

Architecture & Design Scotland

Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

Learning locally

Co-designing sustainable learning settings
in Armadale

Version 1.1



Armadale Place Standard method

Armadale Primary pupils at the
Black Moss



“To build an inspiring movement for change so every 3-18 place of education becomes a Sustainable Learning Setting by 2030.”

LfS “Target 2030” Sustainable Learning Settings

Learning locally- co-designing sustainable learning settings

This project is about supporting the delivery of the “Learning for Sustainability Policy” in places, by co-designing sustainable learning settings through pilots in varied school contexts. Working at a local level to create lessons that are transferable nationally.

What can we learn from our local area in order to:

- understand concepts of sustainability and the changing climate including: sustainability, the circular economy, energy, mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity and food growth
- develop a strong understanding on how we could act locally, ensuring that the changing climate is not an abstract concept
- know how schools can make better use of their learning estate as sustainable learning settings

This pilot in Armadale is working with three schools to identify local sustainable learning settings.

Delivering Armadale Place Standard

The first step to understanding how you can learn from your place, is to understand your place. So we carried out the Place Standard exercise in Armadale with pupils from Armadale, St Anthony’s and Eastertoun Primary schools.

The Place Standard is an assessment method which asks “How good is my place?”. We elected to use the Young People’s version rather than the Childrens version so that results out of seven rather than three could correlate with the Place Standard with a Climate Lens exercise carried out at the Dale Hub in October 2024.

We chose to carry out the Place Standard as a series of walk arounds, allowing young people to experience places and routes while providing their answers. We used worksheets for each stopping point and recorded key bits of conversation on voice recorders.

Each school focussed on a different area of the Place Standard, with all considering the section of How I feel and how I care. We then returned to a community building to score the Place Standard.

This Place Standard workshop was carried out in conjunction with another that took Place in Armadale in October 2024 with adults, community group members, and residents from the Mayfield area of the town.



Mapping our places

Once we were back from our walk we asked the young people to map two things. With lovehearts a place they love and value, and with circles a place that could be improved.

What is good?

- Volunteer Park
- The Speedway
- My house
- The Dale Hub
- The Day Today
- Scotmid
- The Partnership Centre
- Queen Elizabeth Square
- Watson Park
- Jai's Thai
- Mallace Avenue Football field

What could be better?

- Xcite Armadale
- Armadale Academy
- The Black Moss
- Armadale Primary School
- Derelict site (old Arnold Clark)
- St Anthony's Church
- Mayfield Play Area
- The Speedway
- St Anthony's school

Young person adds their contribution to the map

Armadale map including what is good (hearts) and places that could be better (circles)



Armada Place Standard results



Mapping valued places on the map
back at the Dale Hub



Scoring the Place Standard

We employed dynamic voting asking pupils to move to the area of the room corresponding to the score they wanted to give the topic.

For the final five topics we employed a thumbs up, thumbs down and neutral scoring as time was tight.

Analysis of method

We went with the score chosen by most of the children rather than forming an average. Scores among the group could be very disparate.

We elected to use the Young Person's version of the Place Standard as the score out of seven could correlate, compare and contrast with the exercise carried out with adults in Armadale. On reflection the Childrens' version of three scores only would have been easier to manage and get a workable score from.

Areas of strength (5+)

- Nature, parks, woods and hills
- Play, hangout, games and hobbies
- Schools, libraries, shops and other services
- Jobs and places to work
- Home, friends and neighbours
- Feeling proud and part of a place

Neutral topics (4)

- Walking, wheeling and cycling
- Public transport, buses and trains
- Meeting and talking with people

Areas for improvement (4-)

- Traffic and parking
- Streets, squares and buildings
- Feeling safe
- Fixed clean and managed
- Having our say and being listened to



This diagram shows
the score given by the largest
number of children for each category.

What I need to live well

Pupils from St Anthony’s primary school took a route through the centre of Armadale to discuss facilities and services, jobs and the local economy and homes friends and neighbours, visiting a variety of sites.

“The partnership centre is good because I come here for dancing”

“I use the partnership centre library to borrow books, we used to come every Saturday when I was wee, adventure books were my favourite”

Schools, libraries shops and other services

We walked from the Dale Hub, up South Street passing a number of shops, Volunteer Park, the old XCite sports centre, the pharmacy and the doctors surgery. We stopped outside the Partnership Centre to discuss facilities and services.

What is good now?

- Community Centre
- The Partnership Centre where I do my dancing
- Volunteer Park and Armadale Thistle
- The library, I like to borrow books
- The scouts, the scout hall is on South Street, but it shouldn't say boy scouts any more as its just as many girls.
- There's two dentists here
- My brother does Taekwondo here
- I like to meet my friends at Watson Park
- I use the Partnership Centre to borrow books, I used to come here every Saturday and borrow my favourite books, usually about adventure

What could be better?

- Safer paths
- A girls football team
- Better quality fresh food (like a Lidl or Aldi or maybe a greengrocer).
- The swimming pool and the gym should be open again.
- I used to go swimming and my mum would go to the gym but we need to go to Bathgate now.
- I miss the pool I can't go swimming there any more.
- We go swimming in Bathgate, we go by car, or you could get a bus or go by bike.
- We need an Aldi or a Lidl here, or Scotmid needs to be better.
- There should be more clubs
- The doctors, it takes a long time to get an appointment.
- There's too much litter
- More parking
- Make cycling easier
- St Anthony's church is unsafe and broken down and I hope they can fix it. I go to the church up a bit instead, or St Andrew's.

- Fix the holes in the road and make better places for buildings apart from waste ground and plants (specifically old Arnold Clark site).
- There used to be a charity shop on South Street but it's not there any more, I miss it.
- Bring back Coias Sweet Shop

Other comments

We walked past Volunteer park and spoke about how it's on maps of Armadale going way back in history, noted that there is no girls team in Armadale and there should be. Two pupils used to play with Armadale Thistle but have moved onto new clubs. Comments going past old Arnold Clark site were that *it's ugly and messy and needs cleaned up and something better put there.*

We spoke about if Armadale was an island, is there anything that you need? They said more shops, a centre like Livingston and a greengrocers, somewhere for fresh vegetables or a low cost German supermarket.

Later we walked past the scout hut, a valuable community facility too, and St Anthony's church, which the pupils explained has closed as it is dangerous. They now share premises with Armadale Parish Church, but are unable to have weddings or funerals in Armadale. They were previously using the school gym hall but the hire was becoming too expensive. Many people travel to Whitburn now for mass, and some children go every week. The school used to go once a week to St Anthony's church.

Jobs and places to work

We walked to the Main Street and walked along, looking at the different shops and services, stopping outside the Vets surgery noting it used to be council offices and still bears the Arms of Armadale.

What is good now?

- The hairdressers
- Being able to go to the shops by ourselves

What could be better?

- There should be better wifi, so we can meet in the streets or squares together.

Other comments

I asked how many people had family members who worked in Armadale and there were only 3 including the teaching assistant, all worked in Education settings. We spoke about the jobs people used to do in Armadale — there were brickworks and steelworks. One boy mentioned that some of his family members had been miners. Then we spoke about how jobs in Armadale now are about service or education.

We walked along the Main Street talking about the different businesses that were there – there are two butchers, three small cafes, Scotmid, a few small shops where the children buy sweets, a wool and card shop, a number of takeaways, a hardware store and two pharmacies. The children complained about the loss of Coia's sweetshop.



Top to bottom: Armadale Partnership Centre, North Street
The Goth on Armadale Main Street
Energy efficiency improvements to housing in Mayfield area

What I need to live well

We stopped at The Goth and spoke about a Gothenburg pub where any profits are invested back into the community and how Armadale has one of the last two in Scotland. Mrs Moore explained that the money from The Goth pays for most of the Gala Day, and everyone said they all go along to the Gala Day which comprises floats that end at Watson Park. One girl said she was Flower Queen this year – there is a queen from each primary school.

Homes, friends and neighbours

We walked from the Main Street up past Armadale primary school and then down High Academy Street looking at the different houses from workers cottages and Victorian villas to new build houses and post-war council housing.

What is good now?

- *Most houses are warm and cosy*
- *My house is freezing in the winter*
- *We enjoy living in Armadale because of the parks,*

shops, cosy houses and friends.

- *There are lots of different sizes of properties in Armadale.*

What could be better

- *Availability of properties to rent*
- *Make it easier to be energy efficient here, my dad looked into solar panels but it was too expensive.*

Other comments

We spoke about the types and sizes of houses in Armadale and the children agreed that there was a good variety of different sizes of houses for families. Their teacher wondered if renting was as easy as buying though.

We looked at small workers houses, sometimes really narrow, and one girl guessed they were about 70 years old, and we said they were more like 150 years old. We then walked past a street of big houses known locally as “Doctors Brae” as that’s where all the doctors used to live.

We also spoke about where St Anthony’s primary used to be, and the old St Anthony’s church.

Turning onto High Academy street we saw a house with solar panels and spoke about energy efficiency, and renewable energy, one boy mentioned his dad had looked into it, but it was too expensive.

Walking through the Mayfield area we saw two houses side by side, one with original brick and render and the other with external insulation and a new roof. One boy recognised a ramp had been fitted for disabled access and a girl knew the houses had insulation fitted to make them warmer.

One girl thought the houses were about 50 years old, but Mrs Moore noted they were older, possibly 1940s.

We stopped in the park at Mayfield to discuss where the group would wave their magic wand and they agreed it would be to open the swimming pool again.

We then spoke about some of the other topics thinking about Armadale as a whole – but time was tight.

Our route

Stopping points

- 1 Stop: Armadale Partnership Centre
Topic: What I need to live well

Areas of interest: Volunteer Park, Doctor’s surgery, Partnership Centre, local shops and services, community centre and library

- 2 Stop: Armadale Cross
Topic: Jobs and places to work

Areas of interest: local shops and businesses, types of shops and businesses, local supply chains, Gothenburg pub and charity shops for different economics, former council offices

- 3 Stop: Mayfield Park
Topic: Homes, friends and neighbours

Areas of interest: following a walk through different housing areas we discussed housing mix, energy efficiency, retrofit, solar panels and community events and spirit.



A High Academy Street – big and small old houses – for workers and doctors

B High Academy Street – Energy – house with solar panels

C South Street – Scout Hall and St Anthony’s church

D Mayfield area – Energy – houses are retrofitted for energy efficiency

E The Goth Pub – profits fund community events like the Gala day

F Former Sports Centre, and doctors and pharmacies

G The Dale Hub – community building and garden

Talking points

Where I go and what I do

Pupils from Armadale Primary school visited three different types of greenspace in Armadale on a tour to discuss play and recreation, nature and streets and spaces.

“I would like to see more wildlife and less litter here, Black Moss can be a natural habitat for animals”

“There should be more things for older kids to play on here”

Play, hangout, games and hobbies

The group walked from the Dale Hub to Mayfield Playground.

What is good now?

- *It is big with lots of space*
- *There is good play equipment*
- *It's fun and a good place to meet up*
- *Good environment*
- *There's a lot of things to play on*
- *There's a range of equipment but the last park was better*

What could be better?

- *There used to be better, longer and bigger monkeybars*
- *There's too much dog poo*
- *There are lots of fires here*
- *I don't feel safe*
- *There should be less vandalism*

- *There's not a lot for older kids*
- *There's only 1 bin*
- *There should be a space for younger children*
- *It could be more vibrant*
- *Better monkey bars and bins*
- *No more bonfires and vandalism!*
- *More bins*
- *Dog poo bins*
- *Rubbish picked up*
- *Less fires*
- *I don't think this is safe because every November, there's a fire at the corner of the park and tons of kids could get injured.*
- *There should be more things for older kids, there's just baby things here.*
- *It's a good and bad environment, because there's litter and not enough bins but it's also got trees.*

Other comments

We spoke about what we thought was causing the vandalism and fires. The children thought it was because there wasn't really enough to do – the park was only designed for small children.

They felt that if the space had more things designed for a wider age range, it wouldn't be used so much for fly-tipping, which was generally what got set on fire.

Some children did come here to play, but most didn't – they were too old for the equipment, yet younger than the older children who hung around, so they didn't feel safe.

Nature: parks, woods, hills, beaches

We then went to Black Moss Nature reserve. There was a discussion about who comes to the Black Moss and why, with dog walking being the top answer. Some said they are scared of being chased by older kids. They said it was good for nature with a good number of them having seen squirrels.

There were a few comments about the trees being removed at Black Moss and the representative from the council explained it was part of a managed scheme because of tree diseases, but the council could have been better at communicating that with the community.

What is good now?

- *It's good for a walk with your dog or just a nice walk for yourself.*
- *There's a lot of trees being planted*
- *Lots of flat areas*
- *It is a good dog walk*
- *It's a good space and a nice place for walks.*
- *It's a place we like*

- *Good they are planting trees*
- *Good for climbing trees*
- *We've seen squirrels here*
- *In the summer you get wildflowers, dandelions and violets*
- *The school did our health and wellbeing sponsored walk round here*
- *It's a good environment*

What could be better?

- *We would like to stop deforestation here*
- *Time and kind of people that come*
- *Fights and fires*
- *More trees*
- *Less pot holes*
- *It's a bit scary, it's not overlooked.*
- *I would like to see more nature*
- *I don't like that they cut down the trees*
- *I would like to see more nice people*
- *It can be too busy*
- *I would like to see more nature and more trees*
- *I would like to see more wildlife, and less litter here, it can be a natural habitat for animals.*

Other comments

We spoke about the positives that if felt so wild and not that you are in the middle of town or that the park is so near but such a different type of place. The pupils mentioned that there can be a lot of anti-social behaviour and that they don't come here at certain times as it feels dangerous.



Where I go and what I do

Street squares and buildings

We walked to Queen Elizabeth Square on South Street, a small planted area with benches. The young people liked it there, and identified it as their favourite part of the walk, and a surprise as none of them had been there before.

What is good now?

- The important shopping streets are South Street, North Street and Main Street
- We've not stopped at Queen Elizabeth Square before
- Neat and tidy
- Lots of nature
- Seating
- Good view
- This is a really nice place
- A nice place to think about Queen Elizabeth

What could be better?

- Empty spaces
- No swimming pool, we now need to go to Bathgate
- We need the sweet shop back
- There are some empty spaces
- There should be a swing set in Queen Elizabeth square
- Open the swimming pool back up
- The old nursery building is not nice
- Behind Coppies bar the old building door is open and people can get in, it's not safe
- We need more landmarks
- Use the empty buildings
- Open Coia's again
- More protection from rain at Queen Elizabeth Square
- Open the swimming pool
- Tidy up the weeds
- We could add a shelter over the benches

Other comments

We spoke about the lack of places for them to come together at this age and they liked the square as it felt safe and connected and thought it could be nice to even eat lunch or hang out, they felt it could do with perhaps a covered area, and noticed that the building that looks on to it is empty and that made it look abandoned slightly.

Our route

Stopping points

- 1 Stop: Mayfield Playground
Topic: Play, hangout, games and hobbies

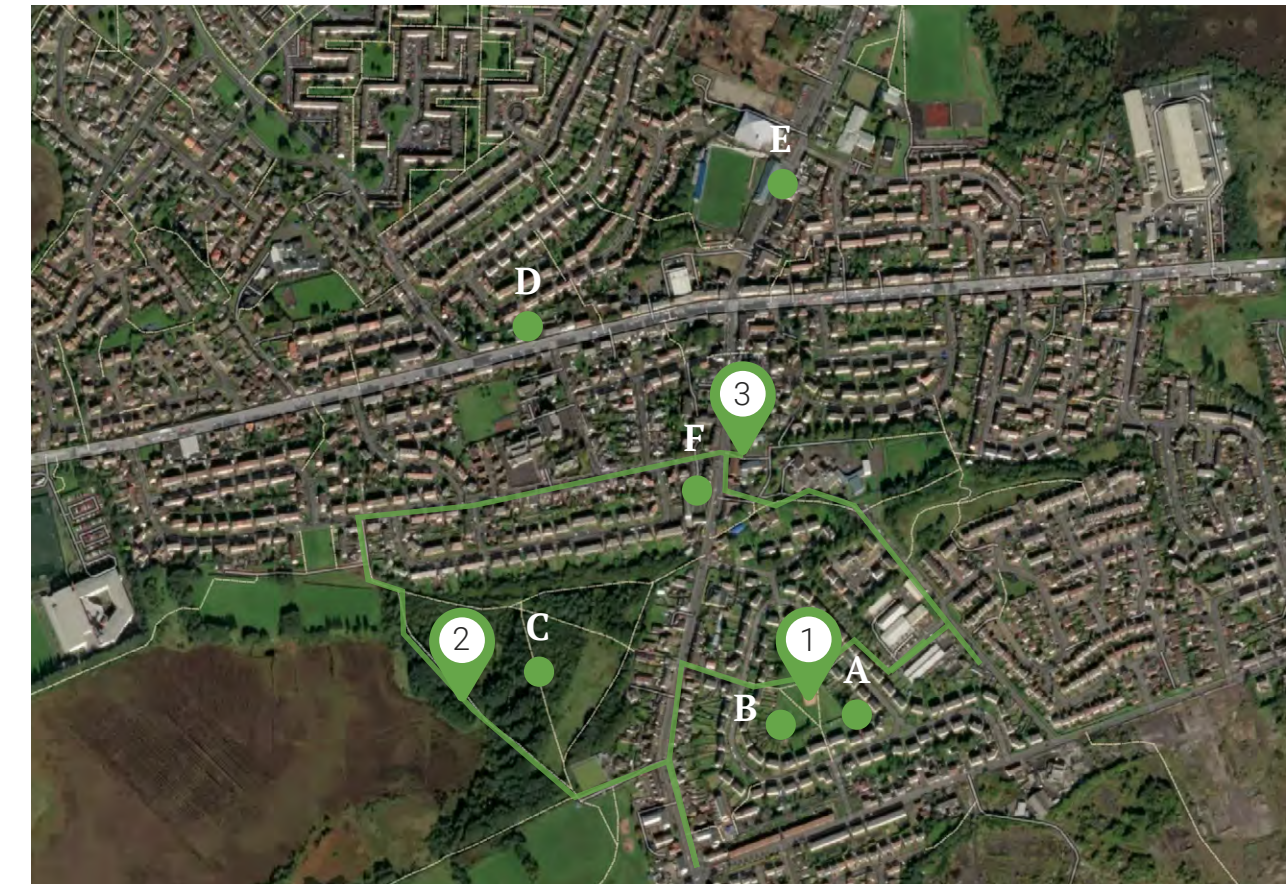
Areas of interest: Play provision, maintenance, meeting friends, anti-social behaviour, play suitable for older children

- 2 Stop: The Black Moss
Topic: Nature, parks, woods, hills and beaches

Areas of interest: nature habitat and biodiversity, tree management

- 3 Stop: Queen Elizabeth Square
Topic: Streets squares and buildings

Areas of interest: The town square, sitting area, planting, shelter, maintenance and safety



Talking points

A Mayfield Park can suffer from fires and vandalism.

C Black Moss nature restoration works misconstrued locally as destruction

E North Street is an important street in Armadale

B Mayfield Park – there should be more for older children

D Main Street is an important street in Armadale

F South Street is an important street in Armadale

How do I get from one place to another?

The group from Eastertoun primary took a walk through Armadale, from segregated walking and cycling paths, along quieter streets to the main bus routes in the town to explore getting from one place to another.

Walking, wheeling, cycling

We headed to the Black Moss nature reserve taking the paths earmarked for walking and cycling, and marked on local plans as cycle routes.

What is good now?

- Drove Road Park and North Street Park are examples of a good spaces to walk, cycle, play in and generally visit.
- Another pleasant spot for walking and cycling is located close to Southdale Primary.
- A good thing about the Black Moss Reserve is that it provides the opportunity to access nature and wildlife, especially in the summer.
- The nature reserve is a pleasant place to visit, there's tweeting birds and it's really peaceful.
- I feel comfortable cycling in low traffic areas, like High Academy Street, its a nice place to bike.

What could be better?

During our walk, pupils observed several areas in need of cleaning and discussed the issue of rubbish on streets, pavements, and green spaces, which they believe is a problem in some parts of Armadale.

- There are some bins, but not enough.
- There is often litter when I'm cycling to school, which makes it unpleasant to get around.
- Although there are walking paths, this is not an area we would usually visit.
- To make this better for people walking there should be more signs at key locations like crossroads to help people get around.
- A better variety of plants and greenery would make the area more interesting – specifically, a selection that includes greenery even in the winter months.
- More seats in public spaces would be better, not just for us, but for people who are less mobile. This would encourage more walking in Armadale.
- Few places are accessible to wheelchair users.
- I would feel safer cycling in a dedicated cycle lane
- It is dangerous cycling near cars, they drive too fast.

Other comments

Our first stop at Black Moss Reserve received mixed reactions. Some pupils expressed interest in the area, noting that it could be a pleasant place to visit in the summer, with one describing it as "there's tweeting birds, and it's really peaceful." However, others found the area bleak, comparing it to a scene "out of a horror movie."

Among Eastertoun Primary pupils, there was a general sense that the Main Street acts as a barrier to visiting the area south of it. This could be attributed to several factors, including the greater distance from their homes and schools compared to the other two primary schools. The lack of crossings and the high-speed traffic – both of which were mentioned in the pupils' comments later on – can also be contributing factors. As a result, they were less familiar with the area south of the Main Street and felt more comfortable in the area to the north, even though, in terms of actual distance and scale, it would be feasible to walk or cycle in the southern part of Armadale. In terms of access to green space and dedicated pedestrian paths, although Black Moss is seen as an opportunity, its full potential has not been realised—at least not for this group of pupils.

Traffic and parking

What is good now?

- The traffic light system and zebra crossings in the Main Street are good. It is sometimes slow and could be improved by making it more responsive.

What could be better?

Eastertoun pupils reiterated the issues around their school during busy pick-up and drop-off times.

- When we walk on the main streets the air feels polluted, you can smell the exhaust fumes.
- There are lots of lorries due to the nearby depot.
- When I cycle I get confused by one-way streets, I'm not sure which way the traffic will be coming from.
- The main roads would benefit from more crossings that prioritise pedestrians over car traffic.
- Cars need to slow down.
- Cars parked on the pavements can make blind spots for pedestrians and cyclists.
- There should be less on-street parking
- It can be hard to find a parking space near the main street, my parents sometimes need to park quite far away that can add on walking time.
- When cycling around the main roads, there are a few places to park bicycles, but not many – there is one bike rack near Scotmid.



How I get from one place to another

Other comments

Car ownership among the group was high, with an average of 2-3 cars per household.

When asked what would make the Main Street more interesting and pleasant, the group mentioned that they would like to see more trees, plants and public art. They also expressed a desire for more destinations, such as a pizza place. Additionally, they noted that the local ice cream shop, Coia's, which had previously been a popular destination, has now closed.

Public transport

What is good now?

In terms of public transport, not many children use the bus or train frequently. However, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Livingston were mentioned as destinations by those who do travel, primarily by train.

What could be better?

- *When I take the bus they sometime come too early or too late, which means you have to wait for longer.*
- *When you wait for a train or a bus, there's nowhere comfortable to sit, you have to lean against the seats instead of sitting comfortable. I think that's to stop homeless people sleeping there.*

Other comments

The majority of the pupils either did not have a free bus pass or were not using it.

When asked about places they would consider using public transport to reach instead of driving, a pupil mentioned destinations up north, such as the Highlands, particularly for holidays, if the service was more convenient and reliable.

Our Route

Stopping points

- 1 Stop: Black Moss
- Topic: Walking, wheeling and cycling

Areas of interest: Black Moss paths and sitting areas, South Street crossings, Mayfield Drive pavements

- 2 Stop: Armadale Primary School
- Topic: Traffic and parking

Areas of interest: High Academy Street, Armadale Primary

- 3 Stop: The Main Street
- Topic: Public transport

Areas of interest: Main Street, The Cross, Main Street traffic and parking spaces, bus stops, crossings



A Black Moss – peaceful for a walk or cycle

C Main Street can be a barrier due to fast traffic and limited crossings

E Eastertoun Primary – issues with safety and congestion at key school times

G North Street Park is good for cycling and walking

Talking points

B High Academy Street – quiet street for cycling

D Issues with pollution and air quality

F Drove Road Park – great for cycling and walking

How I feel and how I care

These topics were covered throughout the routes and later in the group discussion, these bring together the mainly experiential topics of the Place Standard.

“We all go to the Gala Day, the floats end up at Watson Park, I’m Flower Queen this year there’s a Queen from each Primary School”

“Volunteer Park is my favourite place, I used to play for Armadale Thistle”

Meeting and talking to people

What is good now?

- *I go to the Main Street shops to meet my friends and we sit at the cross.*

What could be better?

- *We could do with more destinations like a pizza place.*
- *It would be good to have an ice cream shop again like Coias.*
- *If the town had better free wifi I might spend more time on the main street with my friends.*

Feeling proud and a part of my place

What is good now?

- *There is good community spirit here*
- *We have the Gala Day, good parks and strong traditions.*
- *Money from the Gothenburg pub helps to pay for the Gala Day*
- *Volunteer Park*

What could be better?

- *The Main Street can be daunting to cross for young people, there should be better connections and more crossings, the speed of traffic can be a barrier.*

“I don’t think this is safe because every November there’s a fire at the corner of the park and tons of kids could get injured”

Armadale Primary pupil in Mayfield Playground

Feeling safe

What is good now?

- *When asked if they feel safe in Armadale everyone shouted yes! Then they all started to think of maybe one incident when they didn’t.*

What could be better?

- *I’m scared when teenagers are in the park and we want to play*
- *I get scared of big dogs*
- *We are intimidated by drunk people sometimes, or creepy people.*
- *We should get some better lighting.*

Fixed clean and managed

What is good now?

- *Queen Elizabeth Square*

What could be better?

- *The roads have lots of holes in them.*
- *There is too much litter*
- *There should be more bins*
- *There should be better fences at Mayfield Park*
- *The grass pitches get muddy and hard to play football when people walk their dogs there and let them run about.*

Having our say and being listened to

What is good now?

- *These Place Standard results will be fed into the Armadale Regeneration Plan.*

What could be better?

- *We didn’t know why the trees were being removed from the Black Moss, now we know it’s part of a project and new ones will be planted.*

When scoring the Place Standard all together we discussed how the young people could put their points forward. The Community Regeneration Officer explained about her job and that elected members (councillors) are also there to listen to people and try and make a change.

Identifying sustainable learning settings in Armadale

Topic/ SDG	How do I get from one place to another?	What I need to live well	Where I go and what I do	How I feel and how I care
Natural environment and biodiversity		People’s gardens, most pupils here will have one.	The Black Moss, Queen Elizabeth Square, Dale Hub Garden, Armadale Primary Field	
The climate emergency			The Black Moss as a carbon store, Armadale Primary Field for potential climate action	Community Council and Armadale Regeneration Group for resilience and local planning
Economies – local, sustainable and sharing		The Main Street, Armadale Shed, Library, Local produce, Gothenburg Pub, cafes	Mill Garden Centre family business	Historic jobs in industry, current work is in service industry. Improve derelict land
Energy – past and future		Houses with solar panels and energy efficiency external insulation.	Wind turbine visible from Black Moss	Coal mining heritage extracing energy from the ground along with fireclay for brick production
Health and wellbeing, activity and play	Active travel cycling and walking routes throughout Armadale. Cycle parking on Main Street	Dance class, Taekwondo, Partnership Centre, Volunteer Park, Scout Hall.	Black Moss, all Armadale parks, local football fields	Davie Kerr Heritage Walk, Volunteer Park
Sustainable transport and access	Bus routes and bus stops through Armadale, Armadale Train Station			Historic transport centre, stagecoach and cattle droving routes.
Community services and assets	Core Path maintenance and provision of seating areas	Partnership Centre, Doctors, Dale Hub, Library, Churches, schools, Armadale Thistle	Black Moss regeneration work	We miss the swimming pool.
Community coherence and resilience		Gothenburg Pub community wealth building model, local school uniform swaps		Armadale Gala Day, Community Council, ARG, local elected members, people who help us

Key learning and reflections

- The workshop brought together three schools, so hosting at a neutral community venue was a benefit. Everyone was in a new place and all equal. There was a garden for play over lunch which was beneficial.
- One school sent a teaching assistant who had lived in Armadale their whole life and added depth and history to discussions. Carrying out the Place Standard exercise with families or older members of the community could add depth, understanding and belonging for learners.
- It was intended that each group contain three learners from each school for greater understanding and representation in discussions from all catchment areas. In the end each school followed a particular theme linked to the work they were interested in. While the first option would make the Place Stanard results more representative, the second represents a stronger progression of learning in the specific topic.
- The walkaround was a successful way to engage learners, and even when in one place, other similar areas were discussed allowing the exercise to reflect the whole town.
- We added prompt questions from the Climate Lens Place Standard to the Young People’s version to ensure sustainability issues were central to discussions in line with Learning for Sustainability aspirations.

Co-designing sustainable learning settings

Young people in Armadale have a considerable depth of knowledge about their community, as well as a strong understanding of justice and where things could be better.

The Place Standard exercise can be used by teachers and pupils to work together to unlock understanding of their place, and together identify places in their local community to learn from and about.

The table to the left presents a method of breaking down the Place Standard results into sustainability themes which link to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The next few pages outline Armadale as a Sustainable Learning Setting, considering ideas and concepts brought up by young people themselves.

A sustainable learning setting does not need to be a finished or beautiful space, it can be something that presents intrigue, or inspiration, or can become a discussion point for wider explorations. For example derelict land can often be seen as a hindrance, but it can also be an opportunity, a discussion about post-industrial sites and industrial heritage or a design project to imagine its future potential. Enabling learners to understand that it was once something, and can be something else.

Armadale is a sustainable learning setting



Map of sustainable learning settings in Armadale



“Finding out and connecting with people and groups in your local area can be an enriching experience for all involved as it provides real contexts and often content for learning. To help achieve the local, national and international targets around Net Zero and the SDGs, working in partnerships with your local community can be a positive step forward”

West Lothian Council

Learning locally can have far reaching consequences

Armadale is a typical Scottish town, yet as you will see in the map to the left and the subsequent pages, it also provides learners with a number of opportunities to understand wider concepts around sustainable development, outdoor learning and global citizenship.

Learning for Sustainability grounds the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, enabling learners to understand these, make connections, and be enabled to act in the future.

A neighbourhood, town like Armadale, or village is a good scale for learners to understand wider sustainability concepts. Armadale has greenspaces and nature reserves where nature and biodiversity can be considered. The town’s industrial heritage, coal mining and subsequent derelict areas can be prompts to explore energy, innovation, and future communities. There are a number of routes, sports clubs and activities to explore health and wellbeing while strong community organisations and networks support learning about citizenship and activism.

The subsequent pages outline this in more detail.

Workshop participants were:

Successful learners

Pupils understood that we need to improve greenspaces for nature. They understood barriers to accessibility for people less able, the risk from pollution, learned about energy in the past, and generating and saving power now and in the future.

Responsible citizens

Learners identified shops and public services needed to live well. They were concerned about litter, safety and derelict sites and understood their rights and responsibilities.

Effective contributors

Contributing to the Place Standard was an opportunity for young people to feed on their concerns in a structured way to the Regeneration Officer, and in turn to Armadale Regeneration Plan.

Confident individuals

Secure in the culture of their place from the annual Gala day, to coal mining heritage, and faith and wellbeing communities, participants were able to articulate their understanding, needs and aspirations.

Co-design and collaboration

- Increased scale: three schools working together enabled an understanding of a good portion of the town rather than the smaller scale of a catchment area.
- Shared opportunities: the schools are all within walking distance of each other and so there are overlaps in the areas where each school could feasibly take a class out for an activity.
- Shared resources: working with three schools enabled focussing on three different topic areas, which can be used by all schools in the future.
- Breadth of voice: working with the wider community/ community councils/ elected members and others could have added depth and history to discussions creating a stronger context for learners.
- Enabling influence: while the Place Standard exercise can support educators and learners in identifying potential sustainable learning settings, results should also be fed onto community councils, elected members, or local authority teams to support local place and outcomes planning and to in turn ensure young people do have a voice.

Natural environment and biodiversity



Overview

Protecting and encouraging nature, hand in hand with improving biodiversity can engage learners in a number of settings from the school grounds, to a local park or nature reserve.

Learning can vary from small growing projects, to planning and design of nature friendly biodiverse spaces.

Resources

- [Nature Scot Nature Discovery Map](#)
- [Learning through Landscapes Resources](#)
- [Design elements for school grounds](#)
- [Nature Scot Beyond your boundary- learning in a local greenspace resources](#)
- [OPAL surveys- nature and biodiversity](#)

The climate emergency, risks and adaptation



Overview

Scotland’s climate is changing. While climate change seems like a global or abstract issue for many in our communities.

Allowing learners to understand how the changing climate affects their own place can support their ability to act now and in the future.

Resources

- [Adaptation Scotland Climate Ready Places](#)
- [Climate Ready School Grounds Resources](#)
- [Learning Through Landscapes resources](#)
- [Climate Action towns Toolkit- Adaptation workshop 1](#)
- [SEPA flood risk maps](#)
- [OPAL surveys- climate survey](#)

Examples from Armadale...



The Black Moss

A biodiverse greenspace: the Black Moss is a peat bog, active travel route and area of nature restoration projects.

Potential for: seasonal projects, nature observations, science lessons



Local Parks

There are parks in walking distance of all three primary schools, each with different assets and qualities.

Potential for: biodiversity improvement design projects, hedge wildlife study



Armadale Primary Field

Armadale Primary has safe enclosed greenspace which has been developed with some growing and natural play.

Potential for: visits from neighbouring schools for learning, shared projects. development



Dale Hub Garden

A small but well planned community garden with space for growing, learning and play.

Potential for: learning visits on a number of topics, ideas for design

Examples from Armadale...



The Black Moss

As a peat bog, the Black Moss is a carbon store, and it’s management will continue to lock in carbon to support Scotland’s route to Net Zero Carbon.

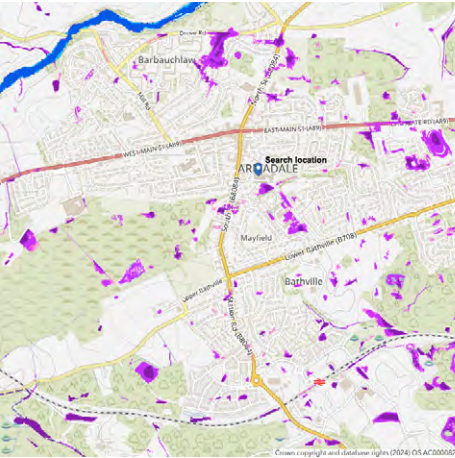
Potential for: climate science discussions, class visits, research



Armadale Primary Field

Armadale Primary has undeveloped space with potential to develop learning spaces that can contribute to climate action.

Potential for: collaborative projects, food growing projects



Adaptation Workshop

Consider local risks to the changing climate, flooding, increased sun, and what can be done to prepare and act.

Potential for: Climate Ready School Grounds audit, design activities, explore climate ready places



Resilience planning

Armadale has strong community resources and networks equipped to deal with a climate emergency.

Potential for: exploring community resilience and emergency responses

Sustainable, sharing and local economies



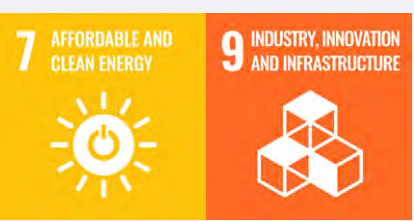
Overview

Exploring the circular, or sharing economy, co-operatives, community wealth-building and locally sourced food and materials can be beneficial in exploring responsible consumption and production and innovation. Enterprise projects, swap shops, research into local food production as well as projects promoting local businesses and services are all feasible.

Resources

- [Zero Waste Scotland - Circular Economy in Education Resources](#)
- [Developing Young Workforce sector activities](#)
- [Circular Classroom](#)
- [Countryside Classroom - Local Food](#)
- [Royal Highland Education Trust- materials on food and sustainability](#)

Energy- past and future



Overview

Energy generation enables learners to explore STEAM topics, and carry out experiments. Most communities have examples of renewable energy in action nearby to view or visit.

Depending on the local community there is also opportunity to explore industrial heritage, coal mining, oil, hydroelectric and local jobs.

Resources

- [Glasgow Science Centre Teacher Resources](#)
- [Our Future Energy](#)
- [National Mining Museum Scotland Teacher Resources](#)
- [Get Learning - Energy](#)

Examples from Armadale...



The Main Street

A traditional Main Street, along with South and North Street provide provisions and services for the town.

Potential for: if Armadale was an Island, would we have what we need?
Local foods and supplies



Jobs past and future

Armadale was historically a mining and industrial town, manufacturing bricks and steel and is now a service centre.

Potential for: Family history, local history project, community jobs survey



The Goth

An unique economic model, a pub which funds community activities like the Gala Day.

Potential for: discussing alternative economies, local enterprise projects



Armadale Shed

Where people share the tools and resources to work on a project of their choosing, and in safe, and inclusive surroundings, re-using materials.

Potential for: design and technology, circular economy, sharing spaces

Examples from Armadale...



Energy past

In Armadale Buttries and Stair Pit extracted energy from underground, while the mill utilised river water flow and the gasometer stored gas energy.

Potential for: energy transitions, local or family heritage project, energy generation science project



Wind turbine

Visible from the Black Moss there is a wind turbine, generating energy from renewable sources.

Potential for: energy discussions, science projects, creating windmills, monitoring wind in the playground



Solar panels

This house on Main Street has solar panels (photovoltaic) to generate energy from light.

Potential for: renewable energy discussions, monitoring solar hours, solar energy project



Energy efficiency

These houses have been fitted with extra insulation and a new roof to make energy bills cheaper.

Potential for: discussions about energy efficiency at home, science on thermal mass and heat transfer in materials

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING

One of the co-benefits of acting on the climate emergency by supporting walking, wheeling and cycling has been the health benefits of more active people. Likewise acting on the nature emergency can create biodiverse areas that people are keen to explore. Play and discover can support unlocking these benefits for young people.

- [Sustrans Active Travel resources for teachers](#)
- [Learning through Landscapes Health and Wellbeing and Play resources](#)
- [TCV Natural Play ideas](#)

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

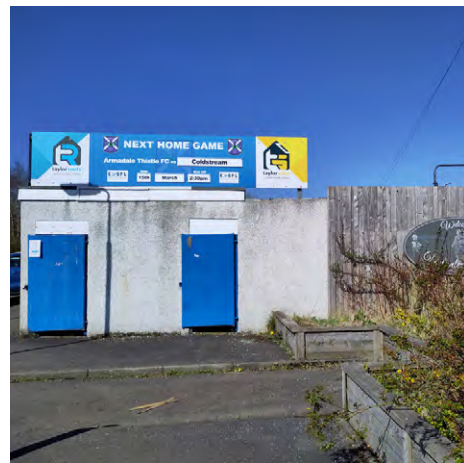
Reducing reliance on the car can improve activity levels or build social connections. Understanding the transport system can unlock learning on mapping, timetabling, and engineering. Exploring carbon emissions of modes of transport can underpin climate change topics, while exploring accessibility for all can support understanding of inclusion.

- [Sustrans Active Travel Resources for Teachers](#)
- [Eco Schools Transport Resources](#)
- [Road Safety Scotland Resources](#)
- [Network Rail Educational Resources](#)
- [Bikeability tools for schools](#)
- [Junior Road Safety Officer Resources](#)

[illegible]

These routes connect historic and still existing parts of Armadales heritage, accompanied by stories from the past.

30



Football has been played at Volunteer Park since 1880 and continues to be 145 years later.



There are parks, recreation grounds and playgrounds easily walkable from all three schools.



Armadale Partnership centre has a large sports hall as well as a studio for dance and a number of clubs promoting activity.

There are a number of bus routes through Armadale connecting the town to neighbouring places and Edinburgh.



The current Armadale station dates from 2011, but there was one previously. Where can you go directly from Armadale?



Goods railways shaped Armadale influencing the form of Mayfield. There are clues in the angle of the scout hut and path to St Anthony's school.

31



Armadale was on the main stagecoach route between Glasgow and Edinburgh and the site of a stagecoach robbery in the late 1830s!

31

Community services and assets



Overview

Good community services with regards to healthcare, water supply, waste management, education, parks and libraries are key to functional communities and reduced inequalities. How did the provision of these services come about in the past? What are the risks if any are reduced or lost? What do we need to live well in our place? What funds the services we use?

Resources

- [West Lothian Council - Your Community Armadale and Blackridge](#)
- [Armadale Partnership Centre](#)

Community coherence and resilience



Overview

Community resilience is essential to acting on the climate emergency, but a resilient community takes years of involvement, advocacy and engagement to develop.

Involving learners in community understanding community organisations or inputting to local plans can enable and embed advocacy and involvement.

Resources

- [Scottish Parliament Learning Resources](#)
- [UK Parliament Learning Resources](#)
- [Stalled Spaces Scotland toolkit](#)
- [Climate Action Towns](#)
- [Armadale Locality Plan](#)

Examples from Armadale...



Partnership Centre

A multi-purpose venue that provides a range of community services and activities.

Potential for: adaptation workshops, Intergenerational learning, recycling workshops and events.



Schools and grounds

There is lots of opportunities to learn within school grounds and buildings, and in the case of Eastertown and St Anthony's the adjacent green spaces.

Potential for: outdoor learning



The Dale Hub

A small community centre supporting families and the local community in Armadale. They have a play-based focus and community garden.

Potential for: play and garden research, small group visits, community links.



Doctors or healthcare

The GP Practice also provides screening programmes, ante natal services, child health clinics and smoking cessations services.

Potential for: learning about people who help us, understanding healthcare.

Examples from Armadale...



Armadale Community Council and Regen Group

These organisations exist to look after Armadale and are connected to the council to support change and action,

Potential for: local democracy, climate activism, representation



Faith communities

A number of faith communities in Armadale support the population and offer other community services.

Potential for: RME, Community activism, understanding church buildings



Armadale Gala Day

This annual vibrant event brings together the primary schools and community organisations in the town.

Potential for: discussing local traditions and celebrations in different places



Derelict spaces

A large proportion of Armadale live close to derelict land, (such as the old Arnold Clark site) so learners are conscious of this.

Potential for: design projects, stalled spaces ideas, activism and representation



Discussing locations as a group around the map.

Co-designing your sustainable learning setting

In Armadale the main aim was to identify places, settings and opportunities for Learning for Sustainability in the vicinity of the schools.

The Place Standard offered an ideal opportunity to identify those places and community stories while also understanding learners interests. This might be a particular topic around which to shape learning, or a particular place like a derelict site, or a town square around which learning such as research followed by a design project could be identified.

Working in this way where the outcome is not clear at the outset can be daunting for many – so the following few pages offer a framework to work against, and the example from Armadale should provide enough scope to develop learning opportunities based on pupils interests and aspirations.

Process to co-design your sustainable learning setting



Think about...

Scale You don't need to cover a whole town, just where you are most likely to learn, your school grounds might be enough. Or you can partner with other local schools to think big and share outputs. Just define the area clearly.	Starting small You can start with key parts of the Place Standard or place workshops and don't need to cover everything, this can build with new learners year on year to build up Learning for Sustainability resources for your school.	Appreciation You might not think much of your place, but a tiny burn is still a river and there's much to be learned from it. Learners will feel better enabled to act when learning about big concepts in their own place.
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Identifying sustainable learning settings ideas - potential ideas/ locations

Topic/ SDG	How do I get from one place to another?	What I need to live well	Where I go and what I do	How I feel and how I care
Natural environment and biodiversity	Green corridors and nature networks for wildlife movement	People’s gardens	Local nature reserve, beach, local parks, school playground, local rivers and forests	Are there community environmental groups? Youth Parliament membership
The climate emergency	Walking buses, or cycle to school groups	Local community gardens or food growing initiatives, school garden projects, local farms	Areas of flooding or coastal erosion. Think about changing climate, ask older family	Are there any local climate or resilience groups?
Economies – local, sustainable and sharing	Community transport or car sharing, taxi services	Shops and services, healthcare, libraries, charity shops, shed, laundrette, larder, swap shops	Pop-up shops and local markets in streets and spaces	Historic jobs, current jobs, enterprise and sharing opportunities
Energy – past and future	E-vehicle charging	Houses with solar panels, renewable energy and energy efficiency external insulation	Wind or hydro energy generated locally in the landscape	Historic energy generation – coal, peat, watermills, oil
Health and wellbeing, activity and play	How easy is active travel – walking, wheeling and cycling? are there local routes.	Sports halls and facilities, team sports clubs, coastal activities, local sports clubs	Informal activity and sports such as local parks, informal play	Sports and activities that bring the community together, not and in the past
Sustainable transport and access	Public transport routes – bus, train, boat, or local bike library	Active travel corridors	Walking routes and health walks in local parks	Historic transport in your place, how did people get around and between places
Community services and assets	Core path maintenance and provision of seating areas. school transport	Community centres, sports centres, healthcare, libraries, faith buildings, charity spaces	Parks and greenspace management	
Community coherence and resilience	Community transport	Housing associations, foodbanks,	Community environmental groups or community gardens	Community council, elected members, development trusts, campaigning groups

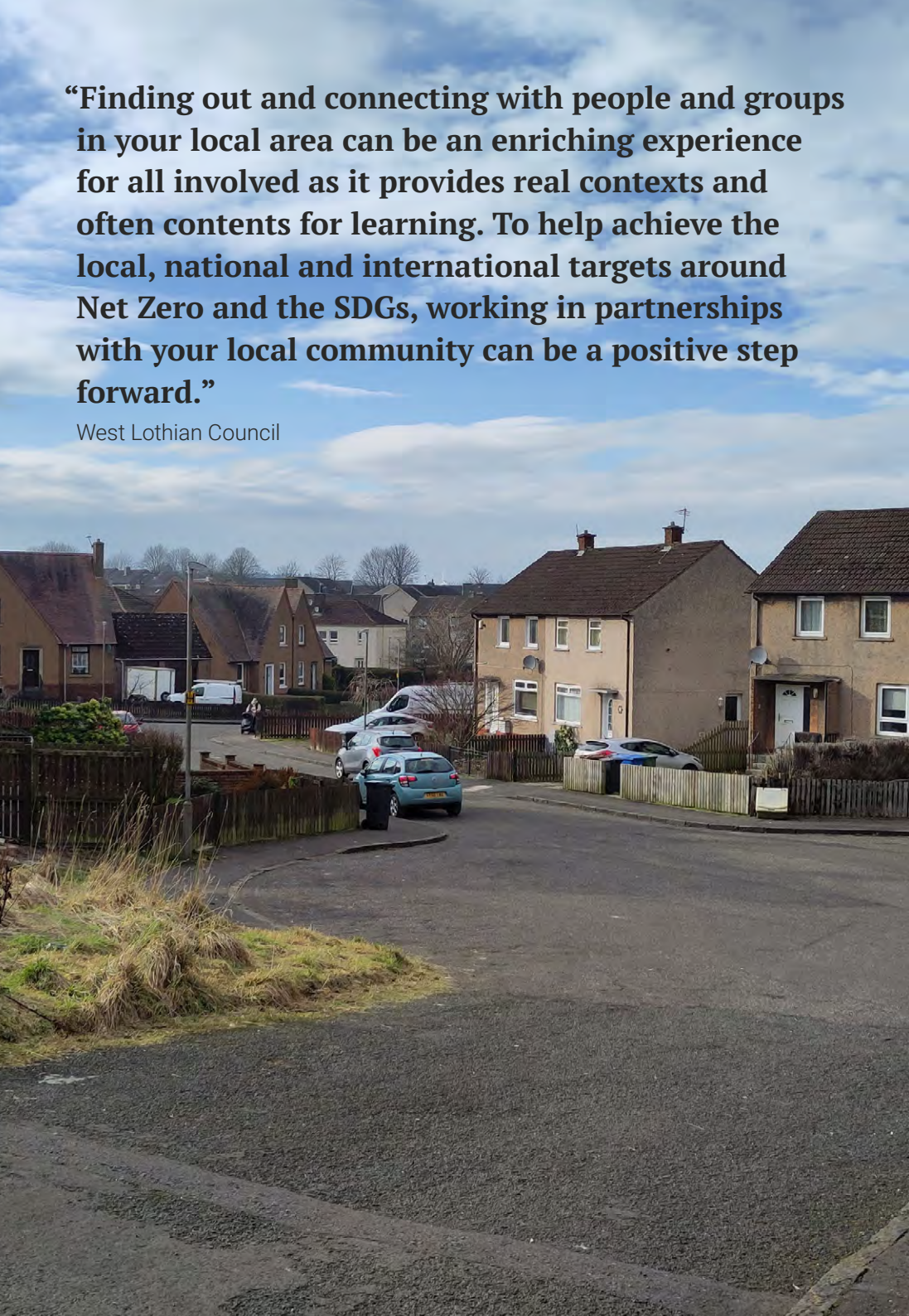
The table to the left considers typical locations in a place which could link to the Sustainable Development Goals and be considered a Sustainable Learning Setting with regards to Learning for Sustainability Policy and Target 2030.

Considerations

- Using the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework to underpin the identification of Sustainable Learning Settings can support learning being in line with Target 2030. These also closely align with the themes of Eco-Schools learning resources.
- Young people and their families are experts in their own places and co-designing with the wider community can bring forward local history and stories that desk based research or mapping would miss. The walk around also support this, prompting recollections.
- Collaboration between schools can support understanding the place as a whole rather than a series of catchment areas. This enables to schools to co-develop learning resources and activities and share resources between schools.
- The Place Standard is of a considerable size with a number of themes, one group of learners need not complete the whole thing and this can be apportioned out into different themes explores by different classes or groups.

“Finding out and connecting with people and groups in your local area can be an enriching experience for all involved as it provides real contexts and often contents for learning. To help achieve the local, national and international targets around Net Zero and the SDGs, working in partnerships with your local community can be a positive step forward.”

West Lothian Council





The learner’s view

Understanding how things work at the scale of your own place, can set foundations for understanding the wider world. The impacts of the changing climate and understanding how to act seem global and abstract to many communities and learners. Making links between learning for sustainability concepts and your local place can support learners to know how to act. Projects better embedded in the local community could enable schools and learners to deliver live small scale projects in their place, or campaign for improvement.

The local area plays a powerful role in helping schools support and develop the four key capacities in the Curriculum for Excellence by:

Successful learners

- Real-life contexts: learning in familiar settings makes abstract ideas more real and engaging.
- Outdoor learning: nature walks, or science fieldwork support problem-solving, and investigation.
- Libraries and local interests: offer access to local history and knowledge beyond the classroom.

Confident Individuals

- Speaking to others in the community: builds confidence and communication skills.

- Public presentations: pupils might share research findings or creative work with local audiences.
- Trying new things: taking part in community arts projects, sports clubs, or local events encourages self-belief and risk-taking.

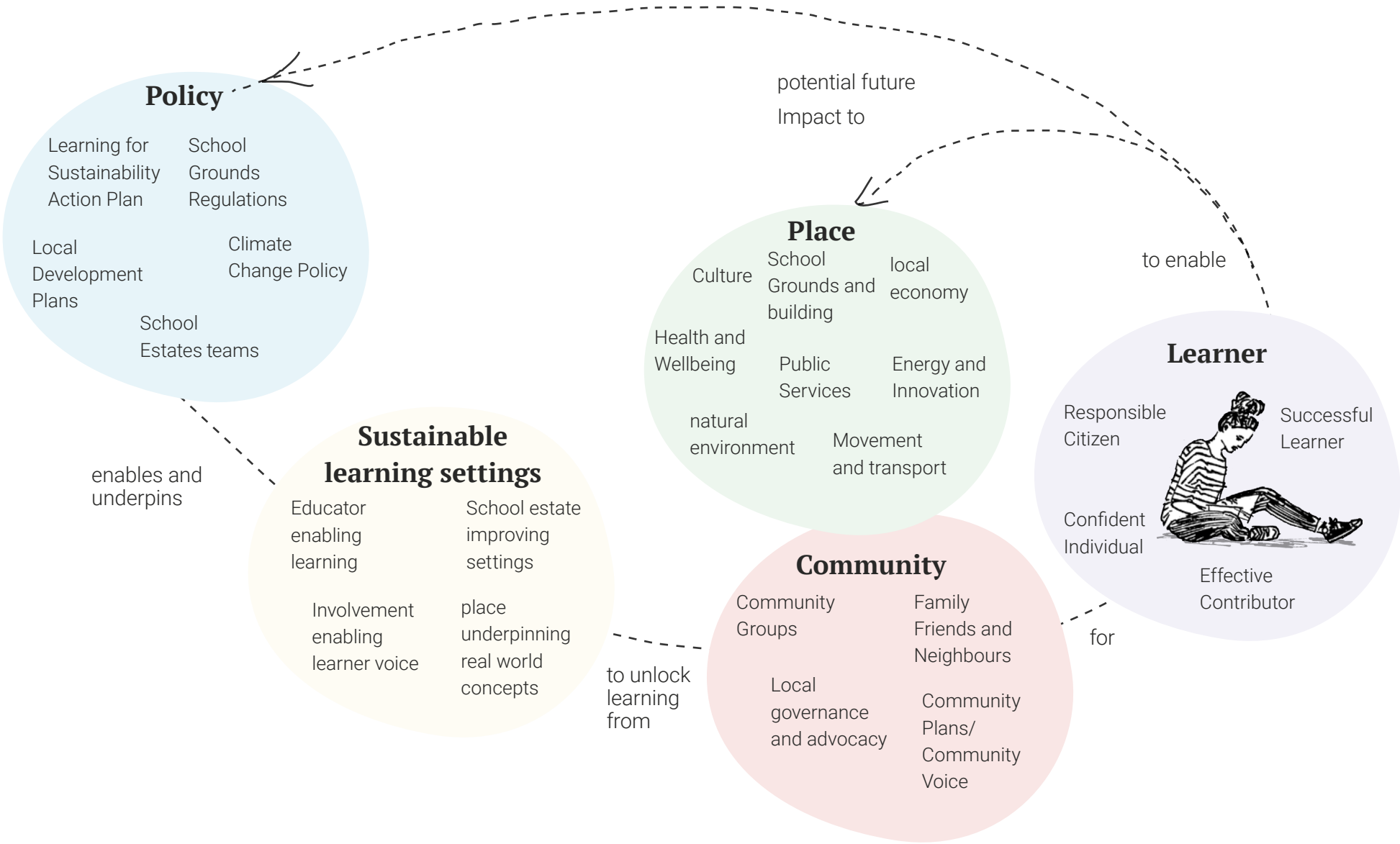
Responsible citizens

- Local governance and history: learning about local council decisions or past events builds local awareness.
- Community projects: taking part in litter-picking, recycling initiatives, or fundraising encourages care for others and the environment.
- Cultural awareness: understanding local traditions and diverse community groups promotes respect and inclusion.

Effective contributors

- Teamwork on local projects: building community gardens or planning charity events helps build teamworking and initiative.
- Enterprise challenges: creating products to sell at a local market encourages creativity and leadership.
- Problem-solving: addressing local issues (like traffic safety near the school) develops critical thinking.

Potential for sustainable learning settings



Learning locally for strategic impacts

“ **Co-designing learning experiences with young people can result in positive outcomes, such as increased motivation and engagement, the development of student voice and agency and the enhancement of creativity and problem-solving abilities. There are a number of ways that young people can be part of the co-design process, and many practitioners will already engage students in some form of this”**

West Lothian Council Together We Can LfS Guide for Practitioners

Potential strategic uses for this methodology

Briefing: the learning locally process and utilisation of the Place Standard could greatly benefit in the briefing of a new, retrofitted, or amalgamated schools to understand place and learning opportunities, and bring people together.

Learning: the process can help identify sustainable learning settings in your own community, enabling learning locally while considering real world concepts and global contexts.

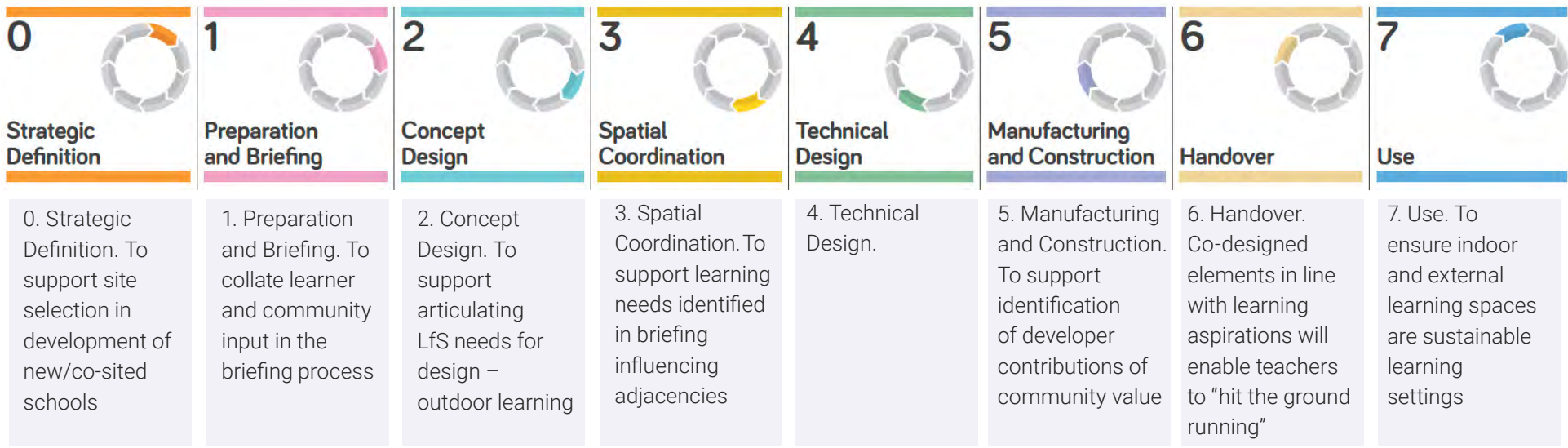
Improving: this process can support incremental improvements to the learning estate in understanding what learners and educators can get from their schools grounds and places to support the Learning for Sustainability Action Plan.

Contributing: this methodology can also support learners and the wider school community to have a stronger voice once outputs are fed onto community planning, community councils and elected members to ensure learners have a voice.

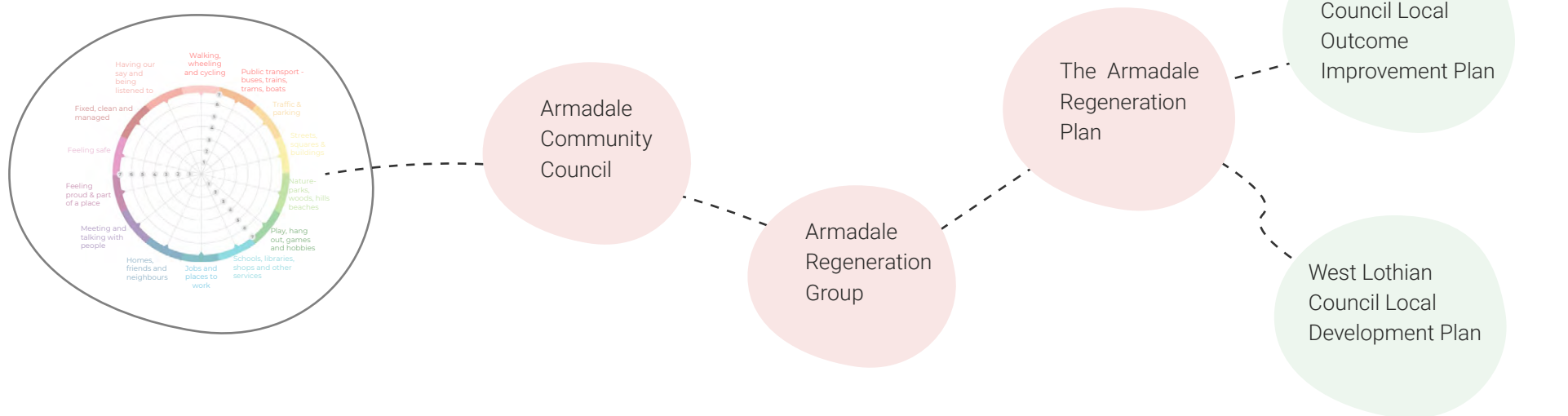
Applying: once schools have a clear understanding of elements that could improve their own grounds to the benefit of learners they are in a strong position to apply for funding or initiatives such as tree planting or rain garden implementation.

Collaborating: schools working together can identify and co-develop learning opportunities in their place, this can also identify opportunities to share school grounds for learning or tender for improvements collectively.

In learning estate delivery Against RIBA Plan of Work 2020



In community and place planning In Armadale Place standard results will inform...



Armadale Playgrounds Standard

Simplified school grounds audit

The most convenient and accessible place for outdoor learning and to understand concepts of sustainability is the school grounds. The provision in school grounds for greenspace, or wilder areas is not equal and often in line with what was expected at the time of school building.

The primary schools in Armadale were all adjacent to a community recreation space which the schools access for sports day and other activities. Over time due to incremental development the one at Armadale primary school has become landlocked and exclusive to the school and is now known as the school “Field”.

To understand whether the school grounds were able to act as a sustainable learning setting for the schools we provided each with a “Playgrounds Standard” to complete – a simplified version of the Place Standard (presented right) to understand learners needs and aspirations from their school grounds.



Summary analysis and recommendations for all

The feedback gathered from the pupils during the Playground Standard activity revealed several recurring themes and suggestions for improvement.

More and diverse greenery

A lot of pupils said they would like more varied greenery, including plants, trees, bushes, and flowers. They also thought it would be fun to incorporate features that attract wildlife, such as a bug hotel.

What this could look like:

- Planting a variety of trees, including flowering ones, along with seasonal plants and flowers.
- A sensory garden with aromatic plants and herbs offering students a chance to engage with nature through touch, smell, and sight.
- A small wildflower meadow to attract local pollinators, providing a space for students to learn about ecosystems and biodiversity.
- A bug hotel or bird nesting boxes where pupils can observe and learn about wildlife.
- A rain garden serving as an educational space for flood and water management.

More varied play opportunities

Many pupils expressed a need for more things to play with, including a wider range of activities or the creation of different “zones” within the playground to offer varied play experiences.

What this could look like:

- Adding more play equipment.
- A nature-based activity zone e.g. a mud kitchen or a vegetable garden.
- A sensory zone including things such as outdoor instruments, a sensory garden, and tactile materials.
- Additional sports equipment, like an outdoor ping pong table or a life-sized chess set.
- A small outdoor stage providing a space for performances.

More seating areas

While pupils generally felt there was enough space to run around, they wanted more – and a greater variety of – places to sit, chat and relax. Suggestions included additional benches and seating areas around trees.

What this could look like:

- An outdoor library area that doubles as a quiet zone.
- Benches around existing trees or among flowers to encourage nature observation, using renewable or recycled materials to educate about material footprint.
- Alternative sitting options such as a hammock, tree logs, or cushions.

Better weather protection

Pupils highlighted the need for more shelter so that they can use the playground comfortably in different

weather conditions, such as during rainy or hot days.

What this could look like:

- Tree planting with varieties that offer shade.
- Adding a rain shelter.
- Wind breakers such as simple fences or shrubs which also serve as an opportunity to learn about the weather.

Improved maintenance and more colour

Some children mentioned that some of the playground equipment is not in the best condition. They said that some items require minor repairs, such as cleaning and repainting, but others are more significantly worn and should be replaced. Finally, pupils wanted their playground to be more visually engaging, with more colour throughout the space.

What this could look like:

- Creating a maintenance schedule.
- Repairing and replacing items using environmentally friendly materials where possible.
- A wall dedicated to art made by the pupils, such as a mural.
- Colourful planters and furniture.
- Brightly coloured flowers.

Visit our resource [Design elements for school grounds](#) for more on how to deliver on these recommendations.

Questions

Nature greenspace
and climate

This place has green areas, I can see nature, trees and insects here



The best area for trees, plants and insects is:

We could make it better by:

Teacher prompts

- Where can you see nature, plants, trees insects?
- What do you want to use greenspace for?
- Can you learn about nature and the environment here?
- What would make that easier?
- The climate is changing, how would the playground be if there were: more sunny days? more rainy days? more flooded areas? more stormy days?
- What would you design to make it better in different weather to keep using it?

Play and meeting
friends

I can play with friends, or there are places to chat if I want



The best areas for play or meeting are:

We could make it better by:

Teacher prompts

- What is good for playing here?
- Are you able to chat with friends or meet if you do not want to play?
- What would you design here to make play or meeting friends better?
- Are different areas better for different types of play? Think about sports like football, quiet games, nature play, playground games in a big or small group.
- Ask your grownup what games they played at school.

What we
need

The school grounds have everything I need to play and learn

my favourite place here is (explain why)



I would design this to make it better

Teacher prompts

- Does the playground look and feel nice? Do you have everything you need for what you want to do here?
- What would you design to make it better? What do you think is missing?
- If you cycle or scoot to school is there somewhere to keep your bike or scooter, and store your helmet?
- Is there opportunity to run lots in the playground?
- Are you able to do gym outside? What spaces and places do you use?

Results

Nature greenspace
and climate

Armadale primary: We have some green spaces and grassy bits in our playgrounds but mainly we have a big field. It is one of the best places for trees, plants and insects. It would be even better with more plants, bushes, trees and nice flowers. We would also like more things to play with, like a hammock between the trees.

The planters and bushes are nice too. There could be more of them and need more care, like watering more often, to help them grow.

The willows are a great area. It would be nice to have more animals there. Another insect house or insect area would help bring more wildlife. We also like the greenhouses and the plant garden in the playground.

It is very hot on sunny days because of the black ground. We also don't come outside when it is too rainy as there are not many dry places – maybe one class in the outdoor classroom. We would like to see less concrete and hard surfaces in our playground too.

St Anthony's: The best area for trees, plants and insects is the forest area. We could make it even better by planting more things, adding bug homes or a bug hotel, and bringing in more animals.

Play and meeting
friends

Armadale primary: One of the best places to play and meet friends is the playground. It would be even better if it was bigger and had more toys and fun things to play with. There are more things to play within the infant playground. The upper playground would also be nicer with more trees.

We can chat anywhere in our playground but there are not many places to sit down. We use the benches, but they need to be looked after or replaced. It would be lovely to have flowers planted around them too.

The maze is a fun place to play. It would be better if it had more toys in it.

We like the field and would like to use it more. Adding more benches would help. Some of us also want to use the MUGA more often.

We use the play park, but it would be nicer if it was cleaner and the old wood was replaced with new wood.

St Anthony's: One of the best places to play or meet friends is the library door area. It would be nicer with some benches, more colours, and some outdoor games to play.

What we
need

Armadale primary: One of our favourite places is the field because it's un, big, we can run around and play in groups or on our own. It would be even better with more things to play with, and stuff to do. We could maybe have parts or zones for different things. More benches and some shelter would help us use it more.

Another favourite is the maze because it's fun to run around and find our way out. The MUGA is also popular, and we would like more opportunities to try more and different sports and maybe have a bigger pitch. We also like the willows and the gazebo in the field because it's calm and peaceul there. The play park is nice too, it's sunny and feels safe. We also have places for our scooters and bikes in the playground.

The playground doesn't always look as nice as it could. The maze needs some cleaning and a bit of painting, and we would like more colour and new wood in the play park to make it even better. We would also like more greenery and flowers in the playground, more seats around the trees and to take away the fences.

St Anthony's: Our favourite place is the MUGA because we can play football and basketball there. To make it better, we would repaint the lines and add astrotrurf.



Eastertoun Primary Action Plan

How I get from one place to another

Concerned about safe and healthy access for pupils travelling to their school and nursery Eastertoun pupils were keen to explore getting around Armadale, safely, and healthily.

Big question...

Imagine an Armadale in the future that is safer, healthier and easier to get around for everyone. What can you learn from other places? What changes would you make?

Pupils from Eastertoun Primary map their favourite places in Armadale.

Areas of interest

Eastertoun Primary School selected this topic in line with their current school work around getting to school safely. Their school is sited in a way that makes safe routes to school harder to implement. Young people there are keen to understand the balance between safe, healthy, and accessible travel to school and around their town.

Easterton pupils were concerned:

- That Armadale Main Street acts as a barrier, with fast cars and limited crossings meaning they were less likely to go to the other wise.
- About pollution, both in terms of air quality but also litter along with the lack of trees or greenery on the streets.
- For others – pupils were very concenred about safety, but also getting around for those less able. They also noted a lack of comfortable places to stop or wait (in public places and at public transport stops).

Recommended activities

The Main Street as a barrier

 **Sustainable Learning Setting – Armadale Main Street**

Take a walk down the Main street from Manse Avenue to the Cross. Think about pollution, both air quality and litter, and how pleasant it is to walk, wait or sit. Are there many trees to absorb pollution? Where could you sit and wait for friends? How could you make Main Street less of a barrier for people, where would you design in improved crossings?

A place for people audit.

 **Sustainable Learning Setting – Manse Avenue, Mill St, Main St.**

How accessible are the routes and streets around Eastertoun primary school. Choose a short route and borrow a buggy, a double buggy or a trundle wheel. Think about how you would get around if you could only walk short distances, or were pushing a buggy, or had a mobility scooter. Mark any issues on your map. When you get back to class think about what you would do to fix things.

Additional opportunities

 Air Quality Monitoring – can you borrow air quality monitors from the council? Outherwise there are simple activities you can do. Set up a monitor, at your school, on Manse Avenue and The Main Street. What are the results, what are the causes?

 Can you have an Active Travel Week at school? Aim to get to school walking, wheeling or cycling, with stickers for any pupil using active travel from the crossing guards to the school. What is the difference to the areas around the school for that week?

 A Public Transport Class Trip – is it possible to take a class trip using public transport, research trains and buses to understand routes, costs and timetables. Where could you go and what would you learn there? How much would it cost? Is it possible to use NEC cards? If it is feasible can you take the trip and write a review.



St Anthony's Primary Action Plan

What I need to live well

With their local church building under threat and aware of the loss of some community services, St Anthony's Primary were keen to understand and celebrate what is still good about Armadale.

Big question...

What can we celebrate about Armadale today? What do we have that is unique, special and worth shouting about?

Pupils from St Anthony's Primary map their favourite places in Armadale.

Areas of interest

Frustrated by the loss of some local services, and disheartened by vandalism, teachers at St Anthony's primary were keen to focus on the positives of living in Armadale and selected "What I need to Live Well" as a topic.

St Anthony's pupils were interested in:

- Sport provision in Armadale, from football at Volunteer Park, to dance in the Partnership Centre and taekwondo on the Main Street these activities were valued. While missing the old pool it was clear there was still a lot to celebrate.
- Having what they need on the Main Street in terms of shops for everyday use, there was an agreement that it's not so easy to get good cheap fruit and vegetables, and that the charity shop is missed.
- Improving derelict space – particularly at the old Arnold Clark site, both to make the town look better but also to provide housing or a shop.
- Energy efficiency and having warm houses as well as knowledge that family members used to work in coal mining.

Recommended activities

Celebrate sports in Armadale

➡ Sustainable Learning Setting – North Street

While the swimming pool has closed, there are still lots of sports opportunities in Armadale. Try as many as you can as a class. Visit Armadale Thistle, Watson Park and the Partnership Centre – can you learn anything from classmates? Dance, bowls, martial arts? From your research produce a newsletter to share these opportunities in your school and locally.

Energy past energy future

➡ Sustainable Learning Setting – route around St Anthony's Primary school

Learn about the coal mining history of Armadale, can older members of the community share anything about mining coal or keeping houses warm using coal. Learn about renewable energy from local wind turbine, solar panels and retrofit projects. Can you create a small windmill, or bonus points solar panel or water wheel.

Additional opportunities

Main Street Meal – can you make a menu based on fresh ingredients you can buy on Armadale Main Street? What were your original plans? Did you have to change the idea based on what was available? How many of the ingredients are sourced locally? (within 30 miles).

Circular Armadale – learn about sharing, re-use and recycling in Armadale. Can someone from The Shed visit the school?

Are there any charity shops, swap shops, school uniform sharing scheme, or jumble sales? Visit the library and learn about how easy recycling is. Can you make one of these happen in your school?

Imagining a future for vacant sites – design project. Armadale has a considerable amount of vacant land while housing is a key need at the moment. Learn about sustainable communities, and housing. Model your own house design and place them on the map of either Bathville or the Old Arnold Clark site. Learn about the trades, and premissions that would be needed to make it all happen.



Armadale Primary Action Plan Biodiversity and greenspaces

With a keen gardening club, and access to a large greenspace for the school and nursery, Armadale Primary are keen to understand how they can use that space to the best benefit for learning while involving more of the community.

Big question...

How can Armadale Primary Field act on the climate and nature emergence, starting small what changes can you make?

Pupils from Armadale Primary map their favourite places in Armadale.

Areas of interest

Inspired by a community health walk at the Black Moss and visit to the Dale Hub garden and the potential in their "School field" Armadale primary pupils care about nature, greenspace and play and explored a lot of opportunities in the Playground Standard.

Armadale Primary pupils cared about:

- Encouraging nature including animals, insects trees and plants. They felt areas on their walk could have benefitted from improved planting to encourage animals and insects.
- The opportunity for small green spaces, they enjoyed the visit to Queen Elizabeth Square and how nice it felt despite being a small space.
- Play opportunities for older children – they felt there wasn't enough provision for older children their age, and that teens often dominate play spaces. So identified a gap for dedicated opportunities for play for upper primary children.
- Feeling safe and welcome in parks and green spaces.

Recommended activities

School Field Live project

 **Sustainable Learning Setting – Armadale Primary School Field**

Using the recommendations from the Playgrounds Standard, how many of those recommendations could you design, fund and deliver. Develop up a few ideas and choose one to make happen. How much does it cost? What skills and permissions do you need? Can you make it happen, what did you learn from the process?

Places for play

 **Sustainable Learning Setting – Mayfield Playground, Wood Park, Dale Hub, Watson Park**

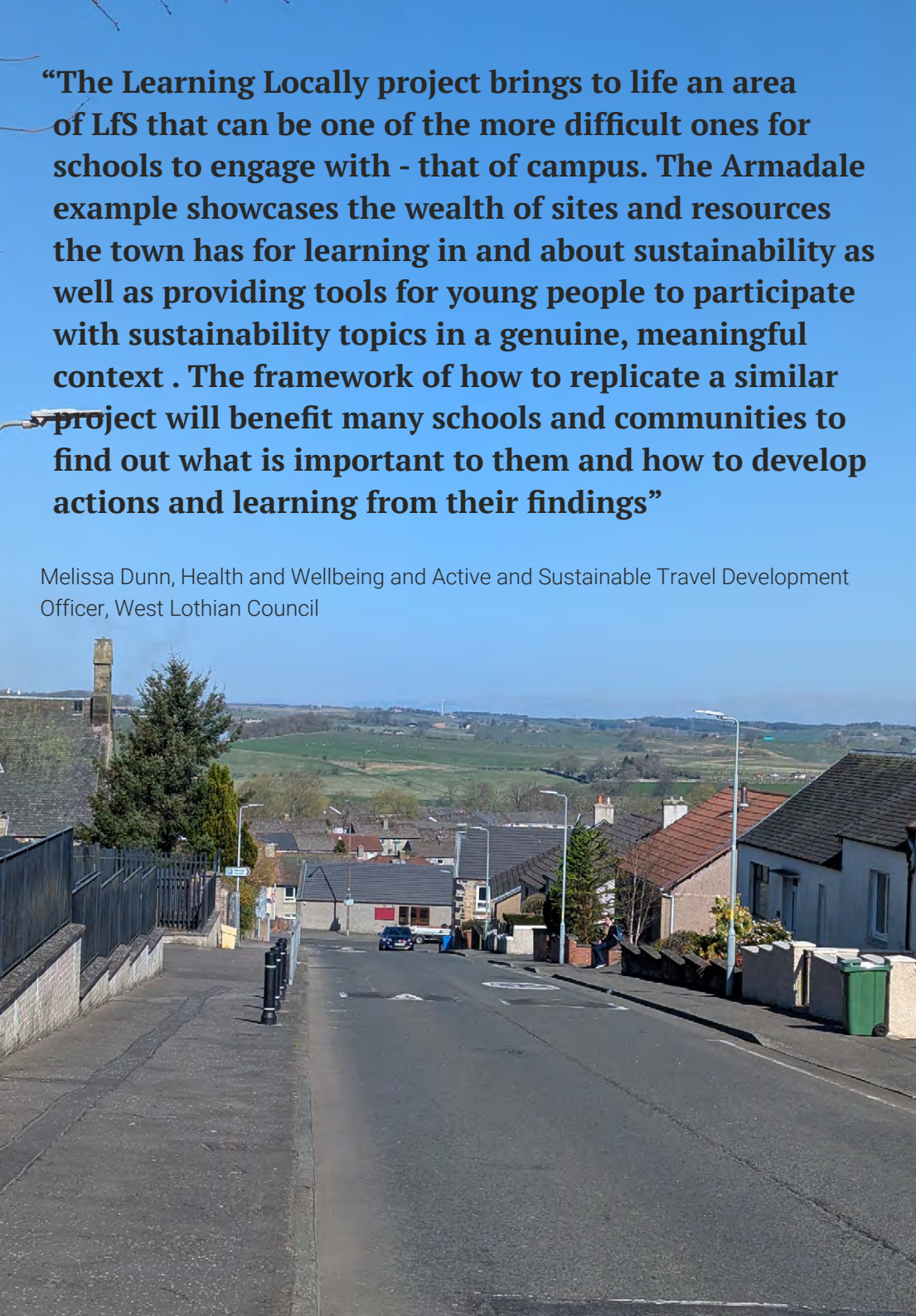
Explore play ideas for upper primary school children. Visit the local parks and note what is good and what could be improved. Research innovative play ideas from around the world. Design a play area for older children. Share you learning and ideas with Armadale Regeneration Group at their meeting.

Additional opportunities

 Climate Change Adaptation Workshop – learn about the changing climate using [Climate Action Towns adaptation workshop resources](#). Pick a place in Armadale and map what changes you have seen, what is likely to continue and what designs you would put in place. It is good to involve different generations in this.

 Micro parks, tiny forests and rain gardens – what makes Queen Elizabeth Square work? Learn about the [Wee Forest](#) planned for Armadale. Learn about rain gardens and why we need them. The Ranger service might help. Design another tiny green space in Armadale, where would you put it? What would you put in it?

 Greenspace Ambassadors – invite one of the other school groups for a shared activity at Armadale Primary field. Tell them about what's there at the moment and why. Talk about the plants, natural play, and future plans. Work together to plant trees or seeds, do weeding, clear a space, do orienteering or play games.



“The Learning Locally project brings to life an area of LfS that can be one of the more difficult ones for schools to engage with - that of campus. The Armadale example showcases the wealth of sites and resources the town has for learning in and about sustainability as well as providing tools for young people to participate with sustainability topics in a genuine, meaningful context . The framework of how to replicate a similar project will benefit many schools and communities to find out what is important to them and how to develop actions and learning from their findings”

Melissa Dunn, Health and Wellbeing and Active and Sustainable Travel Development Officer, West Lothian Council

“This learning for sustainability project, albeit short, will support and empower the Armadale community to make informed choices, foster resilience, and strengthen the Armadale Locality Plan by aligning education with long-term environmental, social, and economic well-being”

Michelle Murray, Community Regeneration Officer West Lothian Council

Next steps for Armadale

While just a short snapshot, this project has explored the potential to build on the interchange between the learning communities, community development and place in Armadale. The outputs from the young people in this report will feed into the Armadale Locality Plan.

West Lothian Council Community Regeneration and Learning for Sustainability group will continue to support the three schools to further explore the topics in the previous pages, enabling any links with community groups or local authority resources.

Armadale Community Council are planning to develop a Local Place Plan – which presents a strong opportunity to engage with all the schools, and understand the needs of the place from young people.

There is the opportunity for Community Improvement Planning to feature in local schools improvement plans.

We would encourage the schools to reflect on this process and identify opportunities to share learning resources, or embark on collective projects, for example with regards to outdoor learning or playground improvements where there might be benefits in fundraising or collectively purchasing for all schools.

Recommendations

This methodology presents a route for local authorities, schools and educators to deliver on the aspirations of the Learning for Sustainability Action Plan – in identifying and understanding the potential for Sustainable Learning Settings easily accessible from the school.

There is potential for this to support the forging of a sense of identity for pupils, and rooting schools in their wider community in existing schools and places, building the groundwork for working better together in a place, and supporting more holistic community planning.

Young people have an unique insight and excellent knowledge of their places and so the ability to feed that into community planning can support wider initiatives, such as identifying potential spend for available funding or projects for participatory budgeting.

In the development of a new school building, or an amalgamated or retrofit school project using the Place Standard can support the inclusion of local understanding to:

- ensure the school site can work for as much of the learning community as possible
- scrutinise routes to school to reduce the need for the car and encourage active travel
- enable the development of the school grounds and use of adjacent areas to support the delivery of the Learning for Sustainability policy



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