What Works in Place-based Approaches?

Claire Bynner, What Works Scotland
Changing Lives, Delivering Success: Turning Ambition into Action, 26 June 2015
What will we cover?

• WWS purpose, aims, staff and partners
• ‘Place’ and the Scottish model
• 6 characteristics of place-based approaches
• 4 rationales for a return to neighbourhoods
• The Elephant and the Flea
• 8 lessons from the evidence
• The wisdom of practice
WWS purpose and aims

Purpose
• To use evidence to transform public services for all of Scotland’s communities to flourish

Aims
• identify and better understand what is working and not working in public service delivery in Scotland, how we can translate knowledge from setting to setting
• contribute to the development of a Scottish model of service delivery that brings about transformational change for people living in different places across Scotland

Website for updates and blogs: whatworksscotland.ac.uk
‘Place’ and the Scottish model of Public Service Reform

Christie Commission
The best level for engaging people and communities in the design and delivery of services will be:

‘more local than the local authority-area level’

‘at or around the level of multimember wards’

The Statement of Ambition
‘If CPPs are to unlock potential, their foundations must be built on a strong understanding of their communities’
How have CPPs responded?

• The National Community Planning Group (2013) reported a move towards:
  ‘locality-based approaches to community planning’
  and
  ‘total place/neighbourhood type initiatives with a strong emphasis on community assets’

• Improvement Service (2014) found that 22 out of 32 CPPs had identified locations for their place-based approaches
  – a mix of holistic and themed approaches
Six characteristics of place-based approaches

- Government policy flux
- Community engagement
- Local flexibility
- Partnership approach
- Central control
- Selected on the basis of deprivation

Rationales for the return to ‘place’

**The Civic Rationale**
- Neighbourhoods are sites of identification and have greater meaning in people’s lives

**The Social Rationale**
- The neighbourhood provides a site for innovation and developing ‘joined up’ local action

**The Political Rationale**
- The potential for democratic engagement, accountability and greater responsiveness in decision making

**The Economic Rationale**
- Potential cost savings from synergies between related services and reducing duplication
The Elephant and the Flea...

- This WWS review – taking account of the current political and economic context.
  - Pushing an elephant uphill?
  - The strength of the flea
What does the evidence say?

1. Understanding the function of neighbourhoods
   - Set realistic and modest goals

2. Holistic or selective approaches
   - Involve services with the flexibility and scope for innovation

3. Long-term vision
   - Shift from ‘initiatives’ to an integrated longer-term perspective
What does the evidence say?

4. Partnership working
   • Mitigate against silo working through leadership

5. Communities first
   • Seek approaches that support and improve mental health

6. Centre and local relations
   • Support the centre in gathering evidence and sharing good practice
What does the evidence say?

7. Evaluation
• Give greater attention to the ‘theory’ and assumptions of the approach and the evidence base

8. Austerity and Welfare Reform
• Support mental health by increasing resources for welfare advice and improve the neighbourhood environment
The wisdom of practice