

Integrated community-based planning

Presentation
to
Sustainable and Resilient
Rural Communities Conference
Devon

Who we are

- Tipperary Institute is a third-level education Institute that also has a development remit
- It was established by the Irish Government 10 years ago
- It works in the areas of ICT, business and sustainable rural development
- As well as offering a range of degree and certificate programmes it provides support to businesses and communities as well as public sector bodies

Governance

“Governance concerns the state’s ability to serve the citizens. It refers to the **rules, processes, and behaviour** by which **interests** are articulated, **resources** are managed, and **power** is exercised in society. The way **public functions** are carried out, **public resources** are managed and public **regulatory powers** are exercised is the major issue to be addressed in that context.”

Handbook on promoting good governance in EC development and co-operation

Effective Local Governance

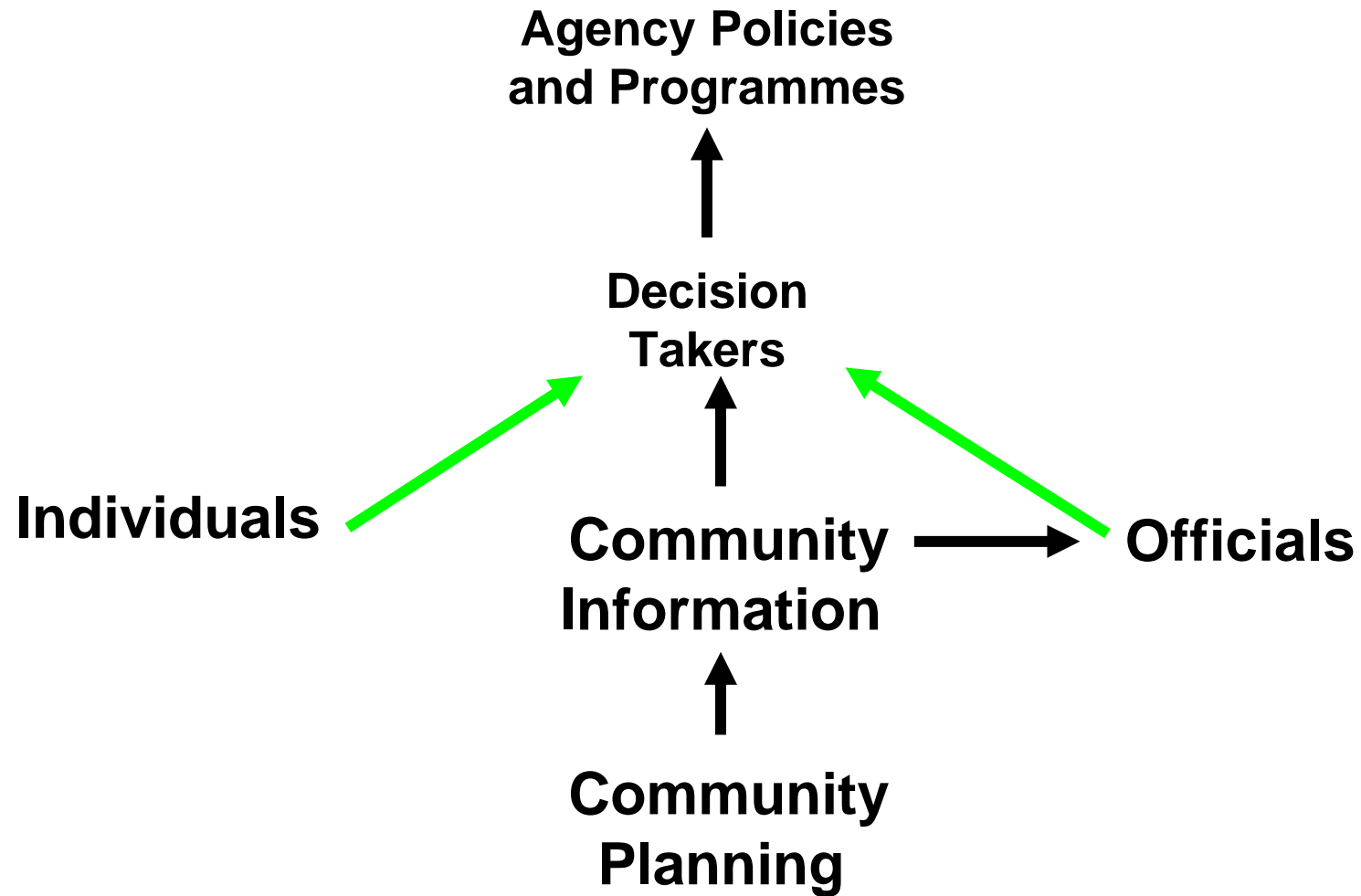
- This occurs where ‘**meaningful** authority [is] devolved to local units of governance that are **accessible** and **accountable** to the local citizenry, who enjoy full political rights and liberty’ (Blair).
- Beetham argues that local governance has the potential to democratise because of its greater capacity for *responsiveness* and *representativeness*.

What the IAP approach is

- A process that involves
 - Discussion of perceived issues in social, economic, cultural and environmental areas
 - Data-gathering
 - Seeking of agreement on the kinds of outcomes wished for
 - Making of suggestions/recommendations including submissions to statutory processes based on these discussions
 - Identification of projects
 - Development of implementation mechanisms

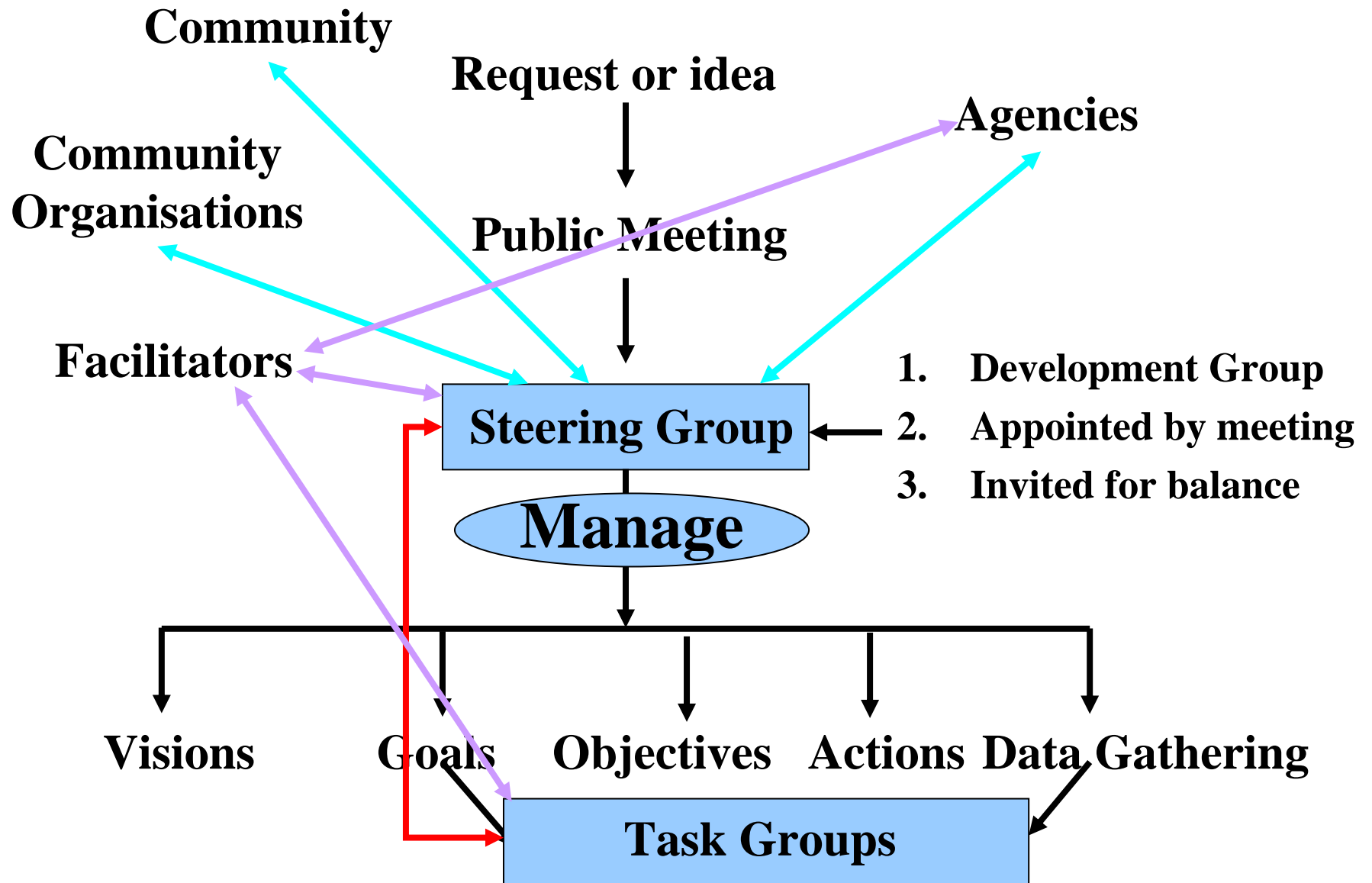
Reasons

- Improve opportunities for small communities to have a say in their future
- Provide an additional resource for agencies in devising plans for an area
- Provide a basis for communities and their representatives to influence a wide range of service providers including local plans
- Bring together a range of ideas around a single issue
- Minimise opposing views within a community



Key aspects of the approach

- Work done within communities with the assistance of facilitators and experts in key fields
- Supports the community in developing the capacity to engage in other processes
- Focuses on social, cultural, environmental and enterprise concerns (the integrated bit)
- Actively tries to include those whose views don't always get heard
- Supports agencies and their experts to engage with the process
- Produces a short written strategy/plan that includes projects, goals and a basis for a submission to the statutory planning processes



The planning system in Ireland

- Has a legislative focus that is heavy in regulatory detail
- Is strongly influenced by national and regional policies
- Traditionally is very expert led
- Involves very high levels of interpretation because of the policy + licence model that it incorporates and the way the law is stated....
 - The proper planning and sustainable development *including* the development plan policies
- Is judicial and adversarial in nature
 - Present evidence to a 'judge'
 - Appeal the judge's decision if unacceptable
- Communication tends to be uni-directional
 - Largely in writing
 - Dialogue, if any, is often stilted and curtailed

But.....

- Complex matters with many stakeholders can best be addressed through processes of multi-directional dialogue rather than uni-directional submissions

Taking decisions

- The development plan process can be seen as a combination of public **decision-making** and **decision-taking**
- Decision-making is the participatory accessible part
 - Dialogue; collaboration; consultation; opinion-forming; influencing;
- Decision-taking
 - Exercise of authority; exercise of power; allocation of resources; exercise of oversight and evaluation; imposition of regulation
- Crucial elements
 - The quality of the **decision-making** process
 - The attention paid by the **decision-takers** to the **decision-making process outcomes**

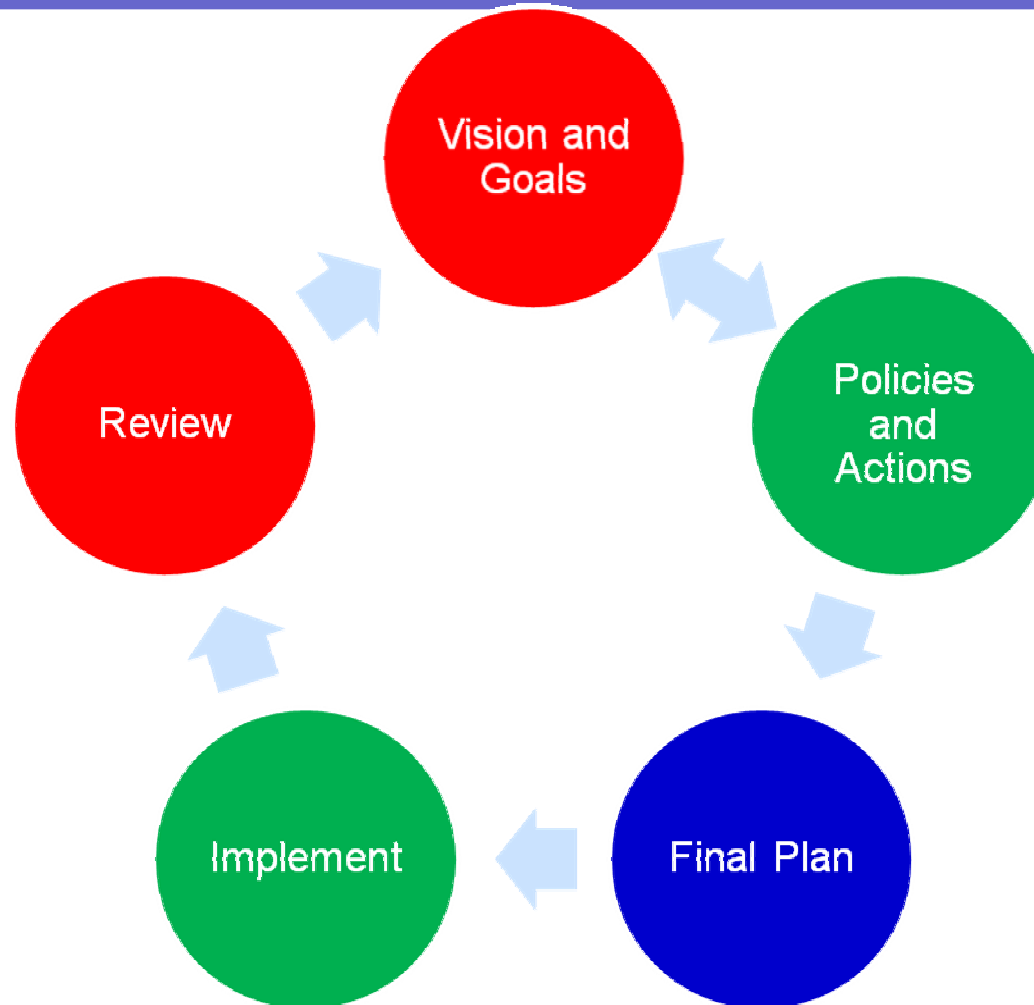
Implications for decision-*taking*

- The planning process in Ireland envisages significant public engagement
- Putting a participatory/collaborative /consultative process in place implies certain undertakings
- The undertakings include -
 - Serious consideration of the outcomes of the decision-making process
 - Communication of the outcome of this consideration
 - Explanation of the reasons behind the outcome
 - In the Irish context the implementation by the licensing system of the intentions of the policy-makers (the decision-takers in this model)
 - It is not, of course, a guarantee that participation equates to every participant's views prevailing

What it needs to be effective

- Involvement of elected members
- Wide involvement of communities
- Involvement of officials and agencies
- Responsiveness to community issues at a policy and project level
- Real consideration of community recommendations for inclusion in statutory plans and policies

The citizen and the expert



Some issues

- Response to the outcome of consultations
 - Defend the original proposal?
 - Stimulus to further consideration?
- Explanation of the decision taken
- Communication with those that have made submissions
- Level of involvement of those bodies that are directly engaged with communities
- Role of the expert

What might be done

- Preparation of participants for engagement in the process
- Agreement in advance of how process outcomes will be used and communicated
- Provision of clarity regarding the role of the process
- Provision of clarity regarding boundaries before the process begins
- Use of facilitator external to the stakeholders
- Use of proper collaborative techniques – providing safe spaces for collaborative dialogue
- Training of planners and other experts

Conclusion

- The planning system provides significant potential opportunity for participation in all key areas
 - Policy
 - Development Management
 - Enforcement
- The policy-making aspect is an underused opportunity
- Real participation, however, has significant implications for the way in which its participants see and implement their various roles
- If participation is to be anything except tokenistic then the processes of participation must be supported and the outcomes of participation processes must be taken seriously

Conclusion

- Such an approach poses challenges to
 - Elected members
 - Experts including planners
 - Organisational and professional cultures
 - Those participating and especially those purporting to represent a community opinion
- If such challenges are not addressed it may be better to accept that participation is ineffective and revert to a representative, technocratic model of decision-making

EnTraCoP

- International project on collaborative planning
- Good materials developed
- Available free to all at

<http://www.oamk.fi/luova/hankkeita/entracop/>