the planning structures and when they are, they are not always able to make a substantial contribution to discussion or decision making. At locality and especially at neighbourhood level in community planning there are examples of more collaborative practice. It is perhaps surprising that planning processes do not seek more engagement with community councils, the lowest tier of local government in Scotland. Community Councils are statutory consultees in planning procedures and some cities have in place a development concordat to guide the consultation process. There is a place for something similar in community planning to provide a framework for community engagement.

Whilst there is clear commitment amongst community planning officers to community engagement, there is evidence to indicate that engagement is making steps up the ladder of engagement towards collaboration and empowerment when communities have a real role in determining local priorities and decision-making for local actions. This is clear particularly when communities are involved in participative budgeting initiatives for the dispersal of small grants or community regeneration resources. The empowerment of communities to determine the character of their place would be significantly enhanced if local authorities were to consistently transfer a larger proportion funds to local communities for community regeneration purposes. There remain challenges to be overcome in local authority decision-making and accountability arrangements to facilitate further progress.

The paper has then turned to the concept of place and successful place outcomes from these place-based planning procedures. Most cities seem to refer to a very non-specific concept of place in terms of developing places which are 'good places' to live, work and study with a suitable distribution of resources in relation to perceived need. But place has many interacting aspects relating to form, function and meaning, and these interactions are the basis for perceptions of place attraction and identity. Place policies can be mapped on to these different aspects of place, although the most challenging are policies promote place meaning. However, it is important not to lose sight of their interaction between actions aimed at each aspect of place. This requires a holistic approach, which must give full recognition to community empowerment. It requires flexibility in service development and delivery, and it requires an openness to learning on the part of public service providers and resources to facilitate neighborhood learning and articulation of needs and aspirations. Integrated steps such as these are essential to boost 'placeness' with city geographies, clarify perceptions of the nature of successful places and demonstrate the importance of the place principle.

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# A PAPER FROM POLICIES FOR PLACES

Policies for Places was founded to bring together ideas and discussion of effective policies for developing successful places.

## About the Author

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