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Planning at a Local Authority Scale

A focus piece showing how Argyll and Bute Council have used the Place Standard tool for planning.

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INTRODUCTION

Architecture and Design Scotland has developed a series of Case Studies to illustrate how the Place Standard tool has been used. The case studies also provide information about the perceptions of, and knowledge gained in using, the tool.

Each case study demonstrates how the Place Standard has been used including spatial planning, community planning, design and development.

The groups and individuals involved have shared their approach and lessons learned with A&DS via a survey and interviews. In the case studies participants explain their reasons for using the tool, their approach to empowering local communities and the impact that this has had.

We illustrate the methods used and the perceptions and knowledge gained, showing how this was mapped into processes of spatial planning, community planning, design and development.

PLACE STANDARD - ARGYLL AND BUTE FOCUS

This focus piece includes two perspectives from a Community Planning officer and a Spatial Planning officer for the same 2017 consultation in Argyll and Bute.

A cross-service, cross-agency approach comes across strongly with the learning from the consultation having a wide influence and relevance as a consequence. Their collaboration demonstrates how a single consultation can have impact in a broad range of policies and service areas.

Key learning points

- The role of starting and documenting a conversation with a community about a place was core to the perceived value of the work.
- The work done to 'get out there' and find people to engage with was key to getting a good response rate.
- Despite scale (second largest Local Authority land mass in Scotland) and geography (mainland, lochs, glens and islands) the work reached throughout the area.
- Patterns of response could be mapped and re-mapped for particular geographies and communities at different scales.
- It clearly highlighted strengths and weaknesses from a health and wellbeing perspective depending on where you live; feeling safe and appreciation of natural landscape were common attributes balanced against poor accessibility and variable outlook for work and local economy.

- Follow-up work was important – working with local groups to convert priorities into actions relevant to each community – converting learning into spatial policy.
- The breadth of use and relevance of the output is striking: not only cross-service within the council but also across other Community Planning Partners (fire, police, NHS) private, 3rd sector and social enterprise.
- Please note: with the advent of the 'Group Admin' function there is now no longer a need for a bespoke website to collate responses.

ARGYLL AND BUTE

Planning Stage	Pre Main Issues Report Public Consultation
Leadership	Argyll and Bute Council
Participants	56 Community Councils, Local residents, School pupils and Seniors. Public of all ages/genders were encouraged to take part.



PLACE STANDARD - ARGYLL AND BUTE FOCUS

In this Argyll and Bute focus we compare two perspectives on the use of the Place Standard:

The Community Planning Officer's View:

"We targeted anyone and everyone who was a resident of Argyll and Bute to get the fullest response possible - we didn't focus or specify any particular demographics. However, when doing face-to-face events, we did try and target those who maybe aren't as likely to complete an online consultation."

Samantha Somers, Community Planning Officer at Argyll and Bute Council wrote:

What were you trying to achieve by using the Place Standard?

The tool was used to survey 'how a community felt about its place'. The process was intended to facilitate place-based actions as required in national policy. (Cont P.3)

The Spatial Planning Officers View:

"It was very useful to run this exercise in conjunction with our colleagues in Economic Development and Community Planning. This ensured we are working off a common data set and meant we could jointly apply more resource to the process thereby improving the response level."

Sybil Johnson, Spatial Planning Officer at Argyll and Bute Council wrote:

What were you trying to achieve by using the Place Standard?

The tool was used to facilitate: Engagement, Corporate Dialogue, Community Empowerment, Decision making, Place-Based Actions.

In particular: i) used to start the conversation on the Local Development Plan process, ii) opportunity for joint working and ... (Cont P.3)

How was the Place Standard tool applied?

The Place Standard tool was a cross-service engagement tool that provided evidence to inform locality planning. We built our own version of the tool on the council website in order for us to collate all the responses centrally.

The assessments were mainly completed by individuals however we were able to piggy-back onto CPR training being delivered by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service where there were larger groups present. The Community Planning Outcome Profile tool from Improvement Service was used in conjunction with the Place Standard tool when analysing the results and identifying priority areas for action.

Data was collated and averaged to create compass diagrams and presented in a report. There was a compass diagram produced for each postcode area, each island and each administrative area. Scores of three or less were focused on as weaknesses requiring action. (Cont P.4)

aligning agendas within the council iii) recommended by the Scottish Government in the SPP; iv) simple tool that is easily applied.

How was the Place Standard tool applied?

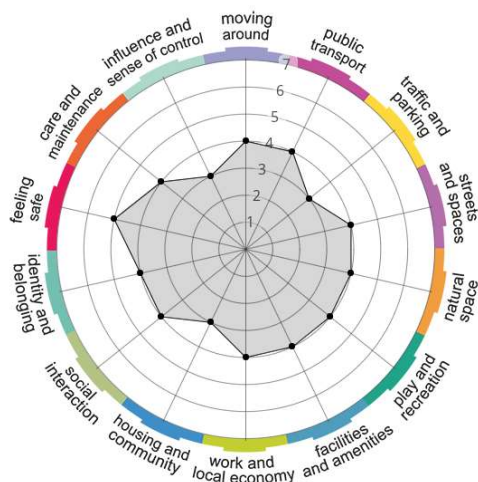
The Place Standard tool was adapted by our web team to run on line and collate the results. We ran an equalities assessment form alongside the tool. People could comment on a town, village or location. We used GIS to aggregate the results to different geographies for different purposes.

In terms of the LDP pre-engagement we had stakeholder meetings, Community Council events, Councillor workshops, assessment of monitoring data, Call for Sites - information from developers and Call for Ideas - more in depth information asked for by survey that built on the PST from community stakeholders and the public. Data was presented in spreadsheets and analysed via pie charts. The output report was shared on the council portal. (Cont P.4)

SAMPLE RESULTS AND OUTCOMES FROM OBAN

NOTE: These sample results and outcomes from Oban represent one of the 79 individual communities that carried out assessments using the tool.

Assessment Area: Oban
Date of Assessment: April 2017
Participants: 64 participants responded. Scores recorded are average.



Place Standard compass with result from Oban

Oban, Lorn and the Isles
Area Community Planning Action Plan
2017-2020

Argyll and Bute
community planning partnership

Argyll & Bute's economic success is built on a growing population

Moving Around

- There is no safe places to walk or cycle now due to all the mess left behind by builders and all green belt area has been destroyed
- The roads are in a dreadful condition- there is no footpath on the 1.5 miles from my house to town centre. There are no shops or amenities at this end of town.
- Footpaths within residential areas are not well signposted and are often muddy, have puddles, uneven surfaces and are not always well lit at night. Access to the shore is not good and the slips and steps are in poor condition. Stretch of road between Oban and Ganavan without a footpath/cycle path is dangerous. the road between Oban and Gallanach is dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists.
- There are some good routes such as the Sustrans cycle path. However, other local routes are not clearly marked and of poorer quality in terms of drainage/ signposting.
- I like to cycle however I live in the Centre of the town and there isn't really any safe cycle path leading you out of the Town Centre.
- I can only answer for walking as I don't cycle , walking is generally quite easy ,
- The road out to Ganavan is very narrow with no pavement or lighting. It has blind bends with no place for pedestrians to jump out of the way when cars meet in opposite directions. It is worrying that learner drivers favour this road and often swing out to the middle of the road on these blind bends. Cyclists use this road a lot too and have no cycle lane.
- As a result of increased development both commercial and domestic in Glenshellach, traffic intensification has increased causing traffic problems at the fire station roundabout on Soroba Road and throughout town. From March until October McKelvie Road and Glenshellach Road are used as a "rat run" by locals and tourists avoiding the heavy traffic on Soroba Road driving through Gallanach into town. McKelvie Road is no longer fit for purpose as a result of increased traffic. Large vehicles including buses, tourers and caravans find it difficult to negotiate parked vehicles and children playing on a 6m wide road. McKelvie Road and Glenshellach Road are no longer safe for pedestrians and cyclists on what is recognised nationally as a cycle route. Further development will compound this issue and it is feared there will be a serious accident. In terms of quality of development; there is a considerable weight of opinion regarding the design of current development and how it fits into the environment. Departures from the local plan have increased the density of Catalina Ave and Hayfield which has given rise to design jarring heavily against existing development. Two 3 storey blocks of flats soon to be erected adjacent to Glenshellach Road will overshadow existing houses and damage the integrity of the Glen.
- No cycle route or lane in town. Pavements along Soroba Road are narrow and to pass you have to walk on the road!
- Cycling - there are no specific cycle paths within the town as far as I am aware. The quality of the road surface within the town is very poor - pot holes all over the

Sample page (1 of 27) of the recorded comments gathered under each of the 14 Place Standard themes from Oban.

What actions are Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership committing to do in the area?

We have consulted with Area Community Planning Groups and local communities to determine where focused activity should take place and what key themes require action. The actions will help reduce the inequality of outcome experienced by communities living in these areas and will complement the existing strategic activity and community-led action plans already happening within the area.

Oban

Action	Lead Organisation	All proposed partners
Identify where small business units could be sited and supply	Argyll & Bute Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Argyll and Bute CouncilBID 4 Oban
Investigate road transport issues and develop solutions	Argyll & Bute Council	Existing working group already looking at this and will feed in
Investigate transition between children and adult disabled services, and set up focus group.	Health and Social Care Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Health and Social Care PartnershipOban High SchoolOban Youth CafeEnable
Review and explore parking arrangements within the town	Argyll & Bute Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Argyll and Bute CouncilCMAL/CalmacBid4Oban

Sample of actions that were captured for Oban in the Area Community Planning Action Plan.

What influence did the work have and how is it being followed up?

We went back to local Area Community Planning groups to establish actions at a local level and then verified these with the CPP management committee. One-year community action plans have been produced for each area and are public documents which are available freely. The findings from the tool were used to focus actions in community planning locality plans.

Higher scores were common for Natural Space and Feeling Safe with lower scores for Public Transport, Moving Around and Work/Local Economy. We intend to use the tool again every two or three years, linked to locality plan timescales to test the effect of implementing improvements.

The data gathered is being widely used by partner agencies including Police Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Community Groups, Community Councils, Private Sector, Health and Social Care Partnerships, NHS Highland, 3rd sector and social enterprise. Within Argyll and Bute Council it is being used by a range of services: Children and Families, Housing, Roads and Transport, Economic Development, Planning and Education. (Cont P.5)

What influence did the work have and how is it being followed up?

In terms of the Local Development Plan - we used the information in the Monitoring Statement that accompanied the Main Issues Report (MIR) consultation as it was part of the background evidence that helped us write the MIR.

The Place Standard had influence on Local Development Plan, Economic Development Action Plan, Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan.

One example from the Monitoring Statement 'Participants in Rothesay had the lowest score in respect of work and the local economy whereas Helensburgh and Oban participants scored this higher.'

The Main Issues Report then proposed that Rothesay be retained as a regeneration area and that, given the potential of Helensburgh and the wider Oban area that these are designated as growth areas. This was based on a range of evidence including the Place Standard tool results.

The next stage of use is anticipated in five years in run-up to next LDP. (Cont P.5)

What lessons would you wish to share?

Having a consultation online is not enough, there needs to be concentrated effort in getting out there and getting the form completed. Time has to be made available for concerted efforts of engagement in as many locations as required in order to maximise input.

Don't underestimate how long it takes to analyse the results. The volume of data gathered took three weeks for one person to process.

There were issues raised by the community with regard to 'urban' rather than 'rural' perceived focus of the Place Standard tool and within the Public Transport section a lack of reference to ferries. This has been fed back to the steering group.

Further Reading

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/about-place-standard-tool

What lessons would you wish to share?

The Place Standard tool is useful to start a conversation. It can highlight key areas to focus on but this requires additional work. Some communities will not respond well to this form of consultation - other methods may be more appropriate - know your audience and tailor.

A range of engagement methods targeted at different levels of detail have to be used to elicit a robust response from a wide cross section of stakeholders. One size does not fit all... Although very few in number, a strong dislike for the tool was exhibited by some.