



Alloa Case Study

A focus piece showing how the use of the Place Standard shaped the way Clackmannanshire Council and partner organisations planned new housing and town centre improvements.

Architecture &
Design Scotland
Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

NHS
Health
Scotland



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

INTRODUCTION

In this focus piece, partner organisations Clackmannanshire (Clacks) Council and Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface (CTSI) share their experiences of applying the Place Standard to facilitate first professional collaboration and then community consultation, to inform housing design and town centre investment in Alloa.

Over the coming years, Clackmannanshire Council, along with the Business Improvement District (BID) body Alloa First, is delivering improvements to the town centre of Alloa, with an emphasis on re-introducing housing to the town centre and meeting the needs of the elderly population.

The starting point of the initiative was a development of new multi-generational housing by Kingdom Housing Association in Alloa town centre. Following a design workshop with Architecture &

Design Scotland (A&DS), and given local political sensitivities, the council recognised that an improvement of local services and infrastructure were required alongside the new housing to meet the needs of elderly residents.

Two stages of Place Standard work followed. The first stage (supported by A&DS and Scottish Government (SG)), tested requirements for the town centre. The second stage was a major community consultation in early 2019, led by the council and Alloa First, and facilitated by CTSI. These events were catalysts for change including new multi-generational housing, a new town centre masterplan, local infrastructure improvements, and service planning including care in the community.

PLACE STANDARD - ALLOA FOCUS

A&DS key Learning points

- A multi-sectoral Place Standard exercise helped forge closer collaboration and ongoing partnerships between local authority, business groups and third sector stakeholders. Combined with a robust community engagement, this collaborative partnership approach has already unlocked considerable funding for town centre improvement such as renewed streetscape, an active travel hub, key road crossings and new social spaces.
- The holistic nature of the Place Standard tool and the relevant and engaging nature of the themes, combined with external, non-partisan facilitation (by A&DS with SG), opened up the conversation about a small but important housing site into a shared vision for town centre regeneration.
- By the end of the professional focus group those participants previously unfamiliar with one another's work had evolved a new and broadly shared sense of the task in hand, inspired to go forward and take collaborative action.
- The initial decision to bring the housing to an A&DS design workshop, followed by two stages of Place Standard engagement, led ultimately to a completely different take, not only on the delivery of the housing within the red line boundary but on the whole approach to the town centre.
- Wider benefits to the community of streetscape improvements associated with housing were verified by the extensive public consultation in stage two.
- Early (pre-planning) engagement of health and social care professionals and dementia care specialists helped to identify simple but effective design measures to benefit elderly residents and those with dementia.
- Collecting demographic information alongside Place Standard responses allowed for the wider community engagement process to be adjusted along the way to ensure broad and diverse representation. To achieve a breadth of engagement targeted involvement was required in a variety of settings and for some an adapted condensed version of the tool was used.

ALLOA

Planning Stage	Town Centre Masterplan / Place Plan / Local Development Plan
Leadership	Clackmannanshire Council, Alloa First, Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface (CTSI)
Participants	Stage 1 - service professionals, planners and Kingdom Housing Association project team designers. Stage 2 - around 300 local residents – including older people, senior school pupils, members of local disability groups and racial minorities.



PLACE STANDARD - ALLOA FOCUS

"The strength of the Place Standard tool is that it can be used in so many different settings and at various scales, be it street, town centre or even wider. It enables a more focussed and structured engagement with people, moving beyond simply the airing of grievances. It allows people to structure their thoughts on particular issues and (dare I say it), even be positive."

Grant Baxter, Principal Planner, Development Quality, Clackmannanshire Council

"Through this project, we have found that the crux has been in true partnership working, and wider community engagement. When considering multigenerational housing in a town centre, it is good to engage with those who are already working with local older people, those with dementia and with disabilities. We would recommend planning reaching out to any local disability groups/access panels, finding out what already exists in the way of age/dementia friendly activities in the area."

Louise Orr, Team Leader, Volunteering and Routes to Work, CTSI

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

The process was motivated by concerns (including from local politicians) about whether the town centre would make an appropriate place for older people and those with dementia to live. Perceived problems included anti-social behaviour, quality of the street environment and non-car accessibility.

A first stage of stakeholder focus group work examined the issue and made sure dementia design was placed front and centre. We had also engaged A&DS at the earlier design stage as we felt the site – centrally located in the conservation area and next to an A-listed public building – needed a design process that raised the bar beyond previous schemes.

At the second stage we carried out a major public consultation to inform a new town centre Masterplan or/Place Plan as part of the Local Development Plan review. This was also planned to inform local infrastructure improvements, community services planning and social care. We were hoping for a greater breadth and depth of input than we had previously achieved from public consultation exercises.

We felt the Place Standard was the best tool for giving us a full understanding of what people felt about Alloa town centre before we started drafting any plans.

How was the tool applied?

The first focus group stage was facilitated by A&DS with SG in August to October 2018. This saw a group of Clackmannanshire Council officers from across a range of services working with health and social care professionals, architects, housing association representatives and town centre business representatives. Using the tool, the group looked at town centre assets and improvements required to provide for the needs of elderly residents of the new housing proposed at Primrose Street and the wider Alloa community.



This was carried out as a focus group over two hours - with the quality of discussion, level of engagement and an incomplete compass prompting a second group session to complete the tool. By the close of this session there was agreement amongst partners that community engagement was also necessary.

The major public consultation carried out at the second stage in early 2019 involved a broad cross-section of around 300 Alloa residents using the Place Standard assessment. Active participation of the community in this consultation was a critical issue for the project partners, and the consultation received grant support from the Scottish Government through the Place Standard Conversations fund. Clacks Council launched and publicised the online tool with a press release and link from the Council website, and partners CTSI and Alloa First did the same.

CTSI and the Council organised, publicised and ran a three-day drop-in event (including a Saturday) in vacant town centre shop premises. Throughout the consultation period, CTSI spent considerable time connecting with specific target groups to ensure a representative cross-section, including local disability groups, racial minorities and younger people.

This was carried out via an online survey, through one-to-one sessions and as focus group workshops. CTSI took members of target groups through the Place Standard at special drop-in sessions in convenient local venues – libraries, community centres and even a pub. With the intergenerational housing project being central to proposals for the town centre, local elderly groups were approached to ensure they were well represented in the survey. CTSI met with the Older Adults Forum, Volunteer Managers Forum and KLACKSUN mental health group, among others, to talk them through the tool and gather their views.

The drop-in sessions were not always conducive to completing the whole Place Standard there and then, so CTSI prepared a condensed five-minute, one-page version that most people were happy to do on the day. People were also able to take away the paper booklet to complete at home. Paper slips with the web address of the online PS tool were handed out – there was a significant spike in online survey submissions, presumably from home, after each drop-in session.

CTSI also created a separate survey to gather equal opportunities information. When this indicated that most respondents were 35 and over, it focused on promoting the project online to engage a younger demographic. In addition, the Headteacher of Alloa Academy arranged for a group of around 30 senior pupils to complete the Place Standard. In the end,



a total of around 300 respondents completed the Place Standard assessment.

The combination of public drop-in sessions, targeting specific groups and publicising the on-line tool helped to achieve a wide and diverse response.

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

The A&DS-facilitated Place Standard focus group helped identify priority streetscape improvements that would benefit the new development as well as the wider town centre – these priorities were reinforced by the community in the results of stage two. It quickly became clear that streetscape works to make the town centre a safer, friendlier place for people with dementia were simply good practice actions that would benefit everyone.

The timescales for the Primrose Street planning application meant that inputs from the focus group could shape the evolving development design in real time, during the pre-application stage. Thanks to this front-loaded pre-application design work, the planning application had a very smooth passage and the decision was made well within statutory performance targets.

The stage two public consultation results informed the development of a Masterplan and Place Plan for Alloa town centre. A Main Issues Report on the new Local Development Plan went to Council in December 2019. Additional consultation stages and events will check and test decisions as the Local Development Plan develops.

The Place Standard survey results from both stages have also facilitated rapid funding decisions: in March 2019, Clackmannanshire Council was awarded £683,000 from the Scottish Government's £50 million Town Centre Fund Capital Grant. Thanks to the Place Standard consultations, suitable projects in Alloa town centre were easily identified and approved.

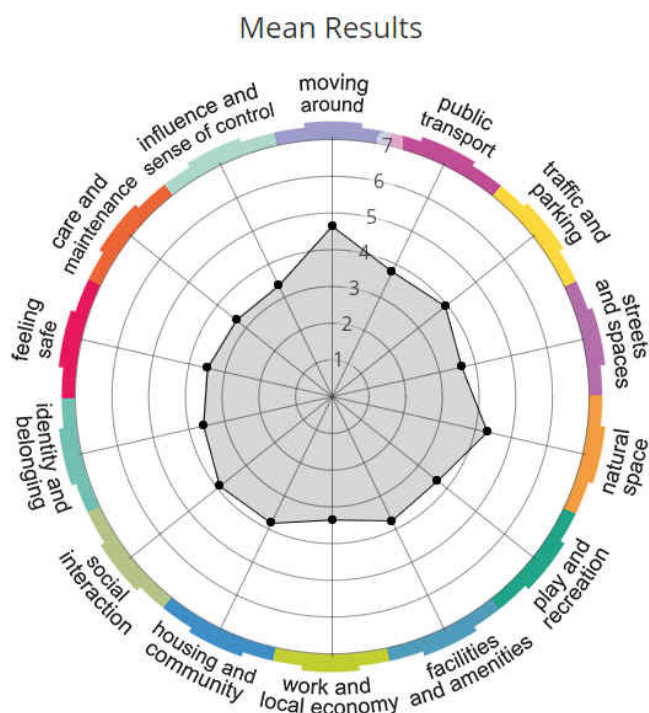
The Place Standard work has also led to closer collaboration between the Council, Alloa First and CTSI, for example in delivery of an active travel hub project. In addition, planning officers now meet regularly with Alloa First to provide support in such things as signage and branding strategy, facilitating open air markets and promoting Alloa more widely.

The Council's community services team is also working closely with Kingdom Housing Association to ensure that the most is made of the Speirs Centre as a community resource and meeting place for residents of the new flats.

Following the success of the Place Standard consultation in Alloa, housing and planning teams are collaborating with A&Ds and Scottish Futures Trust to use Clackmannanshire as a pilot area for rolling out its 'A Caring Place' approach to intergenerational town centre housing.

Similarly, the council have since had success with the Place Standard in Alva as part of new streetscape plans. We helped the community council to lead a Place Standard consultation including a 3 day drop-in where volunteers were on hand to discuss and assist. Empowering the community in this way showed how the use of the tool can help make the whole process more constructive, collaborative and beneficial in terms of feedback.

CTSI is also using the results to help focus its efforts and actions in the most effective way. Part of its work on the project was to equip community groups to feel informed and confident enough to use the Place Standard tool in their own setting. The tool has now been used to inform the new Community Action Plan for Alloa South and East. Beyond the Alloa consultation, CTSI has used the Place Standard tool in its Community Justice Partnership to engage vulnerable people in a conversation around how they feel about their place.



What lessons would you wish to share?

“For the first stage, having the right people round the table early on was key: health, social care and dementia professionals were able to explain simple but crucial measures to transform the new development from acceptable to exceptional in living terms. We’ve learned that dementia-friendly design principles need not involve bespoke or expensive interventions – it’s mostly about following good street design principles.

“Everyone has to come into the process with an open mind, and be prepared to hear the views of others, have their own views or perceptions challenged and realise that we are all designers in the process.

“The strength of the Place Standard tool is that it can be used in so many different settings and at various scales – be it street, town centre or even wider. It provides a more focussed and structured engagement with people, moving beyond simply the airing of grievances. It allows people to structure their thoughts on particular issues and (dare I say it), even be positive.

“The online tool usefully allows people to participate in their own time. However, I feel the questionnaire is too big for use in drop-in session, leading to fatigue. CTSI’s five-minute, one-page version really helped in gathering input on the day. A quick version for children would also be useful – I know this is in the pipeline. Overall, it’s been very positive and has made for a valuable consultation exercise.”

Grant Baxter, Principal Planner, Development Quality, Clackmannanshire Council

“The tool is fantastic to delve into issues with people, resulting in rich qualitative information. However, at times we had to alter some language within the tool to make it more widely understandable.

“From our perspective, it would have been helpful to be able to capture demographic/equal opportunities information within the tool itself to track engagement, so that the strategy and approach can be tweaked to engage as broad a demographic as possible.

“Having the time to meet with people on a one-to-one basis and really delve in to their thoughts on the topics in the tool, was a struggle. We had to balance the need for quality information with the need to have a good number of responses to ensure the opinions gathered were reflective of those living, working, shopping and visiting Alloa town centre.”

Louise Orr, Team Leader, Volunteering and Routes to Work, CTSI

Find out more online

<https://ctsi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ReportSGAug19Updated.docx.pdf>

TOWN CENTRE CAPITAL FUND INVESTMENTS

Living Alloa



Clackmannanshire
Council
www.clacks.gov.uk

Comhairle Siorrachd
Chlach Mhanann



A **partnership** project using the redevelopment of a vacant town centre site to create an **intergenerational living** environment within the heart of **Alloa** and act as a catalyst for regeneration.

A **multi-agency** design process transformed unremarkable plans for a flatted development into a high quality scheme based on **dementia friendly design** and **place making principles**, extending beyond the site boundaries.

An **A&DS** led design review exercise brought together a variety of stakeholders, from planners and architects to dementia and social care professionals, ensuring the highest standard of living environment, inside and out. The resulting proposals are fully informed by principles of **Town Centre Living: A Caring Place**.

The **Your Town Audit** helped identify priority areas for action around the development. Using the **Place Standard** tool and stakeholder workshops. We were able to identify town centre actions that were tailored to support town centre living and contribute to vitality and viability.

The **Town Centre Capital Fund** grant will allow us to deliver 5 projects identified through this exercise in time for completion of the new residential development. These include a new active travel hub and series of access and streetscape improvements making the town safer, more legible and more enjoyable to move through and spend time in.

"The collaboration between the Council, CTSI and Alloa First has ensured the projects truly reflect the priorities of residents, visitors and businesses."

Hugh McMichael, Chairman Alloa First

"The Primrose Street development will provide intergenerational apartments in the heart of Alloa, and along with these projects, will redefine the Town Centre area."

Jo Aitken, Kingdom Housing Association

"We want our town centres to be sustainable and thriving places and this funding is an important step towards making improvements to Alloa."

Councillor Craig Holden, Place Convenor, Clackmannanshire Council

"Working together, we used the place-standard tool to identify what was important to older people."

Anthea Coulter, Chief Executive (CTSI) Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface

Active Travel Hub

1

Re-purposing of former public toilet to active travel hub and visitor information centre.

King Street

2

Enhance safe crossing opportunities on desire lines and environmental improvements

Shillinghill

3

Re-model social space and improve connections to college

Link to High Street

4

Make key pedestrian route safe and legible.

Bank Street

5

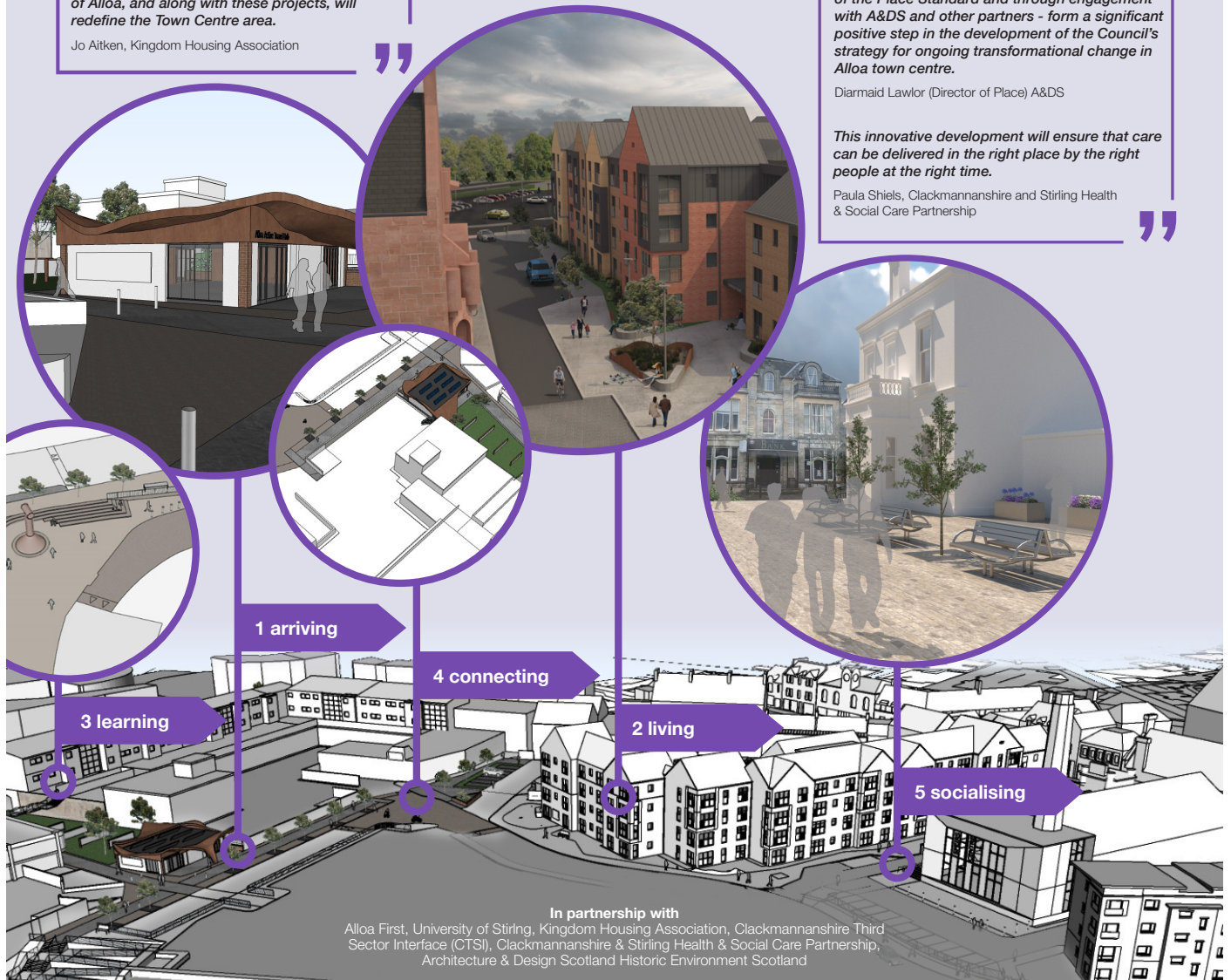
Re-model poorly functioning space and improve connectivity.

"The proposed improvements to the town centre - identified through the Council's use of the Place Standard and through engagement with A&DS and other partners - form a significant positive step in the development of the Council's strategy for ongoing transformational change in Alloa town centre."

Diarmaid Lawlor (Director of Place) A&DS

"This innovative development will ensure that care can be delivered in the right place by the right people at the right time."

Paula Shiels, Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health & Social Care Partnership



1 arriving

4 connecting

3 learning

2 living

5 socialising

In partnership with

Alloa First, University of Stirling, Kingdom Housing Association, Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface (CTSI), Clackmannanshire & Stirling Health & Social Care Partnership, Architecture & Design Scotland Historic Environment Scotland

THE LEAFLET USED - INCLUDING DEMOGRAPHIC PROFORMA AND '5 MINUTE' QUESTIONNAIRE

I consent to take part in the Place Standard Tool.

Demographics

We are committed to ensuring an inclusive sample response and therefore need to collect monitoring data. All data will be kept anonymous.

Postcode: _____ Town: _____

Gender: Male Female Transgender Non Binary Prefer not to say
Age: _____

What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual Gay woman/lesbian Gay man Bisexual
 Prefer not to say

If you prefer to use your own term, please specify here _____

Which one of these best describes your ethnic group?

White Scottish Asian Chinese White Other British Asian Scottish/Other
 White Irish Black Caribbean White Other Black African
 Mixed Background Black Scottish/Other Asian Pakistani Other
 Asian Bangladeshi Asian Indian Traveller Prefer not to say

What is your religion or belief?

No religion or belief Buddhist Christian Hindu
 Jewish Muslim Sikh Prefer not to say

If other religion or belief, please specify here _____

Do you consider yourself to be disabled, or have any additional support requirements/health issues that would require support to volunteer?

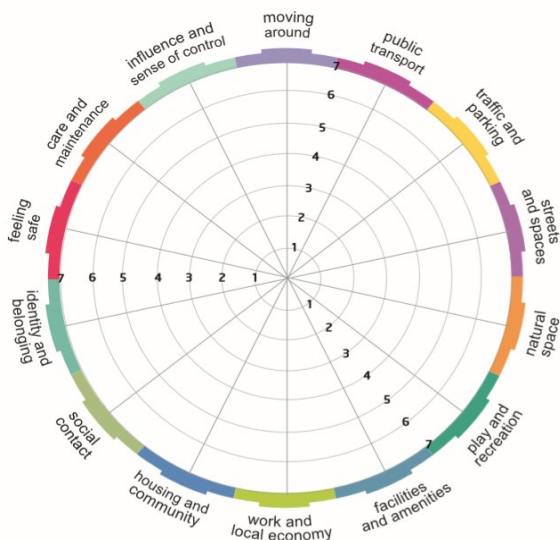
Yes No Prefer not to say

If you wish, please give details _____

Do you have caring responsibilities? If yes, please tick all that apply

None Primary carer of a child/children (under 18) Primary carer of disabled child/children Primary carer of disabled adult (18 and over) Primary carer of older person Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role) Prefer not to say

Please use the below tool to rate Alloa Town Centre on a scale from 1 to 7, according to the 14 areas set out opposite.
1 = there is a lot of room for improvement
7 = there is very little room for improvement

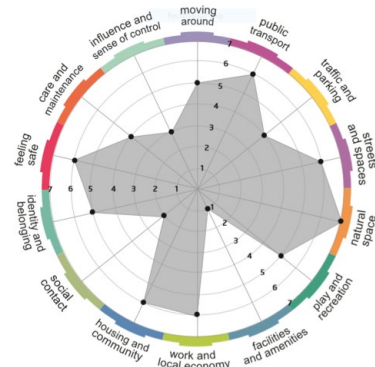


If you have any further comments, please use the space provided below or contact Danny to arrange a 1:1 chat on 01259 213 840 or danny.fenton@ctsi.org.uk

HAVE YOUR SAY IN 5 MINUTES

TO HELP SHAPE AND INFLUENCE ALLOA TOWN CENTRE

Alloa First and Clackmannanshire Council are committed to delivering real improvements to the town centre over the next 5 years and beyond. It is proposed that a **Place Plan** is developed to guide and inform future actions. CTSI are supporting and training communities across Clackmannanshire to carry out this research. We now need **your help** to inform the plan, and ensure we know what needs done to make Alloa a more pleasant and enjoyable place to live, work, shop and visit.



The Scottish Government's Planning & Architecture PLACE STANDARD TOOL

Simply plot your opinions on the scale within. For the full questionnaire please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BHRHPZR>



Moving around

Can I easily walk and cycle around using good-quality routes?

Public Transport

Does public transport meet my needs?

Traffic and parking

Do traffic and parking arrangements allow people to move around safely and meet the community's needs?

Streets and spaces

Do buildings, streets and public spaces create an attractive place that is easy to get around?

Natural space

Can I regularly experience good-quality natural space?

Play and recreation

Can I access a range of space with opportunities for play and recreation?

Facilities and amenities

Do facilities and amenities meet my needs?

Work and local economy

Is there an active local economy and the opportunity to access good-quality work?

Housing and community

Do the homes in my area support the needs of the community?

Social contact

Is there a range of spaces and opportunities to meet people?

Identity and belonging

Does this place have a positive identity and do I feel I belong?

Feeling safe

Do I feel safe here?

Care and maintenance

Are buildings and spaces well cared for?

Influence and sense of control

Do I feel able to take part in decisions and help change things for the better?