

Area-based asset management in the Netherlands: a case study

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Abstract

Since their financial independence in the mid nineties, the role of housing associations in the Netherlands has shifted from a task-oriented landlord of social housing estates towards a social enterprise that provides a wide variety of housing related services.

Many housing associations developed asset management plans to secure that their portfolio meets company goals and market demand. These plans were merely based on a rational-analytical approach. However, research has shown that in practice decisions of housing associations are often not direct results of their strategic plans, but of incidents at the neighbourhood level or of emerged opportunities. Next to that, housing associations nowadays do not only focus on the quality of their own housing stock, but also on the physical, economical and social quality of the whole neighbourhood, which implies cooperation with a wide variety of local actors.

These developments ask for an area-based approach of asset management. Problem is that not much is known about the way housing associations incorporate this approach in their asset management plans and in their organizations. This PhD research project will elaborate this subject. Its main research question is: How can housing associations formulate and organise area-based asset management?

Different case studies will be done. In this paper the results of a pilot case study will be shown. The case study shows different types of planning for neighbourhoods within one housing association. Next to the rational-analytical approach, other ways of planning can be seen to have impact on the operational activities in neighbourhoods.

Introduction

Housing associations nowadays are often regarded as social enterprises (e.g. Boelhouwer, 1999, van Dijk et al., 2002, Marshall and Lovatt, 2004, Gruis, 2005, Pawson, 2006) and less as task-oriented agents of government. Social enterprises are private organisations operating on the market, pursuing social goals which are related to the general interest, producing goods and services and of which the financial surplus is (re)invested in the social goal (Toonen et al., 2003).

Since the mid-nineties housing associations in the Netherlands operate in a relative autonomous way. There is a rather loose regulatory framework in which housing associations are supervised on the basis of general 'fields of performance' and housing associations operate financially independent from government since they are not heavily subsidized anymore. This changed role stimulated the development of asset management, including an increased orientation on neighbourhood level combined with a broader range of activities outside the realm of supplying 'merely' physical housing.

These developments led to a PhD-research concerning area-based asset management of housing association. Since not much is known about the way housing associations incorporate an area-based approach in their asset management plans and in their organizations, this PhD research project has as its main research question: How can housing associations formulate and organise area-based asset management?

In this paper first the policy context in which Dutch housing associations operate will be described. Next, the concepts of asset management, area-based policy and planning will be discussed. Then the results of a pilot case study will be shown. Finally the future direction of the research will be pointed out.

Policy context

In the Netherlands 2.4 million dwellings –35 percent of the total housing stock– are labelled as social rental housing. The one type of social housing provider is the housing association of which there are 455 (Centraal Fonds Volkshuisvesting, 2008). They are private non-profit organizations with a public responsibility, legally authorized as institutions operating exclusively in the interest of housing (Ouwehand and van Daalen, 2002). Since the introduction of the *Besluit Beheer Sociale-huursector* (decree on management of social rented sector) in 1993 and the abolition of structural subsidies for new construction and renovation in 1995, housing associations operate relatively independently in a system in which they are supervised on the basis of general ‘fields of performance’: accommodation of target groups; preservation of the quality of dwellings and their environment; consultation of tenants; securing financial continuity; and providing housing and care arrangements (Ministerie van VROM, 2005). The inspectorate of the ministry responsible for housing assesses the performance in these fields. It mainly supervises compliance with laws and regulations (Ouwehand and van Daalen, 2002). Financial supervision is delegated to the *Centraal Fonds Volkshuisvesting* (Central Housing Fund), a nondepartmental agency which reports to the ministry. This new regulatory framework strongly increased the administrative independence of the housing associations, as it is much less prescriptive than the one it has replaced.

In 1995 the outstanding grants obligations from the government were balanced against outstanding government loans of housing associations. Consequently, housing associations also became largely financially independent from the government, bearing the operation risks and having to finance new activities largely from their own resources (e.g. Priemus, 1995).

Next to the increased autonomy and independence, the increased focus on the neighbourhood is a major development among Dutch housing associations. Various explanations can be put forward for this. Firstly, in 1997, ‘liveability’ of the neighbourhood has been added as a field of performance to the BBSH. Since then, housing associations can also be held accountable for their activities to secure or improve the liveability of the neighbourhoods where their dwellings are located. This enabled as well as stimulated housing associations to develop activities that benefit the living conditions in the neighbourhood, to develop non-residential real estate and to maintain and improve the environment of their estates (Ministerie van VROM, 2005).

A second stimulus to the neighbourhood focus was the designation of 50 (later 56) neighbourhoods by the Minister of Housing in 2003 that were in need of specific attention and extra investments and financial support. This was part of a more general government policy to stimulate urban regeneration. One of the main objectives of this policy was also to achieve a more comprehensive approach towards urban regeneration, including not only renewal of the housing stock, but including physical, social and economic measures in a balanced way. In practice, however, the emphasis remained on physical measures (e.g. Gruis et al., 2006). Partly in reaction to this, in recent years several reports were issued on Dutch housing policy of which the most prominent are the advice reports of the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy “Vertrouwen in de buurt” [Confidence in the neighbourhood] (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, 2005) and the Council for the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment “Stad en Stijging” [City and Upward Mobility] (VROM-raad, 2006). In both reports the neighbourhood is seen as the place where the social and political confidence of residents can be regained. The reports plead for more attention for social regeneration of deprived areas, including measures for empowerment of socially disadvantaged people and to keep the upwardly mobile people attracted to their neighbourhood as to retain them for the city. Both councils recognize a key role for housing

associations. In the end of 2007, the current Housing Minister Vogelaar has designated 40 neighbourhoods where extra funds have come available. Furthermore, current policy is focussed explicitly on increasing socio-economic measures, in addition to physical renewal. Many housing associations have taken up a much broader task and have taken on new roles. They remain primarily responsible for the physical renewal of their housing stock, but also have begun to facilitate, finance and develop activities to stimulate safety, care, welfare, education and employment (e.g. Brandsen et al., 2006). Many of these activities are developed at neighbourhood level, in cooperation with the local government and other societal organisations, thus increasing the neighbourhood focus with housing associations' management.

Finally, and paradoxically, the increased neighbourhood focus can also be seen as a reaction to the increased size of the housing associations due to the substantial amount of mergers since the mid-nineties. In 1997 there were 767 housing associations, at the end of 2007 there were only 455 left. Because of the mergers the average size of housing associations has increased towards 5222 units per housing association (Centraal Fonds Volkshuisvesting, 2008). According to Cebeon (2006) these mergers have led to professionalization and better performance, although the latter is not undisputed (e.g. van Bortel et al., 2008). In reaction to the growth of organizations, there has been a shift towards area-focused and neighbourhood-based forms of organization. Responsibilities are being transferred from the headquarters to the local units, to ensure that the company policy fits with local needs and the housing associations retain their ties with the neighbourhoods and the people living in them (see van Bortel et al., 2008).

Development of asset management

Due to the reduction of government control and the abolishment of financial support housing associations have developed their own asset management strategies to fill in the gap in the housing associations' policies and to cope with financial risks (see e.g. Gruis and Nieboer, 2004a, Gruis and Nieboer, 2004b). Asset management is meant to secure that the housing portfolio meets the organisation's goals and market demand. It encompasses all coherent activities that a landlord develops as part of a market oriented, strategic and comprehensive vision (van den Broeke, 1998). According to a survey (Vijverberg, 2005), 71% of the Dutch housing associations had developed up-to-date asset management plans.

Within the asset management of Dutch housing associations, financial considerations have become a prominent decision-making factor, next to social housing objectives. Many housing associations have adopted financial criteria derived from the commercial real estate sector to support their strategies, employing net present value calculations, risk analyses and assessments of the market value of their assets (e.g. Gruis, 2005). The most obvious reason for the increased emphasis is the increased financial independence of the housing associations. On the other hand, it is also a part of the associations' own objective to act in an economically efficient manner and of performance measurement and decision making within real estate asset management in general.

Several models for determining asset management strategies have been developed since the 1990s (van Vliet, 1993, van den Broeke, 1998, Gruis and Nieboer, 2004b, Eskinasi, 2006, van Os, 2007). In general, these models have been derived from theories on and models for strategic business planning in which strategies for individual estates are derived from general portfolio objectives in a systematic, rationalized manner. According to Nieboer and Gruis (2004) all models have the same general outline of analysis, formulating provisional policy options, testing (ex ante evaluating) these options (option appraisal), and formulating

definitive options. Many models follow a top-down approach, in which general strategies for the development of the portfolio are linked to investment strategies for the individual estates. The existing models can be seen as part of the rational-analytical paradigm of strategy formulation within organisations (Nieboer, 2007).

These models, however, have various drawbacks, some of which are linked to the fundamental drawbacks of strategic business planning and others to the specific context of social landlords. In practice decisions of housing associations are often not a direct result of their plans, but of incidents at the neighbourhood level or of emerged opportunities (e.g. Nieboer, 2007). Gruis et al. (2004) state that few housing associations follow a systematic approach towards the development of asset management strategies. Furthermore, they hardly formulate explicit and measurable targets for the development of their stock and they do not formulate a top-down investment strategy. According to Straub (2002) a clear link between the strategic stock and the planned maintenance is lacking as well. The existing models for asset management can be seen as normative models. The models describe how strategic planning could be done, but not how strategic planning is actually done. The models put great emphasis on analysis and translation into policy. The strategic relationship between the asset management plans and the actual investments is, however, weak. Formal documented strategies do not reflect the actual strategies followed in practice (Nieboer, 2007). Gruis (2006) also notes that on paper many housing associations already transformed to dynamic enterprises that are customer- and society-driven, but that there is a discrepancy between policy formulation and policy implementation. Mintzberg et al. (1999) refer to this difference as the difference between the 'intended strategy' and the 'realized strategy'. The realized strategy is a combination of intended and emergent strategy.

There are specific circumstances that make it difficult for housing associations to incorporate effective top-down planning mechanisms. Gruis (2006) lists four properties of the housing association that make it difficult to plan top-down: the rigidity of the product (the house); the complexity of the environment; the functional organizational structure; and the vague border between supplier and buyer of the housing service.

Several authors have suggested that a neighbourhood-based asset management fits better with the practice and context of housing associations. Andersson and Musterd (2005) mention the following arguments for an area-based approach of welfare policies:

- It allows for relatively easy interaction with the local population;
- It provides a manageable areal focus, which allows for developing 'integral policies' and citizens' involvement in restructuring efforts;
- It would at least in principle be the right context for the actual development of partnerships between governmental departments in all relevant sectors, residents and other actors in the urban development arena;
- Some social problems tend to be spatially distributed in an unequal way;
- The existence of deprived and/or immigrant-dense neighbourhoods poses a political problem, in particular in welfare states having a social democratic governmental tradition;
- Concentration of deprived people makes poverty more visible and concentration of immigrants can easily be argued as a sign of a failing integration policy;
- Certain population compositions in an area have more negative effects upon the prospects of individuals in these areas, compared to other population compositions. Hence, geography is thought to be a central aspect of the problem.

Above arguments can also be applied to Dutch housing associations. However, housing associations have a specific position. Firstly, next to social factors, physical and market

factors play an important role. Housing associations do not only have a social responsibility, but are also concerned with the technical and financial performance of their portfolio. Secondly, location is of great importance for housing associations as real estate owners. The quality of the surroundings of a property is an important determinant for the value and popularity of a dwelling. Thirdly, the dwellings of housing associations are often concentrated in certain neighbourhoods, which gives them a specific interest in the development of the neighbourhood quality. These three aspects make an area-based approach towards asset management seem even more a logic one.

Gruis (2006) and Van Os (2007) add the following reasons for a neighbourhood-based approach:

- The neighbourhood is important for the living experience of people. It is the level on which residents identify themselves and on which outsiders form an image;
- The neighbourhood-level is concrete enough to debate on and to plan on in cooperation with external parties;
- it is often the level on which partnerships with stakeholders and urban restructuring plans are made;
- The neighbourhood level is a suitable level for balancing costs and revenues and for planning in stages;
- Planning at neighbourhood-level can contribute to internal cooperation. Representatives from the 'functional' departments within the organisation (such as the maintenance department, the real estate development department, treasury and the front-office) can work together on neighbourhood plans.
- Thinking about the portfolio, the quality of public and commercial services and social structures coincide on this level.

In Dutch practice, there are already several housing associations where management decisions are not based on portfolio considerations, but on considerations on neighbourhood level. Activities originate from negotiations with different parties and are based on social problems, technical quality and future market position of estates in a specific neighbourhood (Nieboer, 2007).

Planning approaches

In order to analyse the different area-based approaches the concept of planning will be used. Planning is concerned with 'shaping futures in which better conditions for human life and planetary survival can be achieved' (Hillier and Healy, 2008: xxiii). Planning is thus aimed at future improvement of the living environment. This fits well with most asset management strategies of housing associations.

Planning has both a process side and a content side. As Healy (2006) notes: "The planning tradition [...] represents a continual effort to interrelate conceptions of the qualities and social dynamics of places with notions of the social processes of 'shaping places' through the articulation and implementation of policies" (Healey, 2006: 7).

Planning is often associated with government, seen as a public activity. Nevertheless, with a diminishing government and a larger role for private parties (the shift from government to governance), planning is not only limited to public parties.

In the Dutch context housing associations are important players which are involved in the quality of places. As social enterprises they are the appropriate organisations to defend the collective interest. In the end housing associations do not have (or should not have) an 'own' interest, since they have no members, shareholders or other owners.

Furthermore the powers have shifted since the balancing and grossing operation (see above). Before this operation the local authority was leading in the field of housing and urban planning. After the operation local authorities became more dependant on housing associations and their role changed into one of formulating a vision, organising support and mobilising private parties to invest (Gerrichhauzen et al., 1999).

Planning can be done in different ways. Many authors have tried to classify these ways. The classification in this paper is based on classifications of Healey (2003), Hudson et al.(1979) and Innes et al. (2005).

Rational planning

Within the rational planning approach (also called rational–technical, synoptic, rational comprehensive or technical-bureaucratic planning) planners try to formulate policy in a scientific way. “Planning is the application of scientific method –however crude- to policy-making” (Faludi, 1973). Important characteristic of rational planning is the distinction between ends and means. According to Davidoff and Reiner (1962) the formulation of values (ends) is the first step in the planning process. These values are delivered by the client and are the result of a political process. Second step is the identification of possible means to reach the ends. This is the rational-technical process, which includes the selection of the best means to reach the end. Last step is the effectuation of the goals through the application of the selected means.

This approach offers ”flexibility to address the particularity of decision circumstances while constraining corruption by clear accountability of actions to policy criteria” (Healey, 2006: 23).

There is a considerable amount of criticism on this approach. For instance, Lindblom (1959) argues that it is not realistic to separate ends from means and to deny the different institutions and their interests. Furthermore he has doubts on the cognitive capacities of planners. Healey (2006) thinks the notion of culture is underestimated. Culture is seen as irrational and is because of the application of scientific method unnecessary. Furthermore, information often fails to influence or misses the point, decision makers often cannot agree on goals and as a result, analysis may be divorced from decision making (Innes and Gruber, 2005).

Incremental planning

Incremental planning (also called successive limited comparisons) is planning where a plan is based on a limited number of alternatives. These alternatives originate out of the planner’s experience and consist of little steps to accomplish a part of the goal. By successive repetition of this process and adjustment to changing circumstances eventually the ends can be reached (Lindblom, 1959). This approach is characterised by (Lindblom, 1959):

- “Selection of value goals and empirical analysis of the needed action are not distinct from one another but are closely intertwined.
- Since means and ends are not distinct, means-end analysis is often inappropriate or limited.
- The test of a "good" policy is typically that various analysts find themselves directly agreeing on a policy (without their agreeing that it is the most appropriate means to an agreed objective).
- Analysis is drastically limited: Important possible outcomes, alternative potential policies and affected values are neglected.
- A succession of comparisons greatly reduces or eliminates reliance on theory.”

Etzioni (1967) criticizes this approach, because decisions reflect the interests of the participants with the greatest power. Less privileged and organised groups are unrepresented. Also social innovations are neglected, because focus is on the short term and on fairly small adjustments from the past. Furthermore this approach is not suited for rapidly changing environments (crises) and when the initial course was wrong. Etzioni suggests a 'mixed-scanning' approach with a rational approach in high-order, fundamental policy-making processes which set basic directions and an incremental approach for short-term decisions in situations with many stakeholders which prepare for fundamental decisions and work them out after they have been reached.

Dror (1964) also suggests a combination of the two approaches. After the formulation of values, the identification and valuing of alternatives planners decide if they prefer a low-risk strategy (incremental) or an innovative strategy (rational).

Collaborative planning

The concept of collaborative planning (also called communicative planning) assumes a pluralistic society where local conflicts arise between people from different cultural communities. These conflicts can be dealt with through collaboration by recognizing 'the potential cultural dimensions of differences' and by creating 'an additional 'layer' of cultural formation' (Healey, 2006: 64).

Collaborative planning can be characterized with the following concepts:

- integrative place making: interrelation of economic, social, and environmental relationships;
- collaboration in policymaking: emphasis on collaboration in strategy development, and a mingling of formal politics with pressure groups, citizens groups, business lobbies, and environmental groups.
- inclusive stakeholder involvement: to generate both mutual learning and even consensus building before people come to 'fix' their positions.
- use of 'local' knowledge; the mixture of knowledge built up through practical experience and the frames of reference people use to filter and give meaning to that experience.
- building 'relational' resources: a rich social infrastructure of positive relationships between governance, citizens, and companies (Healey, 1998).

Criticisms against this approach are firstly directed towards the neglect of context. The approach is said to focus too much on agency (as opposed to the broader structuring forces) and to be too idealistic, because it is incompatible with current planning context in practice. Secondly, the approach is too much focused on the process, without a normative view about what is a good place. Thirdly, the concept of power is neglected. The approach assumes that people involved in the planning process have equal power and that the planner is a neutral person trying to guide the process. Finally, the approach is criticized for lacking an adequate base in social theory (Healey, 2003).

Political planning

Within the political planning approach (also called 'manipulative politics', 'political influence') a leader works on a one-on-one basis with people which he offers benefits in exchange of support for his agenda. This approach depends on personal loyalty, reciprocity, behind-the-scene deals, promises and rewards (Innes and Gruber, 2005). It refers to relations of power in everyday life as well as to 'deliberate efforts to gain influence and exercise power in the public realm [...] beyond the household and the firm' (Healey, 2006). This approach

can result in 'clientelism', in fraud and corruption, because its aim is not to achieve general policy objectives but to serve peoples personal goals (Healey, 2006).

Social Movement

Planning based on the social movement (also called advocacy planning) is characterized by defending the interests of the weak against the strong (Hudson et al., 1979). It originates from groups of people who feel excluded and/or unrepresented. Typical instruments of the social movement are demonstrations, media-attention and instigating legal action (Innes and Gruber, 2005). This approach has been criticized for being inefficient and obstructive to action (Peattie, 1968).

Case study

Last year I conducted an exploratory pilot cases study with the goal to refine the case methodology and to sharpen the problem statement. Within the case study documents are studied (e.g. business plan, asset management plans, annual reports) to see to what extent area-based strategies are embedded in the organisation. After the document study interviews were held with six key figures within the organisation: two from the policy department, two directors and two from the operational units. Aim of the interviews is to check and clarify the findings from the documents and to gain insight in the more informal side of the organisation. Within the case study the district Nieuwland is taken as a sub-case. The planning of this priority neighbourhood is described.

Woonplus Schiedam is the only housing association in Schiedam, a city with approximately 75000 inhabitants in the Rotterdam region. Woonplus Schiedam is a result of a merger of Woningbouwvereniging Schiedam en Woningstichting Noordvest (former municipal housing company) Woonplus Schiedam owns approximately 12000 dwellings and has 156 employees (139,6 fte) (Woonplus Schiedam, 2008). With its mission statement Woonplus Schiedam emphasizes its focus on Schiedam, on a broad target group and on a broad range of housing related services. Woonplus Schiedam recently changed its structure. The three area-based operational units merged into one unit with area-based subunits for 'participation'. The area-based units were too small to specialise within the units and the area-based activities are often done on a lower (neighbourhood) level.

Policy on portfolio and organisational level

The current policymaking cycle has started with the business plan of 2004. Before, the mission statement was the main guiding framework. Central elements in the business plan are the customers, the real estate and the financial return. Woonplus Schiedam is customer oriented, with the real estate as continuous factor and the financial return as a precondition. In the business plan there is no distinction made between different areas. However, there is room for an area-based approach, for example in deviating from the maximum of 250000 Euros for a newly built owner-occupied dwelling and in the budget for liveability activities. On the scale of districts Woonplus Schiedam aims at differentiating the living environment, whereas on the scale of neighbourhoods and estates the aim is on homogeneous living environments.

According to the business plan a major goal of Woonplus Schiedam is to reduce the amount of social rental housing by replacing them for middle-income newly-built housing, as to attract and attain middle-income groups to Schiedam. Next to the primary, low-income, customer group, Woonplus Schiedam regards the middle-incomes, first-time renters, large families, elderly people and people with special needs.

The business plan contains the general strategy of Woonplus Schiedam. This strategy results in more detailed operational year plans. Next, on district level integral plans are made on the basis of SWOT-analysis in collaboration with stakeholders. Furthermore demographic figures and desired lifestyles result in neighbourhood and estate profiles. Thus, activities in neighbourhoods result form three streams of policymaking. However, it is not clear how these plans relate to each other.

Policy on district level (Nieuwland)

Nieuwland is a government assigned priority district with approximately 7500 dwellings that was built between 1948 and 1965, consisting mainly of fairly monotonous 4-storey multi-family apartment blocks.

The beginning of the nineties renewal policies started for this district. Policies were formulated by the local authority since they were then the owner of the dwellings. Policymaking was bureaucratic, rule-based and politically motivated. Many policy documents were written, but this did not result in much activity (Reinders, 2004a). This period can be typified as political planning.

After the merger with Woningbouwvereniging Schiedam and the arrival of a new executive director policymaking for Nieuwland was based on the mission statement (strategic level) and on instruments as branding and 'buurtplus'.

Branding was introduced to improve communication between planners and residents and was a result of protests against demolition plans (Reinders, 2004b). In two rounds of branding session stakeholders of the district collaboratively formulated six core values, a slogan and typified Nieuwland as a 'patchwork quilt' of neighbourhoods. This metaphor was in line with the ambition of planners to restructure the district bit by bit, piece for piece (Reinders, 2007). The 'buurtplus' approach was part of this piece-for-piece restructuring. Nieuwland was divided into 20 neighbourhoods. For each neighbourhood a label was assigned;

- Neighbourhood management: social measures to extend the lifespan with 10 years;
- 'buurtplus' (neighbourhood plus): social and physical measures in collaboration with tenants with the aim to extend the lifespan with 20 years, to increase identity and to break monotony;
- Demolition-newly built: physical measures to replace old social rental apartments with single family homes and apartments for elderly people with a lifespan of 50 years.

This simple labelling of neighbourhoods without extensive analysis, can be regarded as a form of incremental planning. The branding and buurtplus approach are examples of collaborative planning. Branding was a result of a social movement, a group of people who were not satisfied with the plans for demolition.

In the second half of this decennium planning becomes more rational. The business plan provides a strategic framework on which tactical and operational plans are based. 'Neighbourhood profiles', a comprehensive method of analysis is introduced. Each neighbourhood is assessed on four aspects: market share, neighbourhood potential, housing quality and financial return/risk. Analysis is both based on indicators and on knowledge of the planning department and the units. Every aspect is scored positive, neutral or negative. The neighbourhood strategy follows from the four scores and is input for the estate profile. Although this is an example of the rational-analytical planning style, the resulting strategies are refined through internal dialogue with frontline staff, finance, and management.

In 2007 the new minister of Housing selected Nieuwland as one of the 40 most deprived neighbourhoods in the Netherlands. To acquire the linked government funding Woonplus Schiedam was forced to make a district action plan in collaboration with the local authority and community and welfare organizations. This action plan results in many social and physical projects. Thus, the selection of Nieuwland impacts on the planning of Woonplus Schiedam. Within Woonplus Schiedam the dominant opinion is that Schiedam East is in worse condition than Nieuwland. Because a lot of the urban renewal activities in Nieuwland are already finished or are on the way, attention can be shifted towards Schiedam East.

Conclusion

Woonplus Schiedam sees itself as a neighbourhood-based housing association, although the operational units were (until recently) structured on district level. Woonplus Schiedam is looking for the right balance between an area-based and uniform organisational design and for the right process design for its analysis and activities. Throughout the years a lot of area analysis and plans are made. It is not always easy to find out how these plans relate to each other. There is no clear procedure to balance the different levels and data, but there is an implicit, interdependent test which results in estate profiles and daily management plans.

In the case study the planning approaches that are described in the previous section can all be recognised. Nieuwland can be seen as an example of a district where planning is not only based on rational planning, but also on alternative planning approaches. Increasing awareness of the different planning approaches can contribute to the way housing associations formulate and organise their area-based asset management. These approaches reflect the different ways Woonplus Schiedam deals with the formulation and organisation of area-based asset management. In some instances, one approach evolves into a new approach and in other instances an approach reacts on an old approach. In some instances, Woonplus Schiedam is the main actor and in other instances other actors are leading.

Further research

Next to increased awareness, it is useful to know what constitutes a good planning process in the light of area-based asset management of housing associations. This is a normative question. In order to answer this, next step is to make this question operational by defining the aspects of good planning in the context of housing associations. In preparing for the next cases therefore conditions will be defined for a good planning process. Values will originate from general planning theory (process), from specific planning approaches, from the concept of social enterprise and from the societal problems that the planning endeavour should solve (content). These values will be transformed into interview questions to check if these values are recognized within the specific cases. Future cases must be housing associations that have a substantial task in restructuring areas because in these areas the planning process is most complex. Furthermore, selected housing association must have followed an explicit area-based approach, as to evaluate this approach on the basis of the conditions for a good planning process.

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