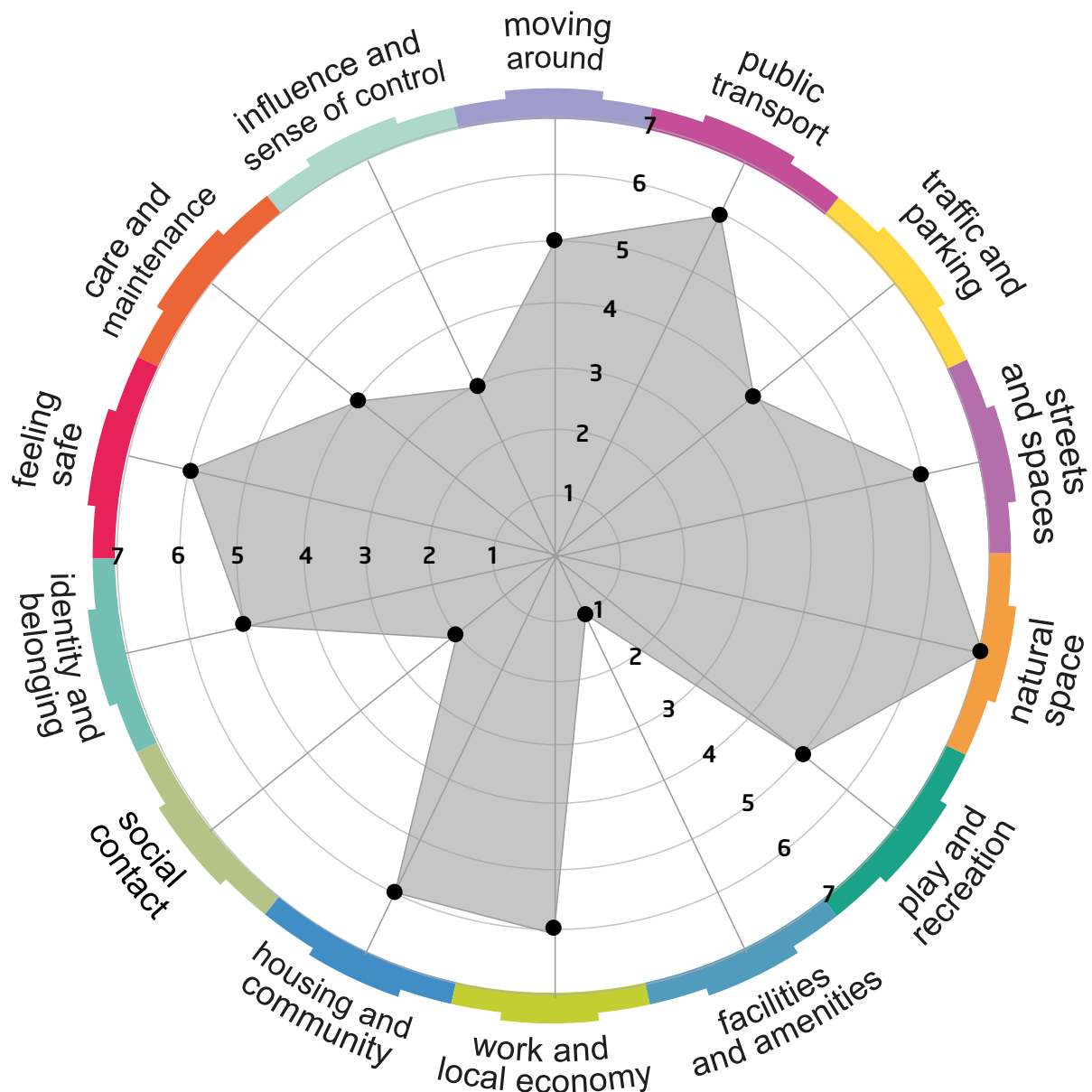


Place Standard tool

Strategic Plan 2020-2023



NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK – NATIONAL OUTCOMES



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Our wellbeing is shaped by the places where we live, learn, work and visit.

Our physical and social environment is the framework in which our lives take place and, depending on circumstances, it can provide us with opportunities or limit our potential. Understanding, respecting and developing the relationships between each other and the place around us is the essence of a place-based approach and is important if we are to improve wellbeing, particularly for people living with disadvantage.

The National Performance Framework (NPF) is Scotland's wellbeing framework. It emphasises the importance of listening to and understanding peoples' stories of real life experiences as part of increasing our wellbeing.

Each place is different, with its own identity and history, but there are issues and pressures that are common to all places. Whether it is urban or rural, aspects of place such as local transport choices, availability of further education, employment or training opportunities will vary. Each place will have different strengths on which to build and areas for improvement. There are significant challenges, particularly in those communities most affected by deep-rooted issues like poverty, low educational attainment, poor mental wellbeing and preventable ill health.

A place-based approach, also referred to as place-based working, is a holistic approach to identifying opportunity and needs within a particular place and addressing issues through collaboration across services and sectors.

Understanding a place, and its influence on individuals and the community is essential for effective place-based working. The Place Standard tool has been highly successful in helping communities and public authorities to generate the discussions required to understand the assets of a place.

This document sets a vision for how the Place Standard tool can build on its successes to date and support place-based working across Scotland. The strategy aims to ensure that the views, stories and real life experiences of people living in a particular place are captured, valued and integrated into the heart of decision-making processes.

PART ONE

WHY PLACE MATTERS

Place has a relationship with each of the National Outcomes in the NPF. Its significance has been highlighted further by the Scottish Government and CoSLA developing and adopting the Place Principle, a formal commitment to support place-based working. The importance of place and wellbeing is recognised increasingly across a number of strategies and legislation including the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. This increasing emphasis on place is based on evidence and experience of how the environment around us can positively influence our wellbeing and improve outcomes for communities.



<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

One of the Scottish Government's priorities is to make Scotland more equal and socially just. This ambition links with the aim of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to promote prosperity while protecting the planet.

Some places have more of the facilities and characteristics that support good health and wellbeing and enable people to flourish. Some other places lack these characteristics and this can have a detrimental effect on people's lives. These inequalities of place are linked to social, economic and health inequalities. A place may be an environment of relative prosperity or relative poverty, or it may well have elements of both, meaning that inequality often exists within communities as well as between areas.

Inequalities can be experienced by people through their relationship with a place. For example, a lack of affordable, warm, good quality housing can increase costs for many people and have harmful effects on health and wellbeing. This can reduce a community's resilience and ability to resist adversity, stigmatising areas and decreasing the potential for positive growth. Subsequently, a place may experience knock-on effects such as social problems, poor access to quality local employment or pressures on schools and education which can lead to communities becoming locked into cycles of systemic poverty and disadvantage.

The complex drivers of inequality mean that approaching the issue from a single perspective is unlikely to improve the outcomes in an area. To truly tackle inequalities, both the physical and social aspects of place need to be considered and acted on. The Place Standard tool can help us to understand these interconnected issues, give local people a voice and a role in influencing their future and bringing together all of the interests and resources within an area. This process of engagement and informed decision-making provides a strong foundation to address inequalities and improve the wellbeing of communities.

Efforts to combat climate change require shared action at a global scale, but the effects are likely to be felt most powerfully at local levels. It is at the scale of the local place where most communities will experience changes to their environment and where place-based working can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the transition to a net-zero economy in a socially just way.

Places are complex, and actions taken to support how we reduce negative impacts on the environment and adapt to climate change may well have impacts beyond their aim. Done well, climate change mitigation and adaptation measures can deliver important co-benefits impacting on issues such as health, reducing inequality, improving the physical appearance of a place and supporting inclusive growth.

Similarly, actions to address other issues within a community can often provide benefits for climate change measures and it is important therefore that place-based working is at the heart of considerations for adaptation and mitigation programmes. Collaboration between policies, professions, business and industry interests and, importantly, with local people, is essential if place-based working is to maximise the prospective benefits of change within local areas.

Incorporating accessible natural and semi-natural spaces such as parks, trees and waterways, has many benefits in a place. They are linked with improving both physical and mental health. They provide opportunities for physical activity and play as well as active travel. Green spaces that are well designed and maintained attract more visitors, and neighbourhoods with attractive green areas or vegetation are viewed as safer, which makes them more 'walkable'.

Green and blue infrastructure provide spaces for people to socialise. They can be part of the infrastructure to reducing flooding risks, help save energy through insulating buildings as well as helping to improve air quality and provide opportunities for local food growing, helping to build social connections and increase physical activity.



The Public Health Priorities for Scotland were published in June 2018 and recognised “that it is not primarily in our hospitals or our GP surgeries that health is first created. It is in our homes and our communities, in the places we live and through the lives we lead.”

The document also comments that the stark inequalities across Scotland’s health mean that society as a whole must increasingly turn towards supporting this sort of ‘wellbeing creation’, as well as reducing harm, for example, by increasing social cohesion, supporting attainment and reducing violence. The Public Health Priorities reflect this ambition and are intended as a foundation for the whole system approach, providing a focus for collective action to improve the public’s health and reduce health inequalities.

The public health priorities outline a clear focus on 6 key areas



1. A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities



2. A Scotland where we flourish in our early years



3. A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing



4. A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs



5. A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all



6. A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active

Using place-based working to support these priorities reflects the well-established understanding that the creation of safe places that nurture health has long been central to the public health agenda. Planning has always been central to efforts to improve public health, from the redevelopment of poor quality housing, to improving sanitation, water and air quality, and ensuring that we have access to health facilities.

Public health reform in Scotland promotes a whole system approach where partnerships between a broad range of stakeholders help to deliver positive and sustainable change to health outcomes. This approach acknowledges the important role that all parts of the system have in shaping health and the essential need to consider place and community at the heart of this process.

Although issues such as housing, planning, design and transport lie outside the traditional remit of the health service, they all have a significant role to play in achieving good health outcomes and can be seen as an important and influential element of the public health workforce.

The design and creation of good places has complex pressures and drivers. However, ensuring that the considerations of health are properly taken into account is essential if we are to improve the quality of life for people and to support decision-making and investment that ensures the best outcomes over the long term.

<https://publichealthreform.scot/the-reform-programme/scotlands-public-health-priorities>

The introduction of Inclusive Growth as a central component of Scotland's economic strategy sets out the case for an economic agenda that recognises the importance of place and communities in promoting equal growth across cities, regions and rural areas.

The economic strategy aims to tackle inequalities in outcomes, but also inequalities in opportunities. It sets out the need for a [One Scotland](#) approach to deliver on our ambitions. This requires all public sector agencies working together – recognising that all can and should make a contribution towards that growth – as well as the private sector, the third sector, and our universities and colleges. Place has a significant role at a regional scale, and is an important consideration in relation to the development of plans and programmes including Regional Spatial Strategies, Regional Economic Partnerships and City Region Deals. Establishing place-based, collaborative approaches at regional scales can set out a framework for investment and activity that is focused on achieving multiple economic and place outcomes in a manner that does not increase inequality by marginalising existing populations or challenging our climate considerations.

At a local level, a thriving local economy can provide work opportunities and help create vibrant places where people want to spend time and where businesses want to invest. Places with a mix of uses, including employment, leisure and recreation and attractive public spaces have potential to demonstrate resilience to wider economic change and adapt to changing circumstances.

THE ROLE OF THE PLACE STANDARD TOOL

How we live and act has an influence, not only on those around us, but is part of a series of complex relationships we have as global citizens. Place-based approaches help make the link between actions and wider outcomes and encourage us to Think Global and Act Local.

Since its launch in December 2015, the Place Standard tool has been used extensively across Scotland and internationally, receiving recognition from the World Health Organization. Part of the success of the tool has been its ability to create meaningful, structured conversations around the complex issues within places, allowing local people, decision-makers and other interests a common platform to assess the existing and future potential of an area.

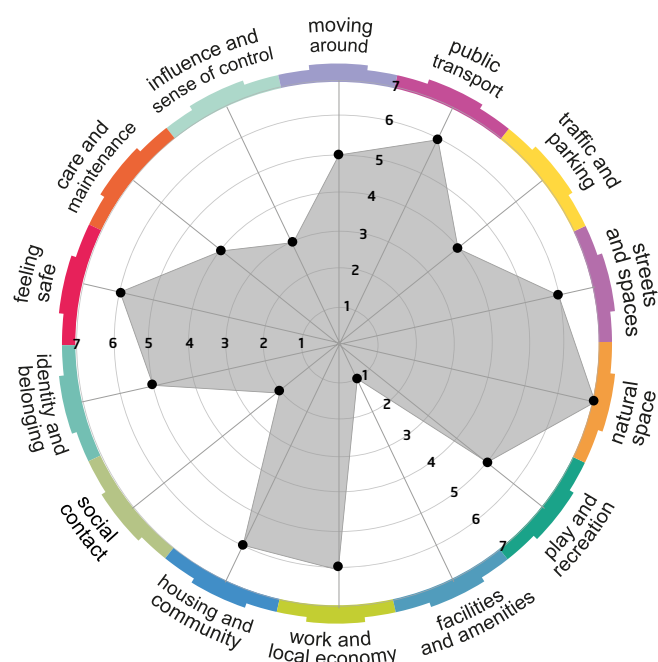
Improving outcomes requires effective collaboration and understanding of the key issues in a place. The ability of the Place Standard tool to support this agenda means that it can be a key aid to initiate effective place-based working processes.

The Place Standard tool can be a starting point to support the aims of the Place Principle. It promotes a shared understanding of place and the need to take a more joined-up, collaborative approach to services and assets to achieve better outcomes for people and communities.

The Place Standard tool has proven to be useful in supporting communities and public bodies work across agendas. Now, as work around place intensifies, how the tool is used and supported can be an important factor in increasing impact and in supporting wellbeing across our communities.

The tool has been used most widely for community and spatial planning engagement. However, moving forward the tool and the measures in place to support it will target areas where a greater focus on place-based working can have most impact. This will involve greater engagement with the development industry and exploring how the outputs of Place Standard exercises can be taken forward into wider place-based working.

Work on the future role of the Place Standard tool has been informed by feedback and experience gathered on its use and by an improvement programme which has engaged extensively with users on how it can be improved and used effectively. The aim of the improvement programme has been to review the tool, guidance and learning resources and, recognising that users will have different needs depending on their circumstances, to revise the tool and develop a number of user specific versions and user instructions.



PART TWO

AMBITIONS FOR THE PLACE STANDARD TOOL VISION AND AIMS

Vision

Our Vision is

“A Scotland where collaborative, place-based working tackles disadvantage, supports improved wellbeing, and protects the environment with all members of society involved and empowered in decision-making for their local areas.”

Aims

Our work to support this Vision has 5 key aims:



Reduce inequalities in Scotland's communities and in particular to improve wellbeing and support Scotland's public health priorities.



Foster and improve collaboration in the delivery of public services, new development and regeneration.



Support sustainability and resilience: environmental, social, and economic.



Encourage smarter, place-based investment by services and businesses that targets the needs and priorities of local communities.



Empower communities to lead change and influence investment, and build social capital and connectedness.

Place-based approaches need to be joined-up and collaborative, so the Place Standard partners will work across all issues of place to support the delivery of the Vision and Aims.

However, in order to make the most of current opportunities to support Scotland's communities, we will focus our resources and efforts on the following priority areas in particular. These were selected by a process involving input from the Place Standard Board and Place Standard Implementation Group, the outcomes of the Improvement Programme and consultation at Place Standard Alliance meetings. They were chosen as areas where there are key policy and delivery opportunities for place-based working and where the Place Standard tool to have a significant impact. Actions relating to each will be outlined within an annual operational plan.



Delivering places that meet everyone's needs requires a process that ensures that the ideas and views of our most vulnerable groups are taken into account and addressed.

The process of engaging communities is well-established in Scotland and, since the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, it has been a legal duty for community planning partnerships to ensure that communities are supported to participate in community planning to influence and shape change. To support this duty, proper insight and investment across services is required to ensure that the most marginalised and disadvantaged communities are able to participate in and benefit from this agenda. Communities that experience disadvantage may be less likely to have capacity to engage and participate in local processes, take action, access funding and deliver change in their local areas. Addressing this capacity gap is essential if inequalities are to be narrowed rather than increased.

Some population groups may be particularly marginalised, and meaningfully involving them in change is of real importance. It is often those who experience barriers to engaging with public services that would benefit most from participation in decision-making. Collaboration and innovative engagement in place-based activity can capture the important knowledge and views of diverse groups and help guide processes that are truly inclusive and most likely to be effective.



Our impact on the environment, our ability to sensitively manage change to a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions society and to support positive connections with nature in our communities is an essential part of sustainable and healthy living.

The challenges of the global climate emergency are unprecedented and the consequences of failing to rise to the challenge are stark. The climate is already changing and, alongside the drive to a net-zero society, we must begin the process of adapting to changes in our environment. It is essential that this transition considers the needs of everyone, which will require particular attention to ensure that inequalities are reduced, rather than increased, as a result of our actions.

Climate change is influenced by a vast range of issues and adopting a collaborative, place-based approach has potential to deliver co-benefits for many elements of our lives and our environment.

As the defining challenge of our times, climate change requires action at all levels of government, civic society and business worldwide. Place-based approaches can support coordinated, collaborative action to mitigate effects and can support and involve communities directly in planning for the changes that will be required in local areas.

Town centres, local centres and community services such as schools, health centres and retail hubs provide many of the essential services and opportunities that we access daily and inform our sense of identity and belonging.

The movement towards online shopping and large, out-of-town retail and leisure parks requires the reinvention of many high streets and local centres. These are areas of social and cultural heritage with important civic functions and strong meaning for communities.

Changes in society, including an ageing population, must encourage new innovative thinking for local centres to support these changes. Reinvigorating these places as welcoming, active, inclusive environments can help to counter social isolation, provide new models for living, support local enterprise and reinforce the important identity and meaning of our places.



Housing is the building block of our communities and is an essential part of our local infrastructure and identity as well as the foundation for health and wellbeing. To deliver housing that meets our future needs will involve supporting place-based approaches in the design and development of new places as well as in the regeneration of our existing communities.

Ensuring that housing which fits the needs of the local population, now and in the future, is a key part of the work to build resilient communities that are health-promoting and can sustain local services.

Engaging with housing providers across all sectors will be a vital element of this programme and this will be supported by a 'Design' version of the Place Standard tool. This version will support those involved with the design, planning and delivery of new development to use the tool in a focused way that informs the entire design process.

How we move around a place can influence our health and levels of activity, our impact on the environment, our ability to connect with each other and with facilities, and the layout and attractiveness of our communities.

The quality of the environment and the choices with which we are provided are a strong determinant of how we move around. Ensuring that walking and cycling are prioritised means making them pleasurable and easy activities and this requires the consideration of the wider environment.

Place and placemaking are now widely recognised as important components of effective active travel strategies. Investment in green and sustainable transport systems can act as a key catalyst to achieving multiple benefits, such as improving air quality, supporting green infrastructure, climate change mitigation and supporting wider regeneration. For individuals, the benefits can include increasing accessibility and inclusion, and increasing physical activity for key groups such as young people, disabled people and older people.

DELIVERY

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The Place Standard tool has been an effective method to support place-based approaches, developing a wide network of use and promoting collaborative approaches across Scotland and internationally.

The tool has been recognised, promoted and applied by the [World Health Organization](#), [European Healthy Cities Network](#) and [EuroHealthNet](#) with much of these delivery successes supported by the collaboration it encourages across sectors and organisations.

The Place Standard tool was developed through a partnership involving the Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland, Architecture & Design Scotland and Glasgow City Council, and implementation of the tool has been supported additionally by the Improvement Service. This partnership will continue to support the use of the tool and take forward the vision and aims of this strategic plan.

However, there is a need to increase the breadth and depth of engagement. We will seek to work across organisations and directly with communities to embed place-based working in policy and practice throughout Scotland. This work will be focused in particular on engaging with people and places experiencing disadvantage and inequality.

To deliver this strategy, we will develop an annual operational plan which will direct resources and provide a framework for monitoring and influencing our work. The operational plan will have collaboration at its heart, focusing on supporting the vision and aims of this strategy in innovative ways that respond to the needs of communities and that are flexible to accommodate changing circumstances.

Building on the Place Standard Alliance and Place Standard Leads network, we will increase our engagement and coordination with organisations across Scotland and beyond who can help to support the delivery of healthy, sustainable and connected places. The Place Standard tool has been used in 14 countries. Alongside the tool's growing international profile and reputation, we now have a network of new knowledge, skills and experience which will continue to be shared, developed and applied to the benefit of communities and organisations across Scotland.

The significant challenges that we face, from the climate emergency to improving public health and reducing inequality, require us to change the ways in which we currently work. These challenges mean that holistic and collaborative ways of working - whether referred to as a One Scotland approach, a whole systems approach, or place-based approach – are required in order to understand and address the complex nature of interconnected issues.

Place influences our lives on a daily basis and has profound impacts on wellbeing and the quality of life that we experience. The Place Standard tool has been shown to be a simple and effective way of convening and structuring conversations around the complex nature of place and therefore, when applied effectively, ensures that the significant investments we make in our places are informed by what matters to people most.

The delivery of this strategy aims to increase further the contribution of the Place Standard tool to improving outcomes for communities and protecting our environment. It will do this by supporting collaborative place-based approaches that understand and capitalise on the unique assets of places in Scotland and the essential role of communities in influencing decisions and positively shaping their future.

If you would like further information on this strategic plan or on the Place Standard tool, please contact us at **placestandard@gov.scot**

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