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GOVERNING CROSS-SECTOR, INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

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GOVERNING CROSS-SECTOR, INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Across the world, various governments have increasingly sought to draw on the resources and expertise of public, private and not-for-profit organizations to fund public infrastructure and more effectively address complex social problems that sit in the ‘inter-organizational domain’ (Trist, 1983). In the UK, this has ranged from the Conservative government’s introduction of public-private-partnerships in 1992 through to a variety of cross-sector collaborative arrangements under the Labour governments (in power from 1997 to 2010). While the Coalition government of 2010 removed some of the collaborative structures enshrined in legislation by the Labour government, overlapping collaborations comprising various combinations of local, national and international organizations continue to play a major role in the governance of localities, shaping and implementing public policies. The navigation of complex collaborative contexts thus continues to characterise the work of public sector leaders and managers. Likewise, research about the benefits of collaboration and how to manage better the challenges associated with its implementation in practice continues to advance academic literature. How cross-sector collaboration is governed and how such governance evolves over time however is one area where a gap in knowledge has been identified (Milward and Provan, 2000; Provan and Kenis, 2008; Raab and Kenis, 2009; Saz-Carranza and Ospina, 2010).

In this article, we aim to make a contribution through an exploration of the design and implementation of the governance of collaboration in practice. We shall note a distinction in extant research between a focus on ‘collaborative governance’ which is concerned with

governance through the formation of inter-organizational collaborations (e.g. Ansell and Gash, 2008; Emerson et al, 2011; Osborne, 2010; Purdy, 2012) and a focus on ‘governing collaborations’ which is concerned with the governance of collaborative entities *per se* (Cristofoli et al, 2012; Provan and Kenis, 2008; Saz-Carranza and Ospina, 2010). These two related areas of literature, when compared, introduce competing logics (Mullins, 2006) for individuals who seek to design and implement the governance of collaborative entities in practice. A specific question that guide our research therefore is: *How do considerations of ‘collaborative governance’ and ‘governing collaboration’ influence the design and implementation of the governance of cross-sector, inter-organizational collaboration?*

Our pursuit of this question is rooted in theories on the management and governance of public sector collaborations (Agranoff and McGurie, 2001; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Klijn et al, 2010; Osborne, 2010; Osborne et al, 2013; Provan and Kenis, 2008; Stone et al, 2010). We draw on literature, as well as a longitudinal case study involving the governance of a cross-sector neighbourhood regeneration initiative, which is typical of the kind of collaborative entities that sit in the wider context of UK public policy. Our aim is to convey some of the complexity that underpins the governance of collaboration and to conceptualize this in ways that contributes to both theory and practice.

We begin with a synopsis of relevant literature followed by an account of our research approach. Drawing on the literature and our case study, we proceed to conceptualize the governance of collaboration via structures, processes and actors, highlighting some of the complexity that underpins the governance of collaboration and identifying challenges and management tensions that arise for public sector leaders and managers seeking to address these in practice.

GOVERNING COLLABORATIONS AND COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE: A BRIEF LITERATURE SYNOPSIS

A key feature of inter-organizational collaborations is that they are governed without the benefit of hierarchy (Provan and Kenis, 2008). In the literature on public management, the terms ‘governance’ and ‘governing’ are used variously with reference to the coordination of inter-dependent organizations (Emerson et al, 2011; Huxham, 2000; Klijn et al, 2010; Milward and Provan, 2000; Osborne, 2010; Provan and Kenis, 2008; Raab and Kenis, 2009; Stone et al, 2010; Gollagher and Hartz-Karp, 2013). In what follows, we note a broad distinction between research focusing on ‘collaborative governance’ and ‘governing collaborations’ and highlight different aspects that are relevant to governing cross-sector inter-organizational collaboration.

‘Collaborative governance’ draws primarily on literature describing new patterns of government and governing. Organizations are brought together to govern society, contribute to public value, implement public policy or manage public programmes or assets in a collaboration arrangement (e.g. Ansell and Gash, 2008; Emerson, et al, 2012; Klijn and Skelcher, 2007; Raab and Kenis, 2009; Silvia, 2012; Skelcher et al, 2005; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). In particular Klijn (2008) emphasises that governance is carried out through horizontal relationships instead of improving vertical links in existing bureaucracies (as in New Public Management approaches). When the term ‘collaborative governance’ is used in this way, it is usually contrasted with hierarchical and bureaucratic authority (Ansell and Gash, 2008, Klijn and Skelcher, 2007, Klijn, 2008, Entwistle et al., 2007, Powell, 1990; Raab and Kenis, 2009). Sørensen and Torfing (2009: 238) describe Rhodes’s (1997) and Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan’s (1997) work as rational approaches to governance; a ‘strategic

response of rational, self-interested policy actors to the need for the exchange of material and immaterial resources within a public sector fragmented by New Public Management-inspired reforms'. They see the emergence of 'collaborative governance' as a political response to the critique of welfare statism and neoliberalism.

In comparison, we use the term 'governing collaborations' in this paper, with reference to the governance of collaborative entities *per se*. This draws primarily on literature which puts emphasis on the governance, leadership and management of inter-organizational relationships with the view to achieve collaborative advantage – that is the attainment of goals beyond the capabilities of organizations acting alone (Huxham, 2000; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Klijn, 2008; Klijn et al, 2010; Provan and Kenis, 2008; Raab and Kenis, 2009; Vangen and Huxham, 2012). In this context, governance is an important issue in ensuring effectiveness in goal-directed collaborations. To this end, Provan and Kenis (2008) initiated a research agenda in their seminal paper focusing on governing collaboration (networks in their terms) *per se* and conceptualized three ideal forms of governance: Participant-Governed Networks / Shared governance; Lead organization-Governed Networks and Network administrative organization (NAO).

Not all authors would frame their research in ways that recognise this distinction between 'collaborative governance' and 'governing collaborations'. Klijn (2008) for example, equates 'governance' with 'governance networks' and sees governance as an attempt to improve coordination between actors for the purpose of solving societal problems which certainly includes collaborative efforts aiming to achieve collaborative advantage. Klijn et al (2010), define network management as a deliberate attempt to govern processes in a network and hence appear to equate 'governance' with 'network management'.

An alternative way of recognising the distinction between ‘collaborative governance’ and ‘governing collaborations’ is to consider whether the emphasis is on participation by government / public agencies alongside private and not-for-profit stakeholders in the collective crafting and implementation of public policy (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Gollagher and Hartz-Karp, 2013; Ospina and Saz-Carranza, 2010; Skelcher et al, 2005) rather than more generally on collaborations concerned with addressing jointly issues in the public domain. In the first case, as there is a deliberate choice to govern through the formation of an inter-organizational collaboration (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009), cross-sector collaboration is mandated by government. In the latter case, collaboration is not necessarily mandated or funded by public agencies, it does not have to involve the government or public agencies, or be concerned with public policies (Provan and Kenis, 2008; Stone et al, 2010).

While it is possible to make this analytical distinction between the logic of ‘collaborative governance’ and ‘governing collaboration’, both types draw attention to similar governance design and implementation issues. Both related areas of literature – one that emphasises implementation of public policy and one that emphasises governance, leadership and management of collaborations – suggest the need to consider *stakeholder inclusion* (how, when and in what capacity stakeholders may be involved in the collaboration); means of *decision making*; distribution of, or imbalances in *power* (how to deal with such); the extent to which the relationships between potential members are characterized by *trust or distrust* (how to deal with trust related issues) distribution of *resources*; the extent to which stakeholders have similar or divergent *goals* (what motivates potential partners to be involved); whether or not there is a designated *lead* organization and where issues of *accountability* lie.

Notwithstanding the similarity in the kind of issues that need to be considered, the two literatures also highlight different, sometimes conflicting, emphasis and requirements in relation to the issues themselves. For example, ‘collaborative governance’ requires the participation by government / public agencies and not for profit organizations (Skelcher et al, 2005), it frequently stipulates the need for community participation (Rummery, 2006; Skelcher et al, 2005) and frequently focuses on the inclusion of all stakeholders who are affected by the issue under consideration (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Johnston et al, 2011). In contrast, in terms of ‘governing collaborations’ there are no ideological requirements associated with participation and empowerment (Agranoff and McGuire, 2003; Huxham, 2000; Huxham and Vangen, 2000).

Similarly, ‘collaborative governance’, as it involves authorities and often communities, typically require a focus on consensus-oriented decision-making around issues of public concern (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Johnston et al, 2011; Klijn and Skelcher, 2007; Skelcher, et al, 2005, Sørensen and Torfing, 2009). In contrast, in terms of ‘governing collaborations’ where the aim is to achieve collaborative advantage, the governance mechanisms relating to decision making must be designed with that advantage in mind. For example, if there is a lead organization, it will typically take both strategic and operational decisions whereas in a context where leadership is shared, partners will take decisions collectively (Cristofoli et al, 2012; Provan and Kenis, 2008; Saz-Carranza and Ospina, 2012).

Power imbalances are likely to exist in both ‘collaborative governance’ and ‘governing collaborations’. In the former there is typically a tension between the shifting of power away from elected bodies and public agencies to shared power among stakeholders (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Purdy, 2012; Skelcher et al, 2005) as well as power asymmetries related to public

hierarchies (Jarvis, 2014; Johnston et al, 2011). In the latter, power imbalances are not necessarily in favour of public agencies and may be shared or skewed in favour of the lead organizations (Cristofoli et al, 2012; Provan and Kenis, 2008; Saz-Carranza and Ospina, 2012). Like power, trust and the management of mistrust is pertinent in both ‘collaborative governance’ and ‘governing collaborations’. The literature points to the need to build trust, especially in collaborations that are not mandated by government but which rely on the mobilization of partners’ resources towards the achievement of common goals (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Vangen and Huxham, 2003a). With respect to resources, a particular concern in ‘collaborative governance’ is with the equitable distribution of public resources (Cristofoli et al, 2012; Skelcher et al, 2005) whereas in ‘governing collaborations’ the focus is on mobilizing partners’ resources toward the achievement of joint goals (McGuire, 2002; Saz-Carranza and Ospina, 2010; Vangen and Huxham, 2003b).

Notwithstanding the considerable challenges associated with the management of goals in collaborations (Vangen and Huxham, 2012), the potential to achieve goals at different levels (individual, organizational and collaboration) motivate partners’ participation (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Saz-Carranza and Ospina, 2010). However, in ‘collaborative governance’ the joint efforts are necessarily directed towards the achievement of the goals stipulated in public policy (Jarvis, 2014; Skelcher et al, 2005) whereas in ‘governing collaborations’ it is the congruence or goal consensus among partners that provide the impetus for collaborations (Provan and Kenis, 2008; Vangen and Huxham, 2012). Similarly, in ‘collaborative governance’, public agencies have a legitimate and distinctive leadership role (Ansell and Gash, 2008; McGuire and Silvia, 2009; Milward and Provan, 2000; Silvia, 2012; Skelcher, et al, 2005; Sørensen and Torfing, 2009) but this is not the case in the latter type where depending on governance form, there may or may not be a designated lead organization

(Cristofoli et al, 2012; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Provan and Kenis, 2008). Rather, in terms of leadership and the enactment of governance at the individual level, leadership is typically enacted by individuals with no formal positional authority and so the governance design must incorporate the idea that key actors – i.e. individual leaders with or without legitimate power to lead – be given both the scope to embrace, empower, involve and mobilize partners *and* the power to actively steer the collaboration towards agreed upon outcomes (McGuire, 2002; McGuire and Silvia, 2009; Vangen and Huxham, 2003).

As a final example, in terms of accountability, ‘collaborative governance’ may yield government accountability specifically with regards to the distribution of public resources (Johnston et al, 2011; Rummery, 2006) whereas in ‘governing collaborations’ there will typically be a tension between individuals’ accountability to the collaboration versus their accountability to their own organizations (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Vangen and Winchester, 2012).

The above discussion (as summarised in Table 1 below), while not exhaustive, illustrates that relevant literature on ‘collaborative governance’ and ‘governing collaborations’ introduce competing logics in as far as governance design and implementation choices are concerned. What makes these competing logics particularly problematic is that, in practice, collaboration pertaining to complex social problems is typically of interest to and the subject of, many overlapping collaborations with different purposes and governance forms (Huxham, 2000; Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Skelcher et al, 2005). These typically comprise actors whose role it is to implement public policy as well as actors who have a broader stake in the issues incorporated in and affected by public policy. Taken together, these competing logics

introduce real challenges for those concerned with the design and implementation of the governance of cross-sector inter-organizational collaboration in practice.

Insert Table 1 about here

This synthesis of the literature suggests that a better understanding of the governance of collaborative entities can be gleaned through an examination of structure, (that is, the different types of partners that are involved and the structural connections between them), processes (that is, ways of communicating, sharing responsibility and taking decisions) and the action of individual actors (that is, actions of individuals with enough power and know-how to influence and enact the collaboration's agenda). Consequently, we will use a definition of governance as follows:

The governance of a collaborative entity entails the design and use of a structure and processes that enable actors to direct, coordinate and allocate resources for the collaboration as a whole and to account for its activities.

RESEARCH APPROACH

We conducted a longitudinal case study of a cross-sector collaboration concerned with neighbourhood regeneration in a UK city. The collaboration was initiated by the City Council in 2009 as a means to implementing its neighbourhood regeneration strategy.

The strategy sought to address multiple deprivations through establishing a policy framework for economic, physical, social and human regeneration. It aimed to reduce the gap between the richest and poorest through focusing initially at the city's most deprived neighbourhoods.

It involved public, private and not-for-profit organizations and neighbourhood groups concerned with regeneration.

We investigated the development of the collaboration since its inception in 2009 and examined a period when the City Council's Regeneration Team attempted to redesign its governance form. A not-for-profit organization which we pseudonym as Neighbourhood Action was a key player in the collaboration. This organization was in the process of setting up a new collaborative board for a neighbourhood engagement programme. As such, the case study gave us the opportunity to investigate and gather data about the governance of collaboration at a time when influential individuals had to engage with it for real.

Data was gathered in a variety of ways including semi-structured interviews, participation in and observation of workshops, observation of meetings, obtaining documentation, informal conversations, e-mails and meetings with the Head of the City Council's Regeneration Team, the Director and Deputy Director of Neighbourhood Action, and other key participants from local not-for-profit organizations.

A first round of interviews was carried out in 2011 with seven individuals involved in the collaboration and three individuals from other City Council partnerships. A second round of interviews was carried out in 2012 focusing on one neighbourhood and involving eight individuals. Interviewees were asked about their role, the development of the collaboration, and their views on the challenges and successes of the collaboration. We designed an interview template that allowed prompting on key issues identified from literature.

Data was also collected from a ‘world café’ meeting of approximately 20 collaboration participants representing a variety of organizations and a workshop for around 20 individuals, on collaborative working in a neighbourhood.

Documentation relating to the collaboration was collected and reviewed. This included the City Council neighbourhood regeneration strategy and its collaboration initiation document, a City Council review and an external review of the collaboration (both in 2010), regeneration plans for two neighbourhoods, a neighbourhood group’s meeting minutes and reports on a collaboration review in 2011. Documentation was analyzed to build a chronological description for the case (Yin, 2003). It provided an opportunity to supplement and contrast with data from interviews and observation to outline the collaboration history.

All events, including the interviews, were recorded in 24 ‘field-notes’. Field-notes were created immediately following each event summarising the data for further analysis. For example ‘meeting’ field-notes contained data on who was involved, what was discussed and what were the next steps, and observations on the interaction between participants; ‘interview’ field-notes summarized interviewees’ background and their perspective on the collaboration purpose, setup, challenges, successes, and recommendations. In addition, all interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. These transcripts were entered into NVivo and coded using a thematic coding scheme developed iteratively from codes from literature and from themes that emerged inductively from data.

Drawing on the data thus gathered and analysed, the following conceptual sections begin with an analysis of the governance design through examining structures, processes and actors. We

then identify implications – in the form of challenges and tensions – relevant to individuals involved with the design and implementation of the governance of collaboration in practice.

GOVERNING COLLABORATION: STRUCTURE, PROCESSES AND ACTORS

Using the definition of governance developed above and elaborated upon in Figure 1 below, we conceptualise the governance of collaborations in terms of structures, processes and actors. Using this conceptual framework and drawing on the city wide neighbourhood regeneration collaboration in this case study, we begin here to highlight some of the complexity that underpins the design and implementation of the governance of collaborations in practice.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Governance via structure

An understanding of the *structure* of a collaboration can be gained through identifying the partners involved and how they are inter-connected for the purpose of the collaboration. Such structural inter-connections are a significant aspect of the governance of a collaboration as they determine who has genuine access to influence its direction, its priorities and hence its outcomes. The structure determines not only who (organizations and individuals) are able to influence the collaboration's agenda but also who may take important decisions, have resources, power and legitimate authority to act and be accountable for its undertakings.

The collaboration in our case study brought together a number of different organizations to address neighbourhood regeneration in the city (see Figure 2). In addition to the city council and Neighbourhood Action, the collaboration involved local parish councils, councillors, not-

for-profit organizations, the National Health Services (NHS), police, further education colleges / schools, business associations, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), residents and residents associations. It also involved representations from other collaborations concerned with related issues such as crime and safety, health and wellbeing, children and young families, and a local strategic partnership.

Insert Figure 2 about here

The City Council's Regeneration Team initiated the main governance instruments that formed the structural inter-connections between the partners, as illustrated in Figure 3. It had three levels: a sponsor group responsible for the overall strategic direction, a performance group responsible for coordination and monitoring performance across the neighbourhoods and neighbourhood steering groups responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of Neighbourhood Plans (NP) for their area. The City Council's Regeneration Team provided support and coordination across the different levels. Each neighbourhood steering group was accountable to the performance group which in turn was accountable to the sponsor group.

Insert Figure3 about here

To gain a better understanding of the structure and the relative influence afforded to partners, we mapped partners' involvement in each level for one of the neighbourhood steering groups, Buddies of Bacon (BOB). This is illustrated in Figure 4 which shows, with arrows, which partners were involved at which level. From this illustration, we can make a number of observations. For example, the design is hierarchical; far fewer partners are engaged at the top compared to the bottom level. This is partly a result of the sponsor group having a 'tight structure' comprising a few partners who were invited to participate by the Head of the

Regeneration Team. The remit of some of these partners – such as the NHS and the CAB – relate to, but are not directly concerned with, neighbourhood regeneration. In contrast, partners at the neighbourhood level are actively concerned with neighbourhood regeneration. At this level, the structure is ‘open’ and offers wide access to the collaboration’s agenda because any stakeholder interested in neighbourhood regeneration is welcome to join and attend meetings.

‘Tight’ versus ‘open’ structures deal with issues of influence, legitimacy, power and accountability in different ways. For example, a tight structure may exclude key stakeholders from influencing the collaboration’s agenda but may be administratively more efficient. In contrast, in an open structure, where participants are allowed to come and go, it may be harder to agree upon and implement joint agendas because it will be difficult to both resolve differences between participants and to co-ordinate action. It may certainly be difficult to define clear areas of responsibility and accountability. However, open structures encourage partners to contribute where there is a strong overlap between the goals of the collaboration and their own individual and organizational goals and so provides greater flexibility for the collaboration to draw on a range of resources and expertise. This may in turn secure long-term commitment to the collaboration.

As structural inter-connections are key in determining who has genuine influence on the direction of a collaboration, its priorities and its outcomes, the role of governance is clearly important in this respect. However, the extent to which the governance structure is within the control of the individuals who seek to govern the collaboration in practice may be an issue. The structure of any collaboration concerned with public issues – such as the neighbourhood regeneration collaboration in our study - is determined or at least heavily influenced by public

policy. Certainly, the design outlined in Figure 3, was much influenced by public policy and the head of the Regeneration Team's interpretation of the kind of structure that needed to be put in place to implement the city council's regeneration strategy. The governance structure, with its emphasis on sponsor, performance and neighbourhood steering groups reflected the Regeneration Team's efforts to ensure for example, that stakeholders in the communities were participating, that resources were legitimately distributed across the city's most deprived communities, and that any resource spend was appropriately accounted for. It is certainly possible that public sector leaders and managers are tied by the logic of collaborative governance rather than being able to focus on the achievements of joint outputs that would secure buy-in from partners, including existing collaborations addressing related issues for example.

The degree to which governance structures are imposed upon collaborations varies and the initiators of a collaboration may have the freedom to design it however they feel is appropriate. In any event, extant research suggests that the governance structure of a collaboration is likely to evolve as a result of issues needing stakeholders' attention and changes in the context within which partners operate (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Provan and Kenis, 2008; Stone et al, 2010). For example, less than a year into the collaboration, the Sponsor Group stopped meeting. It was explained to us that the focus of collaboration had changed from strategic to operational issues and that it was no longer needed. The performance group began to meet less frequently; quarterly rather than monthly. Less than a year later still, the Head of the Regeneration Team stopped convening the performance group as she was concerned that it too had lost its focus. The performance group was never replaced and the Regeneration Team was effectively left to coordinate the work across the different

neighbourhoods, with the neighbourhood steering groups carrying on planning and coordinating work with different partners at the neighbourhood level.

Governance via Process

The governance of a collaboration is also designed and enacted through processes including ways of communicating, sharing responsibility and taking decisions. Such governing processes can take many shapes and forms and are important for a number of reasons including being vehicles through which partners gain legitimacy to exercise power and act. For example, in this case study processes included developing plans and reviews, convening committees and meetings at different levels and organising workshops and seminars. The way in which, and the frequency by which, partners meet and communicate are obvious components of processes and have obvious influences. At the neighbourhood level for example, the Buddies of Bacon steering group met monthly initially although residents – and residents only – could ask the community council to reserve the meeting venue. This potentially gave significant power to residents because they could effectively decide if a meeting happened or not. In practice however, residents typically had less experience and did not always attend the meetings and so a representative of Neighbourhood Action established a routine whereby they prompted residents to book the meeting venue and attend the meeting each month. In practice, this process of prompting meetings effectively encouraged a sharing of power and responsibility between Neighbourhood Action and residents.

Similarly, some processes clearly encourage partners to share information and develop common understanding of issues whereas others hinder active communication. For example, the Neighbourhood Plans were found by many neighbourhood steering groups to require too much detail and to focus on city council interests. They were seen by many participants as a

‘collaborative governance’ tool for the city council rather than a tool for the governance of the collaboration. While the city council changed the format at the request of some neighbourhood groups, many participants remained sceptical about their utility or impact raising the question as to whether they were required at all. It should be noted that the BOB steering group continued to use the neighbourhood plans because for them it provided a process through which they interacted with and gather opinions from the residents as well as allowing them to keep track of progress and what remained to be done. Evidently, for the BOB steering group, the plan functioned as an effective tool for governing their collaborative efforts.

We can observe that some processes effectively empower potential partners to have access to debate concerning the collaboration’s agenda where others may effectively exclude them. Workshops and seminars for example, are often used to enable specific partners, such as residents and community activists, with information and a forum to communicate their views and influence the collaborative agendas. Other processes enable all partners more generally, to make positive moves to further their collaboration’s agenda. For example, a service provider workshop organized by the City Council became a turning point in how participants’ viewed the collaboration. The workshop brought together existing members of the performance group to reflect on progress. During these deliberations partners gained a better understanding of each other’s roles and what was required from each of them. It was perceived as a start to addressing delivery problems, to coordinate activities and reduce duplicated effort. Workshops such as these can help develop partners’ common understanding, language and definitions of issues and so empower them to be active in the collaboration’s future.

As with governance structure, the extent to which processes are designed by or within the control of the partners is often an issue. All collaborations are subjected to external forces that may alter the processes through which governance can be designed and enacted. It is very typical for new government policies to be disruptive in this way. For example, the Government through the Localism Act 2011 changed its policy on the use of revenues from social housing and so the city council in our study began to pursue a new public-private partnership aimed at developing housing in one of the neighbourhoods included in the regeneration strategy. From the logic of ‘collaborative governance’, this was a rational step, however, in terms of governing the existing collaboration, this new initiative fundamentally disrupted existing processes aimed at progressing the current regeneration collaboration. In a meeting set up to review the governance of the collaboration (which we observed), participants involved in the new partnership were unable to focus on the review and implementation of the current collaboration. Instead, they directed attention to where significant future funding was available and how this may be directed towards neighbourhoods through the new public-private partnership. They were conscious of what needed to be achieved through this new partnership and paid little attention to how this would impact on members (parish councils, residents etc.) of the current collaboration who would not be part of the new one. Hence we see an example of competing logics impacting on the sustainability of the governance form.

Governance via actors

The governance of a collaboration is also designed with the expectations that specific actors will direct, coordinate and allocate resources for the collaboration and be accountable for its activities.

Consistent with the logic of ‘collaborative governance’, the collaboration in our study was led by the City Council Regeneration Team who designed the governance structure depicted in Figure 4. Like most collaborations, this governance structure - through the sponsor, performance and steering groups - gave varying positional leadership roles to individuals representing organizations associated with the collaboration via these groups. Individuals on committees and steering groups have joint decision making power with respect to the direction of the collaboration. However, the chair of committees and steering groups can critically help or hinder others in their enactment of their leadership role. In the BOB steering group, the chair was a representative of the local parish council. This was positive for participants because the chair was known and had a visible presence in the local neighbourhood. While this may have allowed the group to pull together relevant individuals in the area, there was limited ownership of the group from residents who typically looked to the chair (or council officers) for answers. They were struggling to change from ‘following’ to being ‘empowered to lead’ on addressing regeneration issues in their neighbourhood.

The ‘open’ structure operating at the neighbourhood level has characteristics of what Provan and Kenis (2008) call Participant-Governed Networks / Shared governance in that all partners are involved in the process of governance. It certainly embraced the spirit of shared governance. This encouraged a collective approach to decision-making and managing activities. Participants came together around a consistent and determined goal to improve the neighbourhoods. Essential to this was supporting residents in building their own community capacity. This aimed to empower them to take an active lead in developing plans and creating a vision for regenerating their neighbourhood. However, this particular design also gave both the city council and Neighbourhood Action positional leadership legitimacy. Neighbourhood Action gained its positional legitimacy through being commissioned by the former to assist

the neighbourhoods with the development and implementation of their neighbourhood plans and thus necessitating involvement in every tier of the governance form. The city council assumed the position as 'lead organization' because it convened the collaboration as a means to implementing its neighbourhood regeneration strategy. Representatives of the 'lead organization' gained greater legitimacy to direct, coordinate and allocate resources for the collaboration and be accountable for its activities.

While the city council was the lead partner, however, it is not clear that it was the most powerful player in terms of implementing the governance structure and influencing the direction of the collaboration. Apart from the city council itself, Neighbourhood Action was the only partner involved at all three levels. Both the organization's position within the governance structure and its direct involvement as a participant at the neighbourhood level, suggest that it – as a not-for-profit organization – was (still is) a powerful key player in neighbourhood regeneration in this city. Similarly, the initial city council neighbourhood regeneration strategy suggested that local parish and town councils would take a leadership role in managing and delivering regeneration in neighbourhoods in their area. For example Tanton Parish Council led activities in the BOB steering group through providing support and guidance to participants; they were integral to the group functioning. In particular they were persistent in promoting residents' needs to the city council and eventually successful in getting long-term problems included in their neighbourhood plan.

Partners do not always develop the collaboration in the expected manner, even though they may have positional leadership roles. Furthermore, the individuals with most influence may be those without such formal roles. At the neighbourhood level whilst there was a prevalence of shared participant governance, some parties were clearly more influential than others. The

representative from Neighbourhood Action was primarily active in the Tanton neighbourhood but was also influential in facilitating, coordinating and directing activities in the BOB steering group. In prompting and encouraging residents to be active and involved, they became seen by residents as essential to the BOB steering group functioning. Residents depended on them to raise their concerns with the local parish council and the city council. This meant that this individual, intentionally or not, had a position of influence in the sheer functioning of the steering committee. This was particularly noticeable when Neighbourhood Action changed the individual working in the area causing residents to raise concerns about whether the steering group would continue.

Individuals who are not formally part of a collaboration – and who would therefore not feature in its governance form – often also influence the direction of a collaboration. It is common for researchers, facilitators or consultants to be commissioned to help partners manage their collaborative working processes or provide other support. For example, the city council commissioned independent consultants to review the collaboration development in 2010. They highlighted concerns with the sponsor and the performance group and provided recommendations in maintaining the current momentum and approaches to include new neighbourhoods. Subsequently the Head of the Regeneration Team continued with the city council strategy in doubling the number of neighbourhoods in the collaboration but also stopped sponsor group meetings.

In summary, in this section we have conceptualised the governance of collaboration via structures, processes and actors. We have thus described some of the complexity that underpins the governance of cross-sector collaboration, through examining design and implementation choices pertaining to structures, processes and actors. We have illustrate the

ways in which these choices – influenced by the logic of both ‘collaborative governance’ and ‘governing collaborations’ – can shape the direction and outcomes of a collaboration. We have also illustrated that these choices are not entirely within the control of those who design and implement governance forms in practice. Organizations and individuals often work together repeatedly under the auspices of changing collaborations; structures and processes change as a result of changes in both policy and practice requirements and actors move on, rendering specific governance forms highly dynamic in nature.

GOVERNING COLLABORATION: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION MANAGEMENT TENSIONS AND CHALLENGES

The analysis in the previous section suggests that public leaders and managers who grapple with the governance of collaborative entities in practice do so without being entirely in control of design and implementation choices and with governance forms that are most likely ephemeral in nature. Following on from the conceptualizations in the previous section, and continuing to draw on examples from our case study, here we identify some of the typical challenges and management tensions that arise. We draw on selected examples from different perspectives – the City Council’s Regeneration Team, Neighbourhood Action and the BOB community steering group.

From the perspective of the city council and following the logic of ‘collaborative governance’ the delivery of public policy requires a governance form that adheres to a number of principles such as legitimacy, trust and stakeholder inclusiveness. In this particular case study, the engagement of non-public stakeholders and the legitimate distribution of public resources across deprived neighbourhoods, in a period of great austerity, were particularly

important. The three tier governance form depicted in Figure 4 followed these principles in this respect. However, we know from the analysis that the top two layers of the governance form became dysfunctional very quickly.

A particular tension between efficiency and inclusiveness (Provan and Kenis, 2008) may help explain why the governance form could not be sustained. A 'tight structure' was applied to the top tier of the governance structure which is administratively simpler and thus making issues of collective, consensus-oriented decision-making possible. Partners at this level are provided with positional leadership legitimacy and are relied upon for decisions that influence the direction of the collaboration. Their genuine involvement in the collaboration is therefore crucial and this is usually secured through partners having a genuine stake in the collaboration. Securing genuine stakeholder interest relies on the ability to both attract the initial interest of stakeholders and maintaining that interest through changing public policies and other requirements. While the Head of the Regeneration Team's position in the city council gave her access to stakeholders beyond the Council, having to rely on their continuing interest and commitment throughout a period of significant austerity and policy change appeared particularly challenging. Our analysis in this respect suggests that managing the 'efficiency and inclusiveness' tension requires a structure that is tight enough to allow for consensus-oriented decision-making yet open enough to ensure continuing inclusion of enough stakeholders with enough genuine commitment to the collaboration to help sustain it over a period of time.

The neighbourhood regeneration strategy required the involvement of partners from public, not-for-profit and private organizations to work collaboratively with residents around existing and new initiatives throughout neighbourhoods. This need to foster collaborative activity at

the neighbourhood level required a governance form that could yield collaborative advantage. The focus was on bringing together partners' experiences, resources and expertise in ways that allowed them to jointly achieve regeneration outputs at the neighbourhood level that could not be achieved without the collaboration.

The governance form depicted in Figure 4, suggests that an 'open structure' was chosen to gain the involvement of partners at each of the neighbourhood levels. However, collaboration around regeneration at the neighbourhood level was not new; many of the organizations had a long history of working together and would have come to the collaboration with varying expectations pertaining to power and influence for example. Our data shows that a particular tension emerged around leadership and the role of the city council in steering collaborative efforts at the neighbourhood level. For example, there was evidence of resentment towards the city council's reluctance to distribute resources to neighbourhood groups and thus allow them to tackle regeneration issues for themselves. Yet there was also evidence that the neighbourhood groups began to rely on leadership by the Regeneration Team and the impact this had on securing attendance from other partners. For example, when the Regeneration Team stopped attending the BOB steering group meetings other partners also reduced their attendance. This suggests that the Regeneration Team absence reduced the legitimacy of the BOB steering group allowing other participants to prioritize other activities over those of the BOB steering group. This tension may be seen as a point of conflict between the logic of 'collaborative governance' and 'governing collaborations' with respect to the public agency having the legitimacy to lead or not.

Our analysis suggests that addressing this tension requires the application of 'unobtrusive leadership' via actors who are well recognized and accepted as leaders in the neighbourhood

and who are continually supported via the governance structure and any lead organization (in this case the city council) without this lead being obviously visible or perceived by otherwise 'equal' partners as interfering.

From a partner organization's perspective, the implementation of the city council's neighbourhood regeneration strategy provided Neighbourhood Action with an opportunity to influence regeneration across the whole city while simultaneously securing funding for its own work. An end to the Children's Fund programme in 2011 meant that Neighbourhood Action would no longer be receiving funding for a programme of work aimed at supporting children and families in neighbourhoods across the city. One of Neighbourhood Action's deputy director's roles was to design an 'outcomes framework' for the collaboration which gave him the opportunity to link his organization's neighbourhood service outcomes with that of the neighbourhood regeneration strategy. His organization had proven its expertise and success in building community engagement and social capital and its approach to neighbourhood regeneration provided a means to implementing the policy on social and human regeneration as set out in the neighbourhood regeneration strategy.

From the perspective of 'collaborative governance', the arrangement with Neighbourhood Action was one of 'contracting out' which allowed the Head of the Regeneration Team to distribute resources towards fostering collaboration at the neighbourhood level. In contrast, the logic of 'governing collaboration' would have encouraged actors to look for synergy from partners' diverse resources in ways that may have generated a greater potential for collaborative advantage.

From a community level perspective, the BOB steering group's main purpose was to foster collaboration on regeneration in the neighbourhood. It provided an opportunity for organizations working in the area to communicate and share information about their regeneration related activities. The aim was to prompt partners to coordinate their activities and work together. Our analysis suggests that this required careful nurturing of existing collaborations whilst simultaneously seeking to implement the governance form designed by the Head of the Regeneration Team. A key task for BOB then centred on gaining resident involvement, developing their human and social capital and empowering them to take a lead in addressing regeneration in their neighbourhood. While this took more time and effort than initially envisaged, there was a clear increase in participation from residents with some being made 'neighbourhood champions'. Furthermore the existence of the steering group also provided a mechanism for residents to seek to hold the city council, the local council, and other organizations working in the area to account.

However, our analysis also suggests that a tension appeared between building the capacity of BOB and achieving change in the neighbourhood. The ideals behind 'collaborative governance' emphasize the importance of empowering and gaining genuine participation from residents which takes time and effort. While developing human capital is not inconsistent with the logic of 'governing collaborations', it can slow down the achievement of collaborative advantage. Thus, whilst it was important for residents to see long-term problems being recognized by the city council in their neighbourhood plan, residents' participation in BOB dwindled when there were no immediate changes in their neighbourhood. Addressing this tension presented a constant hurdle for BOB as it sought to engage residents, some of whom were dissatisfied and disenchanted with the city council as they perceived that many physical regeneration problems had festered in the neighbourhood due to scarce resources.

BOB sought to address this tension through managing residents' expectations, persistently reminding them of what had been achieved during the collaboration, explaining why certain things could not be done because of resource constraints and in incrementally getting them to take responsibility for activities.

In this section, we have highlighted some of the management tensions that arise for leaders and managers who seek to design and implement the governance of collaborative entities that sit in the wider context of public policy. We have illustrated how these tensions may relate to or be explained in terms of the sometimes competing logics of 'collaborative governance' and 'governing collaborations'.

CONCLUSION

This article explores the governance of cross-sector collaboration. It addresses a gap in knowledge about how collaboration is governed and how such governance evolves over time (Milward and Provan, 2000; Provan and Kenis, 2008; Raab and Kenis, 2009; Saz-Carranza and Ospina, 2010). Drawing on relevant literature, it highlights a distinction between 'collaborative governance' and 'governing collaboration' and proposes an alternative way of conceptualizing the governance of collaboration in terms of structures, processes and actors. Identified from literature, this conceptualization is not entirely novel but rather applicable to different contexts beyond that of UK public sector collaboration. It is holistic in nature and inclusive of specific forms of governance such as those identified by Provan and Kenis (2008).

While the distinction between ‘collaborative governance’ and ‘governing collaboration’ is implicit in the literature, it has not previously been articulated in this way nor is it one that every author in the field would choose to make. This is partly because different terminology – such as collaboration and network for example – is used interchangeably and partly because some authors contribute to both areas of research and do not necessarily see the distinction as relevant to them. Nevertheless, the process of collaboration, as reflected in the literature, can be overwhelmingly complex (e.g. Ansell and Gash, 2007, Huxham and Vangen, 2005) and the navigation of complex collaborative contexts is an integral part of work for public sector leaders and managers. Therefore, in the spirit of developing conceptualizations that capture the complexity of collaboration yet are simple enough for use in practice, the distinction has merit.

The conceptualization of the governance of collaboration, in terms of structures, processes and actors, allows a focus on how design and implementation choices are influenced by the competing logics that operate in practice. It draws attention to why these choices are not entirely within the control of public sector leaders and managers but rather influenced by the highly dynamic nature of the governance of collaboration in practice.

The distinction between ‘collaborative governance’ and ‘governing collaboration’ also focuses attention on the kinds of management tensions that may arise and how they may be addressed. For example, it draws attention to the ‘efficiency and inclusiveness’ tension suggesting that the governance form needs a structure that is tight enough to allow for consensus-oriented decision-making yet open enough to ensure continuing inclusion of enough stakeholders to help sustain the collaboration over a period of time. And it points to a possible notion of ‘unobtrusive leadership’; the idea that the governance form must support

the inclusion of actors who are well recognized and accepted as leaders without their leadership being obviously visible or perceived by otherwise 'equal' partners as interfering.

Our overall conclusion is that paying attention to the structures, processes and actors is key to directing, coordinating and allocating resources for the collaboration as a whole and to account for its activities. Yet the components themselves – and indeed any resulting composite governance form – are most likely short-lived. The practical implication that we can draw from the conceptualizations and examples presented in this article is that the governance of collaborations is highly resource intensive and requires continues energy and commitment and a great deal of skill from those who are in charge of them.

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| Collaborative Governance | | Governing Collaborations |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Concerned with governance <i>through</i> the formation of inter-organizational collaborations. Here, collaboration is used as a form of [democratic] governance often contrasted with hierarchical and bureaucratic authority.</p> <p>The collaboration focuses primarily on the implementation of public policy.</p> | Definitional characteristics, purpose and focus | <p>Concerned with the governance <i>of</i> inter-organizational collaboration entities <i>per se</i>. The aim of the design and implementation of the governance form is to enhance the effectiveness of goal-directed collaborations.</p> <p>The collaboration focuses on the achievement of collaborative advantage / joint collaboration level goals.</p> |
| <i>Design and implementation issues: Example differences</i> | | |
| Emphasises participation by public agencies, not for profit stakeholders and sometimes, 'communities'. Often focuses on 'full' stakeholder inclusion. | Stakeholder inclusion | No ideological requirements associated with involvement, participation and empowerment of all stakeholders affected by an issue. |
| Focus on collective, consensus-oriented decision making on issues of public concern. | Decision making | Draws attention to a range of decision making mechanisms among partners seeking to attain joint goals. |
| Tension between the shifting of power away from elected bodies to shared power among stakeholders <i>and</i> power asymmetries related to public hierarchies. | Power asymmetries | Power may be shared and power imbalances are not necessarily skewed in favour of public agencies. |
| Trust is an essential ingredient and needs to be built to overcome distrust. | Trust / distrust | Trust is usually seen as essential and fragile – focus on trust building and managing distrust. |
| Focus on equitable distribution of public resources. | Distribution of resources | Focus on mobilizing member organizations' resources toward the achievement of joint goals. |
| Collaboration goals are stipulated in public policy. | Goals and values | Congruence in partners' goals provides the impetus for collaboration. |
| Public agencies have a legitimate and distinctive leadership role. | Lead organization | Leadership may be shared or reside with an agreed upon lead organization that may or may not be a member of the collaboration and that may or may not be a public agency. |
| Leadership is enacted by individuals representing public agencies or who has the authority of the state. | Individual leaders | Leadership may be enacted by individuals who do not have formal positional authority. |
| Government accountability – especially accountability for public resources. | Accountability | Tension between individuals' accountability to the collaboration and accountability to partner organizations. |

Table 1: Example differences between 'collaborative governance' and 'governing collaborations'

The governance of a collaborative entity entails the design and use of a structure and processes that enable actors to direct, coordinate and allocate resources for the collaboration as a whole and to account for its activities.

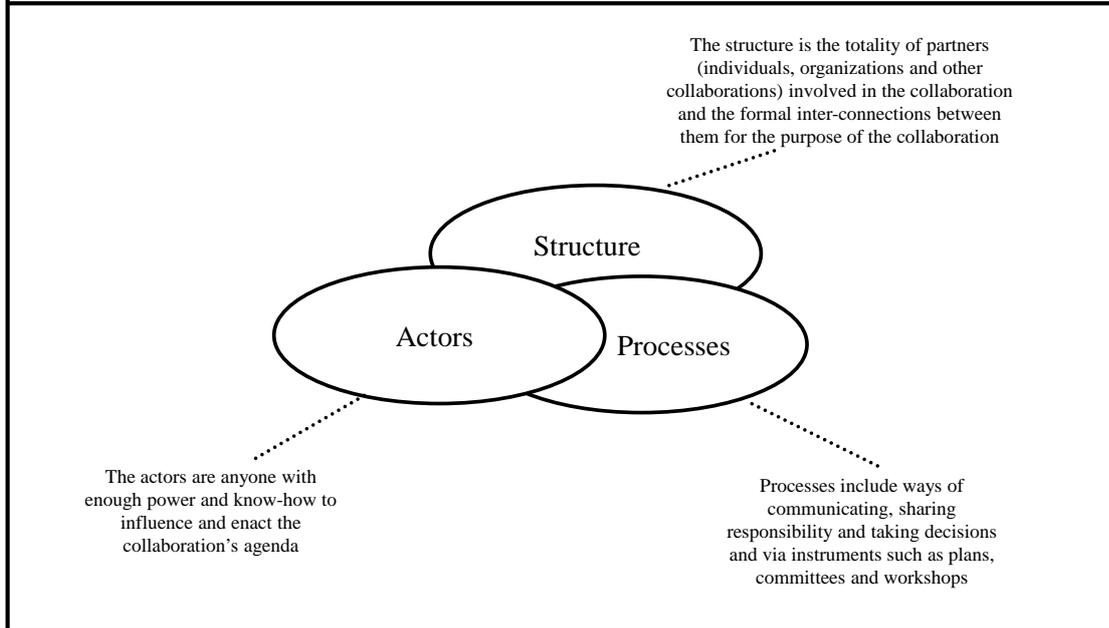
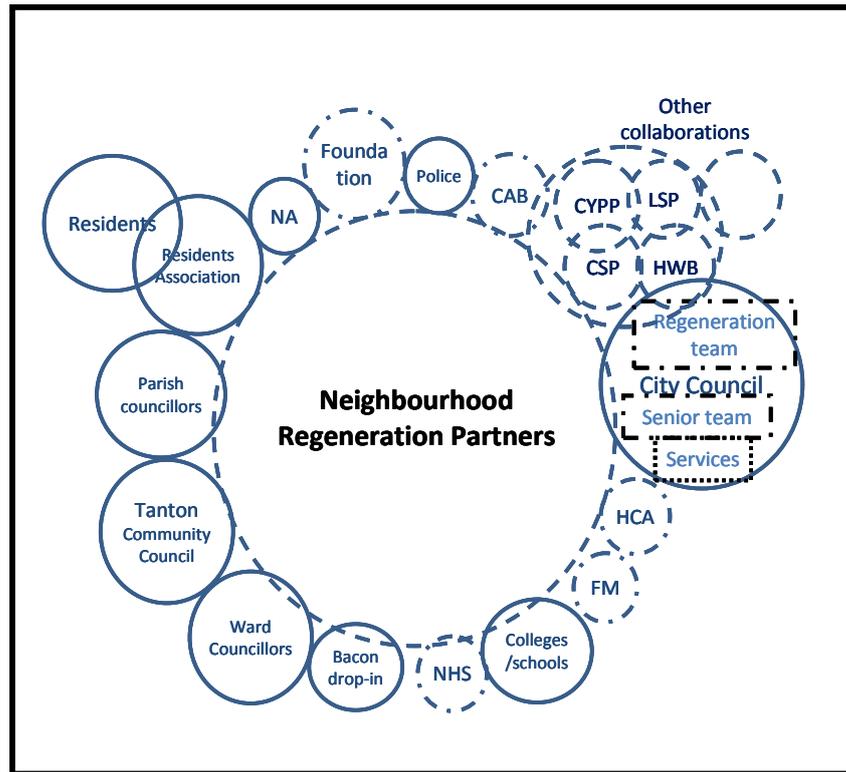


Figure 1: Governing collaborations – key design elements



| Key | |
|---|--|
|  | Organization boundary |
|  | Collaboration boundary (permeable) |
|  | A department / team boundary |
|  | No longer participating |
| BOB | Buddies of Bacon |
| Bacon drop-in | Drop-in centre in Bacon |
| CAB | Citizens Advice Bureau |
| CSP | Community Safety Partnership |
| CYPP | Children and Young People Partnership |
| FM | A Facilities Management organization |
| Foundation | A not-for profit organization improving places |
| HCA | Health and Communities Agency |
| HWB | Health and Wellbeing board |
| LSP | Local Strategic Partnership |
| NA | Neighbourhood Action |
| NHS | National Health Services |
| NSG2 | Neighbourhood Steering Group 2 |
| NSG3 | Neighbourhood Steering Group 3 |
| Performance | Performance group |
| Sponsor | Sponsor group |

Figure 2: City Neighbourhood Regeneration: Partners

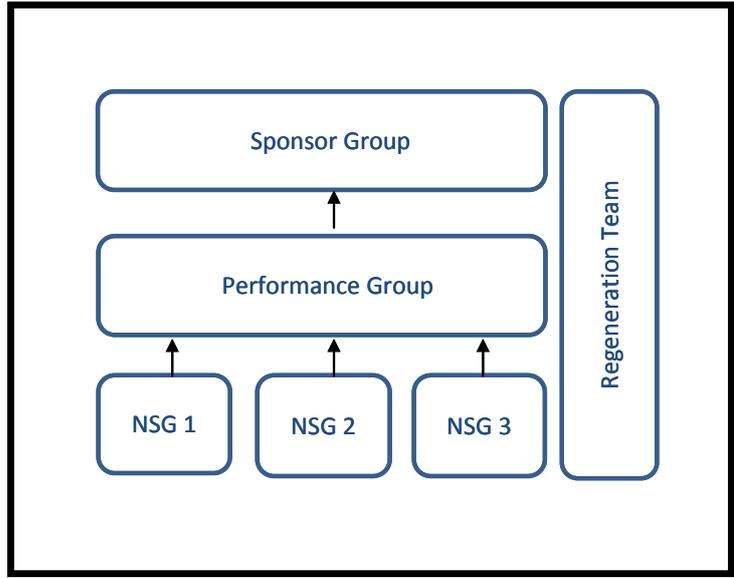


Figure 3: City Neighbourhood Regeneration: Governance instruments

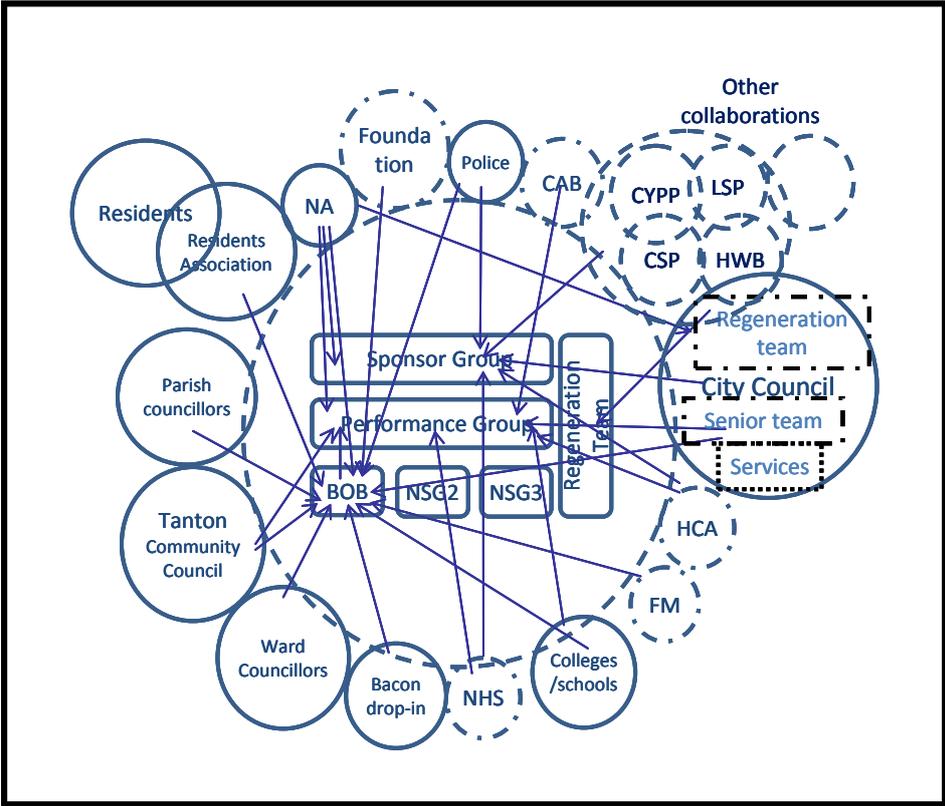


Figure 4: Partners involvement in the governance instruments