PLACE MAKING WORKSHOP EILDON 23 MARCH 2022
BREAKOUT DISCUSSION

1. WHAT IS PLACE MAKING?

- About asking people first, picking up on issues around service and infrastructure, in Place. Communication with the community is vital.
- Need to identify what skills people have.
- Community empowerment is key.
- Stow Community Trust is using the Place Standard tool to gauge people's views on place and their community.
- Focus on a place and its community taking a holistic approach. The views of residents are important and with a participatory process creates an identity.
- 3 themes: environment; people (community and relationship fostering); History & heritage.
- Place making responsibility of the council to engage.
- Coherence of how things/people can work together. Place making is about people and what they want to do in their community.
- Place making has been a bit of a journey. Started as a planning function but more about needs of people.
- Connectivity in the Borders is important and how places join up and flow within settlements and between.
- Community empowerment. Planning happens to us and place making allows us to do things in a different way, but needs a culture shift. Likely to be a slow process too. Communities should have a bigger voice.
- Consistency and continuity of approach. Community consultation using Place Standard tool to find out views of others and what place making is. Place planning can be universally adopted. Equally important Plans can be shared alongside others and knowledge shared to benefit others. A feeling that community Plans and other plans should be easier to find for communities and other organisations.
- About knowledge share and communities taking ownership
- It's about sustainability. A self-sustaining economy that fulfils the needs of community. About a place that you want to live, work and play.
- A place that is inclusive where everyone is important and where all the different needs are taken care of. Including poverty and homelessness and deprivation issues isn't brushed under the carpet.
- Moved back to the area after 15 years and realise the untapped potential of the area – a better place for young and old people. As residents, see how we can get involved in making this a better place for the future.
- Rural communities need to be proactive. Young people leave. Public transport is a main issue despite the railway.
- Shaping the place for wellbeing. Living good quality healthy lives. About shaping the place to live the best life possible. About people being able to live the best lives as possible – a holistic approach.
- The places already exist – we could perhaps make them better – but have to be realistic. Need to do things on a small scale as it'll need central government to do the major things. Fantastic resources in the Borders – but people move away. Little opportunities for younger people.
- What makes a place? Lots of uniqueness – what's special. How do people come together and improve lives.

- Older people having the facilities where they don't have to leave their communities to move into care.
- Inclusive communities. Speak to locals about wants and needs before accepting/rejecting planning proposals!
- About having a vision of what it is you want to achieve – some solutions may be under your nose and then how do we fill in the gaps.
- It's about how we listen to people – easy to get the loudest voice how do we reach the seldom heard voices.
- Communities at grassroots to come up with ideas in terms of making their place that they live/work/enjoy to become a better place. Talking about what matters to them. Need communities/users to come together to tell us what would make their place a better place to live and work. Bottom up. All about listening to the suggestions from the community when making changes.
- Exploring and clarifying the identity of a place/community, self-defining what that is. Maybe the community feels it doesn't have an identity but Place Making can try and tease that out – what makes it different from another community? For better or worse? Place Making is definitely a positive thing and will help emphasise the positive things in your community. Should help the community decide what its priorities are which then feeds into the higher ups (council, local government). Also to improve communication between groups, partners, organisations, council etc.
- Part of the challenge is to encourage or enable people to feel like stakeholders. Engage with them as much as possible, make them believe that their thoughts and feelings can come to fruition. Try to engage across the age ranges. Sometimes areas feel like they lack that sense of community.
- Developing community action plan in Stow. Going through a lot of consultation with the local community. The community needs to say what kind of community they want to be. Once that's done, it's up to the community group to come up with available assets, projects they can deliver etc to fit in with that desire. Continue to have ongoing conversations with community members to feed into the needs of the community, always developing the action plan rather than it just sitting in a drawer. Live document. SCT feel like it's a great fit when developing an action plan.
- From practise/experience, there is a tendency for people to want to engage more about things, space, services, transport and events initially which often leads into health, wellbeing and community discussions. Whereas discussions starting on health, wellbeing and community can sometimes be more difficult to get people to engage directly.
- Mindful around equalities and engagement. Easy to put out questionnaires or invites although if it's not in a language that people can relate to or understand then they will not engage. When trying to attract young people to engage is the event and language attractive to young people? Is an event in a safe place for young people where their views will be heard? Again equalities are important, some people can be disadvantaged in their ability to engage in or access to engagement. Mindful of reaching many people to get a good cross section of people.

2. HIGH LEVEL PRINCIPLES

General Points

- Prioritise cutting down the number of principles - 4 to 5 principles might be more appropriate
- Needs rationalising. It was felt that some of the principles used language that didn't hold much meaning to the participants. E.g. principle 12 what does it mean?
- Principles need sharpening up
- Need achievable goals grounded in realism.
- Participants felt that the principles seems quite detached from what they had just been talking about in the first question. Communities should decide the principles.
- What are the intentions of these principles how are they to be used?

Comments on the 13 Principles

1. Capture and use learning from COVID-19
- Retain – super-important and we can learn from this going forward.
- Learnt a lot from COVID-19, new normal. How people react to the new normal i.e. meetings being virtual is now commonly accepted. Transport may have been a difficulty in the past but now things have changed to allow more people to attend meetings. **Online presence**.
- A lot more active travel, walking. New e-bike system, bikes for hire in Stow. Walking groups that didn't exist before. E-bike group that didn't exist before COVID-19. Definitely positives to take forward even though COVID-19 was very negative. COVID-19 has made some things more accessible (Facebook, Zoom, Teams are less daunting now). A lot of people are now working a WFH/Hybrid model so more activity in local areas.
- Have to accept that COVID-19 is here to stay in some capacity. Important principle that there is a climate emergency and we have to learn to respond to that and be resilient. Given that we've got a short window to have the right response, whatever is going in place making has to be conscious of that. Things like food, transport, education, resilience, will all be a part of Place Making. COVID-19 showed us how quickly we can adapt when changes need to be made. Could part of a community action plan for people to be asked "What If?", think outside the box and be given options for communities to choose from etc. Potential mapping exercise for Eildon? In terms of support, Green groups, actions for people to get involved with, what's going on in the local area, funding etc?

2. Align services, plans and action with local needs and priorities
- Aligning plans is very challenging but would be an ideal – As a resident, can't see why you wouldn't want to align plans to the community's. Difficult to put into action but it's an aspiration we should keep. Differing views, communities aren't cohesive.
- So many community councils and community trusts who all have their own priorities! Put them together in a matrix to work out common themes.

3. Simplify processes to make it easier for people and partners to access information and shape decisions
- How achievable – but yes want to keep
- Streamline funding opportunities and make it clearer what's going in the local area.

4. ***Work with and support communities at the earliest opportunities and create genuine partnership approaches***

- Absolutely vital
- Very vague? Is this about small/sub communities? Big communities?
- Planning projects and including people at a very early stage, in terms of engagement.
- For communities that are already established, perhaps having a serious of public engagement meetings to invite them to give their thoughts on Place Making. Melrose Gait – sitting on the edge of Galashiels, working with and supporting them would be essential, has work been done?
- Do communities actually function as communities? Is there actually a meeting where the community gets together to discuss issues? Not really. They relate to communities of interests but there doesn't appear to be a proper structure for people to get involved in communities of place unless there is a significant change in the area (housing development etc). Place Making appears to be inventing that for a space that doesn't seem to exist? Gives top down an opportunity tie in strategies.
- In a place like Stow, there is a good opportunity for communities to come together and respond well to Place Making but the bigger the communities get, Gala, Melrose etc may struggle to have that sense of place.

5. ***Accelerate action***

- Depends on the actions. Shouldn't be target driven. Sometimes it needs to happen step by step.
- Less than 10 years to solve the climate crisis, action definitely needs to be accelerated.
- Very rewarding to work on this piece of work. How much resilience do the people that are taking this work on actually have? Is it worth building capacity/having people resource going to be an issue going forward?
- Connect groups in some way

6. ***Support and strengthen informal networks and early intervention***

- Informal networks important in communities. Especially important from mental wellbeing.
- Brought together A Greener Borders 10 years ago. Organised monthly talks, each group took its own turn. That could be an idea that a whole host of groups could follow? Food provision, health care, green groups, sports groups – something to explore, develop links between smaller community groups within a bigger community

7. ***Use a mix of Wellbeing, Economy and Borders relevant measures which focus on shared impact and support partners on the use and analysis of data.***

- Less understandable. Less relevant as a principle. Is it to use data to inform? All of these principles are all within the Council's gift and not in our gift. Speed signs – the Council don't share the data about them – so a principle to share would be useful
- Rewrite this point, quite confusing?

8. ***Community Place Plans should be community-led and based on Community Council boundaries or combination of Community Council boundaries.***

- Stow & Fountainhall two different communities in one CC – so it is about whatever is appropriate. Add "or appropriate boundaries". Maybe need to be more fluid about the boundaries.

9. Inclusivity - not just the loudest voices – place making, plans and projects need to evidence inclusive engagement and support.

- Inclusivity – very important. Add and not assume that everything is on the internet. Evidence of inclusive engagement and support that include non-internet mechanisms
- Engage with young people a lot more. They are the next generation and should be more involved in this process. How do they want to see the place progress? What do they want to see in their area? What would make their life easier?
- High school students to be invited on to Community Councils? One "token" young person would not be as effective but certainly get more young people involved in these kind of groups.

10. Equity – Our approach should be equitable across Localities, rural and urban communities.

- Equity – yes keep. Absolutely!

11. Locality Plans at an Area Partnership level, there should be a single Locality Plan for each Locality which should be led and owned by Area Partnerships and which should be built on Community-led Plans as well as reflecting the wider strategic priorities at both regional and national levels.

- Agree but Eildon large. The place plans should be the foundation of the locality plan. If you don't get that right there is little point in the other plans – up not down. Needs to take in the rural areas.

12. Mutual trust, respect and transparency and an understanding of each other's remits, capacities and constraints.

- Combine 12 & 13 – Mutuality. Less emphasis on plans (combine with 5 – with the plans).

13. Mutually agreed priorities, plans and actions.

3. PRIORITY COMMUNITIES

GENERAL POINTS

- The list is quite "infrastructurey" but for a community to thrive, everything has to be interconnected. Community led plans has to be central. Priority has to be everyone's basic needs. We need to feed ourselves, educate ourselves and heat ourselves. Once that is sorted, the other priorities can be put in place.
- Rather than building new things, what about converting old buildings for a new use?
- It would be nice if every community had a space that they didn't have to pay to access. A hub?
- The question – of prioritising communities - is strange, difficult and maybe not appropriate. All communities are important.
- Naturally any representative is going to want to put their community first
- Feeling that it should come from the ground up, and perhaps people in a work/professional capacity sometimes hold bias's to certain settlements.

PRIORITY COMMUNITIES

- From a rural point of view – Community resilience. **Stow & Fountainhall**
- **Langlee** an area of multiple deprivation.
- Rural area – less fortunate are less visible.
- **Newtown St Boswells** – rapidly growing community that's had lots of intervention but local people being asked. Massive changes. Opportunity of new village centre – the benefits and good that can be done.
- **Bannerfield** in Selkirk – go to these people with the field of dreams (build it and they will come) around the community centre investment.
- **Galashiels** – Energise gala event. Town Centre isn't looking its best. A town with different needs than the rural areas but there are important opportunities.
- **Galashiels**. It's a large settlement that has perhaps lost a sense of identity. In terms of place making and action plans Galashiels is maybe further behind than other communities? Galashiels has a big role to play in the Eildon area.