**Are we just talking about working effectively in a place?**

When did you last go a day and one of the following (or very similar) was not mentioned? Granular understanding. Place and people. Prioritisation. Asset based community development. Whole system change. Collaborative leadership. Ego-less leadership. The list, particularly around leadership, goes on and on and terminology is often duplicated. Over the last 18 months this range of existing, new and emerging concepts and phrases have become common place in our discussions.

Is all this just different tactics and approaches for working as effectively as possible in a place?

Place is not consistently defined. People live everywhere. Boundaries aren’t visible. Place and people could be referring to the 1 million population in a county, a specific demographic, a ward, a neighbourhood or even a road.

Which tactic and approach will be most effective is not known. It could be about engaging public health to influence policy and investment to impact on vast numbers of people. It could be about working with partners to improve the built environment. It could be about collaborating with the right people and organisations that can help to shape the right opportunities for a small community. You could badge any of these examples with the now common concepts and phrases.

What is clear is that to resolve these significant place-based challenges requires new thinking. Key national strategies have made that clear. The scale of the inactivity challenge has made that clear. Yes, the concepts discussed may not all be new but for many their application within our context is relatively un-tested. We are trying to tackle complex problems that don’t necessarily have a realistic end or a technical solution to resolve them. However, we can impact upon them with collaborative thinking and behaviours.

Powerful learning around this ‘new thinking’ is emerging. But not the learning we are used to. With place so contextual it is not about the end product and what intervention led to X number of participants becoming active. Place-based learning currently is focusing on the conditions that were created to make things work in a place. For example, where sport and physical activity is seen as everyone’s business, rather than individual organisations. The behaviours that gave the best chance of relationships working. The how and the why. The essence of *collaborative leadership* (the really popular concept out there at the moment!):

*“…engaging collective intelligence to deliver results across organisational boundaries when ordinary mechanisms of control are absent. Grounded in a belief that all of us together can be smarter, more creative, and more competent than any of us alone, especially when it comes to addressing the kinds of novel, complex, and multi-faceted problems that organisations face today.”*[*(Oxford Leadership)*](http://www.oxfordleadership.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/OL-White-Paper-Collaborative-Leadership.pdf)

In advance of our Summer Think Thank we have tried to stimulate thought around the compendium of place-based terminology. How we can work most effectively in a place. How we can develop and apply our thinking to create the conditions that will overcome our place-based challenges.

*“Success depends on identifying the most crucial components and having a strong understanding of what is needed to create and implement the culture, networks and environment for them to flourish.”* [*(Leeds Beckett University)*](http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/wholesystemsobesity/a-whole-systems-approach/)

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday 11 July. If you have not had a chance to read the materials we sent a couple of weeks ago to help you prepare for the event hopefully this short blog has helped. Taking 15 minutes to watch the below video should also help.

[The Collaborative Challenge: Making Quality Decisions Together in the Age of Complexity](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN_A7keXtVg)

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