

# Place Based Framework

a common framework for considering  
place based investment

## Preface

Place is already at the forefront of policy. It plays a key role in the Programme for Government, the Infrastructure Investment Plan, the Covid Recovery Strategy and the National Planning Framework. The place agenda now needs to be reflected on the ground in the circumstances of people's lives. Not only tackling the issues of today but helping to put in place the steps which will prevent tomorrow's problems and enable better futures. The simple goal is to make sure that investments and resources are brought together for the greatest overall benefit.

The purpose of this document is to build on existing good work across Scotland to offer a framework for how this could be implemented. Taking a place based approach involves dealing with complexity. It recognises that to achieve real change demands tackling more than one thing at a time. A consistent approach is needed.

The Place Framework is designed to inform decisions at a national, regional, and local level to shape better places across Scotland.

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## Context

Place is significant in our lives. It has shaped who we are, frames what we have become, and nurtures our aspirations. It is where we find the people and communities that are important to our sense of self. Having a real say in what happens to our place empowers who we are and who we can be.

Place is also acknowledged as a key driver of our fundamental wellbeing. And the response on the ground to the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of local community resilience and the potential of local communities to come together and act effectively. There is increasing recognition of the importance of 20 minute neighbourhoods, towns centres, community wealth building, and community led regeneration.

Making change happen at scale is complicated and difficult. Looking at change in the context of a real place, its communities and partners, provides a more manageable context to engage with competing stories.

So, place is not only vitally important, it also a useful and relatable way to understand and implement complex change – a bridge between national policies and local action. Place based approaches provide a practical mechanism to ensure that:

- changes made in a place are relevant to that place;
- change benefits all the people in a place.

The objective is for collaboration to be an everyday reality in Scotland's towns, villages, and neighbourhoods. For each place to be successful in its own way, with local resources targeted at the most relevant outcomes with the most meaningful impact.

This is an expression of localism in action. It engages with lived experiences and local opportunities. And it helps develop a shared purpose and a will to act. Pulling together scattered resources for shared outcomes, and helping collective leadership and anchor collaborations grow in the heart of communities.

The language of our ambitions is often expressed in terms of the hopes and consequences for individuals, communities, organisations, policy themes, statistics, and outcomes. And these remain the fundamental building blocks of change. However, delivering ambitions across this complex landscape, also requires the organisational scaffolding needed for practical decision-making.

Currently, investment in places can be fragmented and uncoordinated, leading to fewer benefits for the people who live there. Appraisals are not always adequate and do not always address the bigger picture. This needs to change. A common framework for considering place based investment will look at these investments in the round and help to increase the scale and pace of change in each place.



## Approach

The place based approach is being implemented through three means:

**Place Principle:** Adopted by Scottish Government and COSLA, this commits to a ‘more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place . . . ‘

**Place Based Framework:** With the adoption of the Place Principle, all major spending programmes should now be taking a place based collaborative approach. These should also reflect the Scottish Government’s priorities on making the best use of current assets. To ensure alignment between these programmes a consistent place based framework is proposed for all capital spending programmes, across funding streams

**Place Based Investment Programme:** A coordinated programme of place based investments from targeted policy areas. With the intent of encouraging local investments which:

- Consider how each investment aligns with other planned investments in that locality, to streamline delivery and increase impact.
- Ensure that the investment is relevant to the needs of the locality, fits with other local actions, and provides the basis for collaboration with partners.
- Provides a focus for community participation and collective leadership.

The Framework proposes that before investing in a place it is first necessary to have established a common narrative, a shared action plan and a meaningful oversight structure. The Framework therefore asks decision makers to consider a series of basic questions designed to understand the fundamental nature of a place, the reasons why it needs to change, what its future should be, how separate activities will dovetail into an overall programme for change, and how collective leadership will be realised and sustained.

This Framework seeks to provide a common proportionate basis for conditionality across local funding programmes built around three key outputs:

- Place Narrative
- Place Actions
- Place Oversight

Most places have already been the subject of a variety of different exercises designed to derive local plans. A lot of information already exists. And there are already a number of different organisations, tools and techniques to support this kind of work. Which ones are best for any one place will depend on its own context.

To access this expertise and experience, the Framework is supported by guidance, tools, references, and examples, on the Scottish Government’s ‘Our Place’ website.

## Accountability:

### **The Place Principle:**

A common approach adopted across all portfolios.

## Conditionality:

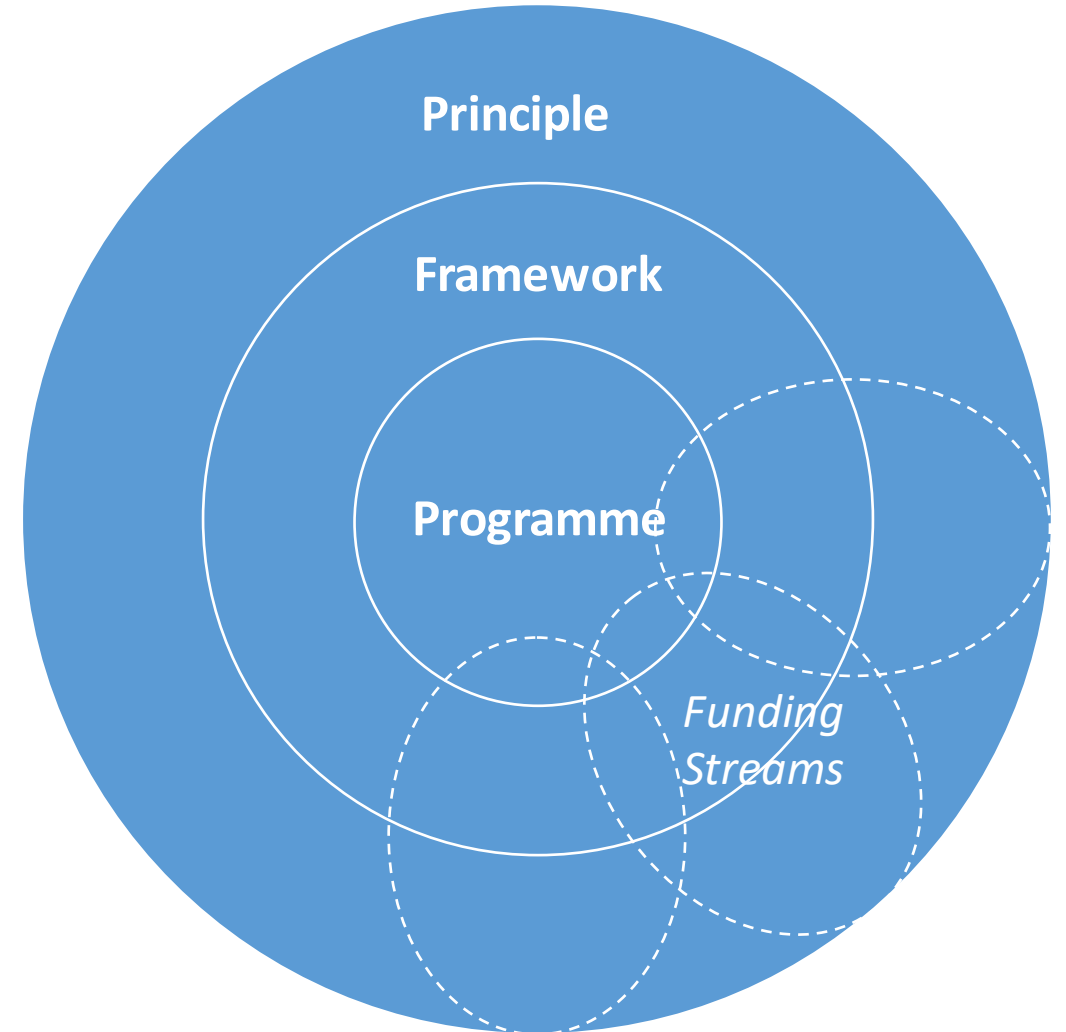
### **The Place Based Framework:**

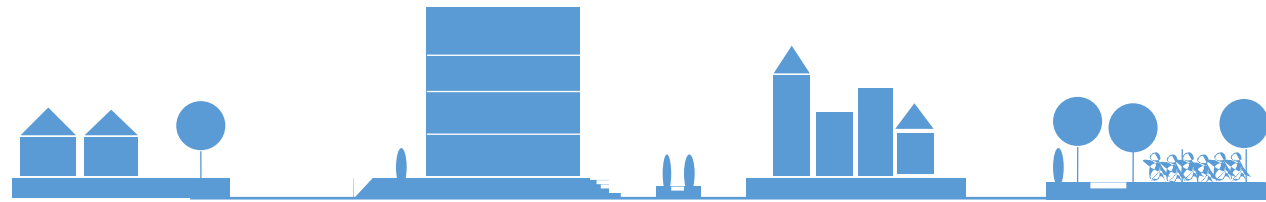
A consistent appraisal framework for all local capital investments.

## Coordination:

### **The Place Based Investment Programme:**

An aligned programme of place based investments.





## 1. Place Narrative

- Brief
- Diagram
- Intent

## 2. Place Actions

## 3. Place Oversight

## Place Narrative

Every place is already subject to many national, regional, and locally determined policies across most areas of peoples lives. A place based approach does not seek to supplant or otherwise divert these legitimate priorities. However, it does seek to ensure that they are delivered in the best way possible when seen in the local context. And that they are considered in concert with other local initiatives. This requires a real understanding of the local circumstance within which these often stand-alone interventions operate.

The Place Narrative responds to simple key questions, in order to develop three useful outputs:

- a **Brief** which captures each unique place's context and criteria for success,
- a **Diagram** of the most relevant geography of assets and activities,
- a clear statement of **Intent** with the actions needed to make a difference.

How these questions are considered and at what level of detail will depend on the circumstances of each place – particularly the strength of the relationships on the ground, the data already available, and the nature of any catalysts for change. It is not about applying an additional level of bureaucracy or creating templates and checklists. It is about prompting a useful and helpful conversation with the people who truly know a place. And also challenging the basis of the assumptions made for, rather than with, those communities

## Core Questions:

### 1. Why is change needed?

- *What kind of place is this?* The current lived experience of a place. How a place sees itself – its issues, challenges, and opportunities.
- *Why does it need to change?* What is most important to that place and why. Community priorities and the different outcomes that are necessary.
- *What should the future be?* A different scenario for that place. Their hopes and aspirations, and their key criteria for success.

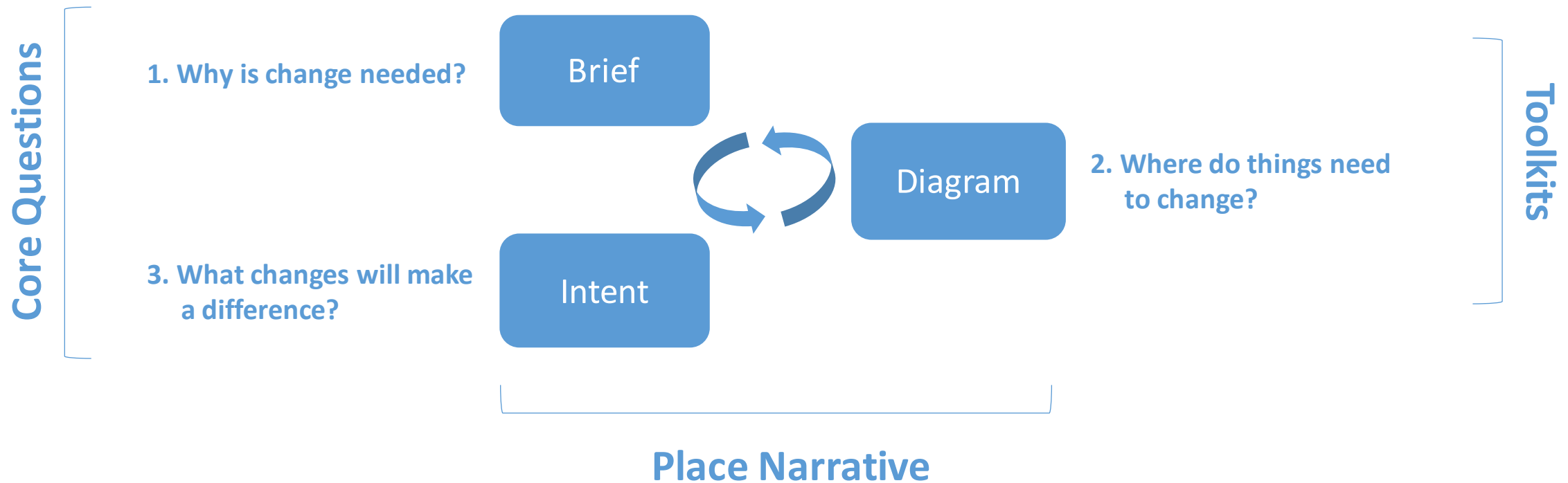
### 2. Where do things need to change?

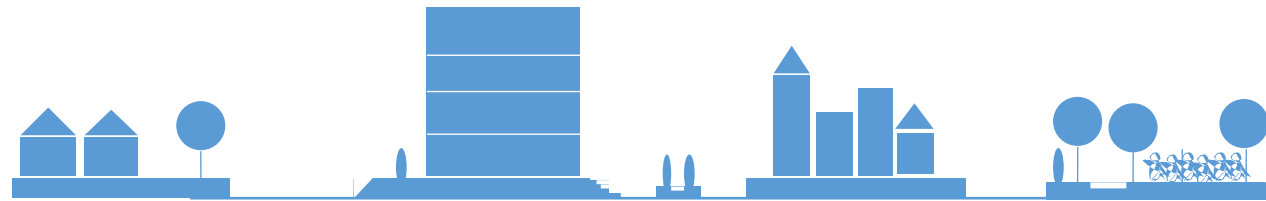
- *What are the defining features?* The key physical aspects of a place. How the built and natural environment shape local possibilities.
- *Where are the greatest needs?* Locate those communities with the greatest inequality that need support, resources and investment.
- *How are assets used?* The range of assets in a place and the services they provide to their communities.

### 3. What changes will make a difference?

- *What is currently going on?* The range of current activities underway across communities and their connections.
- *What is currently planned?* The pipeline of current commitments and the changes under active consideration across stakeholders.
- *What needs to happen?* Target the gaps that need to be filled, highlight plans that needs to be challenged, their order of doing, and by whom.







## 1. Place Narrative

- Brief
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- Leadership
- Plan
- Programme

## 3. Place Oversight

## Place Actions

Delivering transformational change requires a programme approach based on: establishing the right conditions for success; developing a programme purpose, plan and structure; and setting out a robust basis for action.

- Conditions for Success which reflect a **Leadership** commitment from partners and stakeholders to engage and follow through, ensure that different voices are fully participating to reflect the diversity of each place, and support anchor collaborations.
- a Route Map that addresses the core questions and confirms the programme objectives, setting out a **Plan** for how to make things happen, within an accountable programme structure to oversee the process.
- a Basis for Action which identifies the relevant national and local priorities supporting a compelling **Programme** for change, how proposed actions fit within wider system change programmes, and a coherent and credible pathway to delivery.

These essential steps recognise the need to underpin place based aspirations with credible business cases that attract support and funding, with implementation plans that are feasible and sustainable.

## Core Questions:

### 1. What are our objectives?

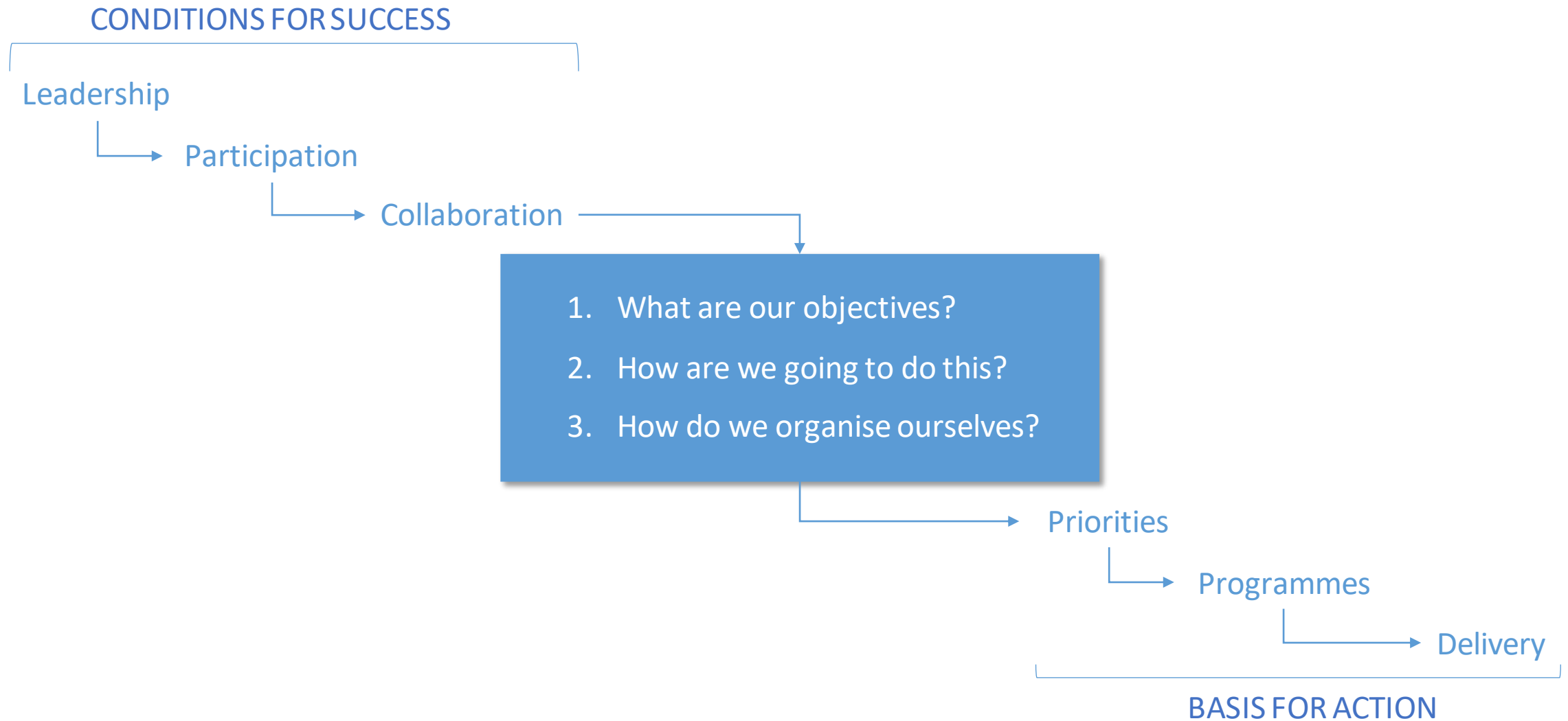
- *What are the key outcomes?* The specific objectives that individual and collective investments will deliver.
- *How will we measure success?* A clear articulation of the observable, reported, or quantifiable impact expected.

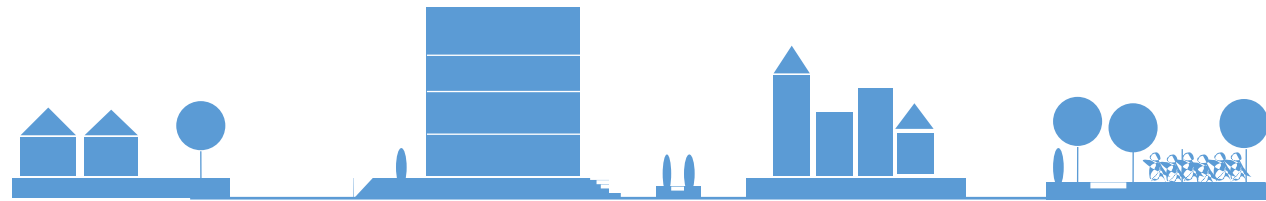
### 2. How are we going to do this?

- *What's the route map?* What needs to happen, when and by whom.
- *What resources do we need?* The inputs required – people, funding, assets, support – to deliver the plan.

### 3. How do we organise ourselves?

- *What's the right programme structure?* Sustaining collective leadership accountability, and participation.





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- Authority
- Engagement
- Assurance

## Place Oversight

The local decision making and funding landscape is complex across sectors, responsibilities, activities, and geographical boundaries. To make sense of this at a local level requires a forum for voices to be heard and a focus for decision making.

In order to give common purpose to local, regional, national, public, private, community and third sector partners, and to deliver varied activities over a long period, there needs to be a shared local programme. Who leads this will depend on local conditions and characteristics on the ground – though the roles of local authorities and anchor collaborations are likely to be pivotal.

For this local oversight to be meaningful and effective it needs to create the governance framework necessary to provide:

- an **Authorising Environment** which has the support and trust of partners and the terms of reference to make decisions on their behalf;
- a **Stakeholder Engagement** process which is transparent, well managed, and offers meaningful, empowered opportunities to influence decisions;
- **Policy Assurance** that what is being done is for the right reasons and in the right way with the right outcomes.

At the heart of this oversight is the adoption of agreed principles within a clear place based implementation process. One which dovetails the needs of stakeholders with the needs of the place.

## Core Questions:

### 1. What are our agreed shared principles?

- The core criteria for what we do and how we work together.

### 2. How will we provide assurance?

- A governance and operational framework that partners, stakeholders and funders can endorse.

### 3. What are our priorities for change?

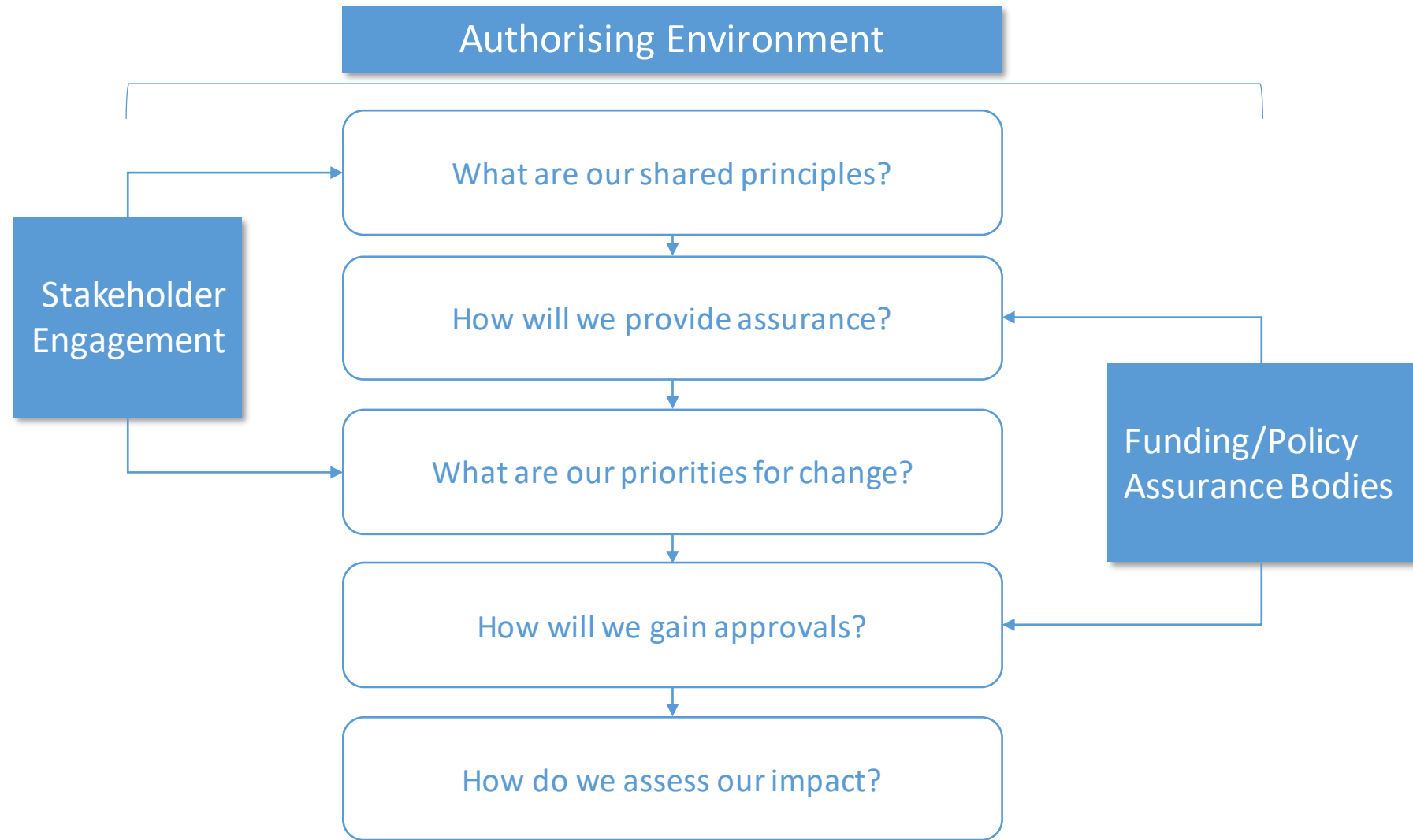
- A clear statement of what is most important, why that is, and how choices will be made.

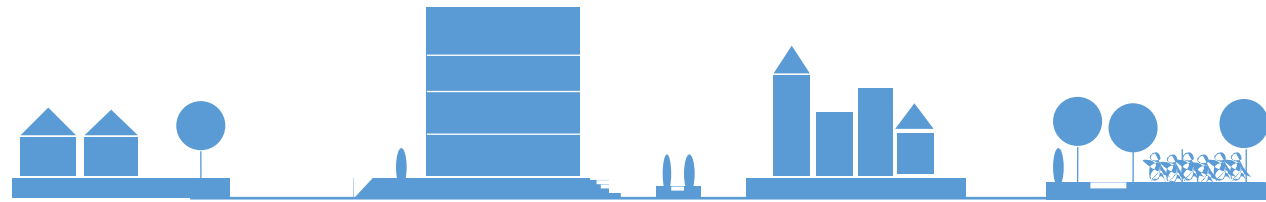
### 4. How will we gain approvals?

- Respecting and ensuring that the requirements of partners are being met, individually and collectively.

### 5. How do we assess our impact?

- Learning from the changes we deliver and their impact on the ground.





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## Summary

Someone's life in a place can be changed by the way in which small but significant interventions come together. Communities can be transformed when investments are brought together and shaped by a real understanding of the places they live.

The Place Based Framework is designed to help make the Place Principle a reality in everyday lives and to set out a baseline for how we consider the importance of local in how we make decisions. It provides a challenge to the assumptions we make about places without their participation. And it does this by demanding answers to straightforward questions before we decide what to do, and what to stop doing.

In summary our ambition is to nurture places across Scotland where more authentic narratives form the basis for more coordinated programmes of actions with more collaborative oversight. The impact on people's lives will be to shape changes that are relevant to the places they live in and that benefit all the people in those places.

## Core Questions

### 1. Narrative

- Why is change needed?
- Where do things need to change?
- What changes will make a difference?

### 2. Actions

- What are our objectives?
- How are we going to do this?
- How do we organise ourselves?

### 3. Oversight

- What are our shared principles?
- How will we provide assurance?
- What are our priorities for change?
- How will we gain approvals?
- How do we assess our impact?