



## Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland*



# Community Planning and Land Use Planning in Ireland's Border Area

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## Aims of the presentation

- To outline local government reform occurring across the island of Ireland
- To explore the interfaces between land use planning (reforms) and community planning (innovation) in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in the specific context of the border area
- To discuss are vertical, horizontal and lateral dimensions to this potential interface in executing the new governance arrangements on integrated service delivery and spatial development



## Introduction

- Unique opportunity on the island of Ireland with the convergence of local government reform in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
- Allows for further consideration on how an inter-jurisdictional co-operative framework can foster collaborative decision making on cross boundary community planning issues
- In Northern Ireland, the introduction of community planning is heralding the reorganisation of local government, together with the transfer of statutory land use planning functions from the centre to the new local authorities
- The Republic of Ireland is witnessing a strengthening of its local governance arrangements through the Local Government Reform Act 2014 to create new Local Economic and Community Plans (LECP), which facilitate the better integration of public bodies, social and community partners to collaboratively work on integrated plans for specific actions in communities



# Research Methodology and Framework

The evidence informing this paper has been gathered through a combination of:

1. Academic research and review of existing scholarly literature relating to land use planning and local government moderation across Europe;
2. Analyses of policy documents, strategies and reports on community planning and local government reorganisation across the island of Ireland;
3. A research project, funded by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD), aimed at exploring potential collaboration in the Irish border area with respect to land use planning and community planning (integrated service delivery).



## The Context for Convergence

- Cross-border cooperation important for the EU's territorial cohesion agenda
- Contemporary governance arrangements challenge how authorities consider ways to nurture harmonious development and innovative integrated approaches that address spatial and sectoral issues (Knippschild, 2011)
- Spatial planning systems are reforming with a degree of convergence around *policy goals* (Stead, 2013)
- Also, little evidence for convergence of *policy outcomes* and *policy instruments* in spatial planning (Stead, 2013)
- Body of literature supports the need for further research around how current periods of reform offer scope to pool resources and expertise to address shared policy goals

## Definitions and themes

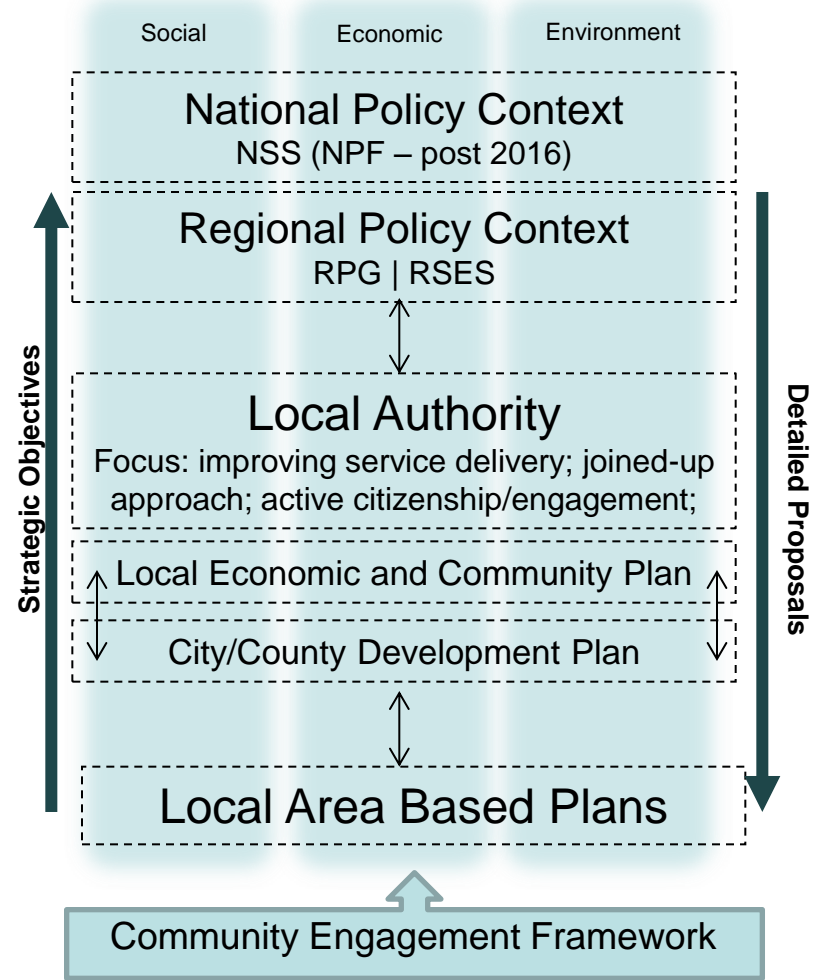
- **Land use planning:** the regulation and forward management of land and property development in the broader public interest
- **Strategic planning:** the territorial management of land use and development with a regional, more comprehensive perspective
- **Spatial planning:** beyond land use to embrace sector planning, regeneration and local service delivery, and promote connectivity
- **Community planning:** promotes the social, economic and environmental well-being of their area through identifying long-term objectives for achieving sustainable development



# Northern Ireland – Post 2015



# Republic of Ireland – Post 2015



# Emerging Opportunities and Challenges

## 1. Lateral dimension

### • Opportunities

- Framework for Cooperative provides overarching construct
- Convergence of policy goals, e.g. economic and environmental aspects
- Similar governance architecture and policy instruments
- Focus on linking development (spatial/physical) planning and public service provision (community planning)
- Ad hoc inter-jurisdictional collaborative operations between local authorities in the border areas

## 1. Lateral dimension

### • Challenges

- Political (mis-)perception
- High level conversations
- No cross-border statutory body on spatial and economic planning
- No 'pooled sovereignty' - shared institutions for decision making
- Developing a cross-border development zone





## 2.Vertical dimension

### •Opportunities

- Well established formal communication channels between central and local government (RoI)
- Partnership Panel (NI) provides scope of enhancing vertical communication

## 3.Horizontal dimension

### •Opportunities

- RoI – merging development planning and economic functions under one directorate in local authority
- NI – possible merging of development planning and community planning functions under one directorate

## 2.Vertical dimension

### •Challenges

- Local authority partnerships are missing the ‘big players’ (NI and RoI)
- Lack of high level priorities framework to inform community planning outcomes (NI)

## 3.Horizontal dimension

### •Challenges

- Institutional insularity
- Need for a robust performance management framework
- Effective partnership working



## Conclusion

- Community planning, as articulated in both jurisdictions, tends to be predicated on two key principles
  1. To provide the over-arching policy and priority framework in a given jurisdiction based on the co-ordination of initiatives and partnerships. This seeks to promote horizontal integration
  2. Community planning has a vertical dimension since it is also intended to improve the connections between national priorities and more local governance arrangements
- Securing both vertical and horizontal integration in each jurisdiction represents one challenge – to secure a ‘pooled sovereignty’ in local planning and governance
- Seeking to integrate across the border represents another operational challenge
- The processes of change in train provide an opportunity to develop better joint working
- Community planning demands new competencies and capacities for action involving civil engagement, agency coordination and the deliberate need to integrate the land use planning and community planning functions not just in each jurisdiction, but across the border area. It is perhaps here that the greatest challenges are present to creating a pooled sovereignty in local governance in the border areas





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