



# Development Site Scale

Case Study examples of where the Place Standard tool has been used for planning at Development Site Scale.

Architecture &  
Design Scotland  
Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

NHS  
Health  
Scotland



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

# INTRODUCTION

---

This series of case studies from Architecture and Design Scotland illustrates how the Place Standard tool has been used in a wide variety of ways and at a range of scales for the purpose of informing spatial planning, community planning, design and development.

The practitioners and organisations featured explain their reasons for using the tool, the methods they applied when doing so, their approach to empowering local communities and the impact that this has had. They also share their perceptions of the tool, the knowledge gained in using it, as well as any valuable lessons learned and worth sharing with others.

## PLACE STANDARD - DEVELOPMENT SITE SCALE

---

This set of case studies shows the use of the Place Standard tool in site-specific or project-specific engagement, most commonly to inform design briefs for new development – be it of housing or infrastructure. It features:

- Internal use of the tool by developer Scotia Homes to guide design briefs for all its new housing sites
- Use by North Ayrshire Council in targeted consultations with local people as part of an early-stage planning assessments of eight new housing sites
- Use by design partners of a housing association to inform masterplanning for a new housing site in Staneyhill, Lerwick
- The Place Standard tool being embedded in a Sustrans funding delivery model for large active travel infrastructure projects in Scotland.

### Key learning points identified by A&DS:

These cases studies demonstrate diverse methods of application of the Place Standard tool, and the range of impacts it has had. Most notably:

- The Place Standard tool has been embedded in project management at Scotia Homes, replacing a similar internal evaluation tool previously used
- In North Ayrshire, use of the Place Standard helped increase capacity for local residents to have material input at a strategic stage in development planning. Residents' input provided detail on planning considerations going beyond in-principle objections to development. Place Standard outputs were combined with technical site information to create development briefs for each of the new housing sites
- For new housing at North Staneyhill, Lerwick, two-step use of the tool with neighbouring residents saw the tool being applied to the greenfield site 'as existing' and again to outline design proposals, with a direct influence on layout design and masterplanning
- The design partners for North Staneyhill point out that managing public expectation – in terms of what can feasibly be delivered – is a key part of the conversation
- Sustrans Scotland has embedded the Place Standard tool as part of the selection process for its Community LINKS funding programme to ensure that meaningful community engagement influences both investment decisions and post-occupancy evaluation.

## NEW HOUSING SITES, PERTSHIRE AND ANGUS

---

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Planning Stage</b> | Development brief      |
| <b>Leadership</b>     | Scotia Homes           |
| <b>Participants</b>   | Three members of staff |



*“The Place Standard has proved to be a useful tool with regard to tracking design development, and aids with the brief development at the outset of a project.”*

*Jonathan Wisely, Development Lead / Architect, Scotia Homes*

Aberdeenshire-based housing developer Scotia Homes uses the Place Standard tool internally at the very start of each new project, as Jonathan Wisely explains.

### **What are you trying to achieve by using the Place Standard?**

At Scotia Homes, use of the Place Standard tool has been built into our project management process since it was launched in December 2015. Before that, Scotia had used its own ‘Place o’ meter’ tool, but the Place Standard was adopted to replace it.

The tool is applied internally at the very outset of all new projects, prior to any local authority input and public consultation, to guide design briefs for new housing sites. Most recently, it has been used in relation to a new site of 100 homes in Forfar, Angus, and a rural site for 92 new homes near Bridge of Earn, Perthshire.

The tool helps to inform our design development brief for each new project, with the aim of producing a benchmark ‘vision’ of the place we are trying to create. We could then use this vision to facilitate decision-making, and review against it at key stages of the development.

### **How is the Place Standard tool applied?**

Usually, two to three members of our in-house design team complete the online version of the tool in the office to help generate and inform the design brief for the proposed new housing development.

Using information gained through a combination of desk research and site visits, staff members take into account existing local amenities to identify needs – both within the proposed new development and the larger community as a whole – when completing the exercise. They generally complete the tool individually and then discuss their scores to reach a consensus, which is input online to produce the Place Standard wheel diagram.

The resulting wheel is included in the initial briefing document which goes out to external design consultants. As the design evolves, and the project progresses with input from the design team, external consultants, the local authority and others, we can then benchmark throughout the process against the initial Place Standard results.

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

Using the tool internally in this way has helped to clarify our aspirations for our proposed new housing sites when drawing up design briefs. It has facilitated decision-making on local needs to prepare design team briefs.

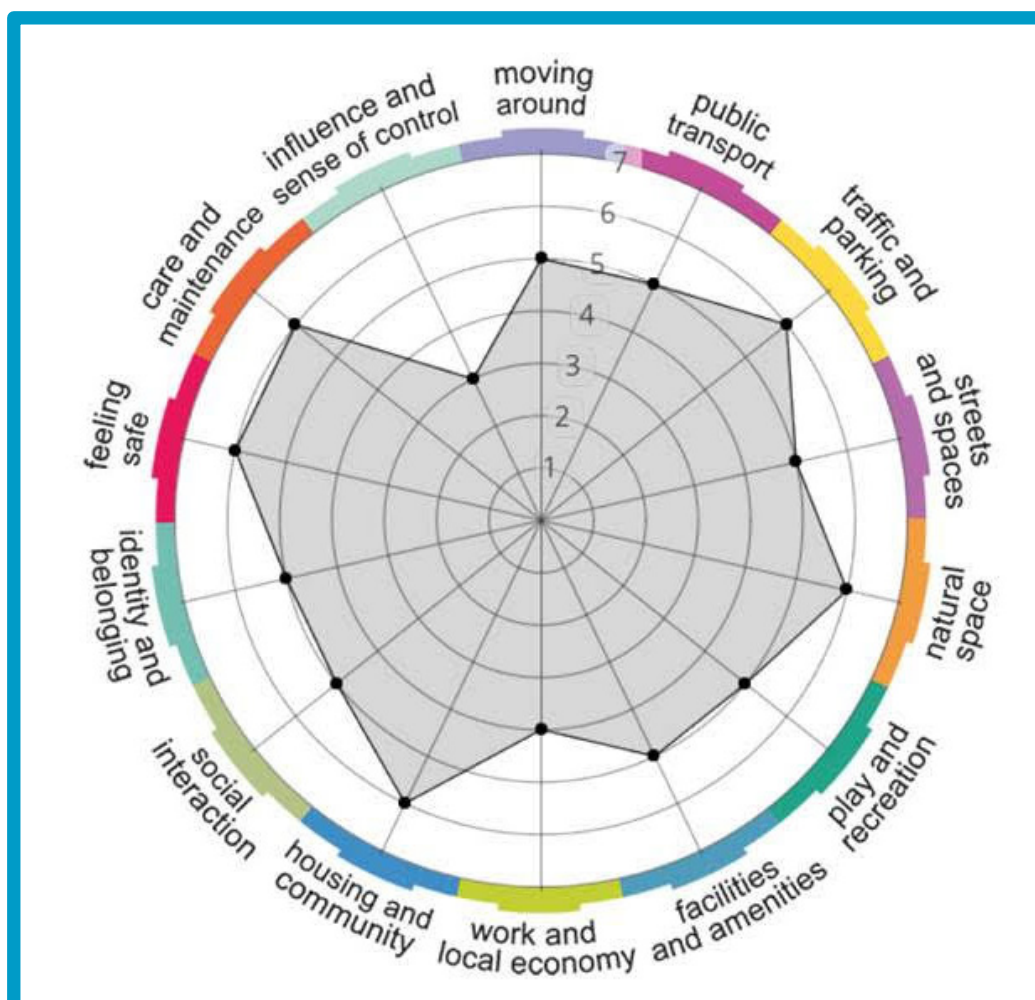
The results of the Place Standard exercise feeds into the design brief document that is issued to the design team, then referred back to as a way of ensuring the design development meets the initial development aspirations. Crucially, use of the Place Standard tool is embedded as part of our project management procedure for every site.

## What lessons do you wish to share?

"The Place Standard has proved to be a useful tool when it comes to developing the initial design brief at the outset of a project. It is easy and straightforward for our staff to use, and each theme is well defined.

The visual representation of the output as a wheel graphic goes into the briefing document for external consultants – it is easy and simple for them to interpret. Tracking and benchmarking the design development against the Place Standard outcome is equally simple."

Jonathan Wisely, Development Lead / Architect, Scotia Homes



The completed Place Standard assesment from Scotia Homes for the Bridge of Earn site.



people. They were supported in going through the questions, and they then applied those questions to one or two sites simultaneously. We supplied participants with a small package of information for each site, showing visuals and maps of the site location, a one-page summary of the technical assessment and an indicative site development layout to help them understand the nature of the sites they considered.

A facilitator timed the event to complete scoring in around one hour. Each table had a group facilitator, to ensure that each Place Standard question was covered through rich discussion, while achieving feedback from all participants (who were given the opportunity to submit individual scores; but more often opted to respond as a consensus).

There was also a Planning Officer at each table, only to provide technical information to assist the discussion (planning officers strictly abstained from influencing the discussion). All feedback was reported, drawn up and passed back to the participants. It also formed part of the evidence of engagement for the LDP examination.

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

This targeted consultation formed part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the new housing sites. It informed site development briefs and spatial planning.

The SEA and site selection processes were linked together, so that optimal environmental performance was part of the site selection process – while there was a strong focus on deliverability of sites, we were ensuring that the environmental impact of sites was of equal importance.

This meant that the environmental objectives were set to ensure that allocations would achieve quality place making. Input of development delivery information and technical consultee responses all fed into a single process for selecting sites, to ensure that only sites that were deliverable and would result in quality places were considered. In the end, the proposed Fairlie site was rejected because of an alignment of technical concerns and strong community feedback against it.

**What lessons do you wish to share?**

“This was a very effective tool in drawing out material planning views from community representatives, moving discussion on from basic opposition to proposed new housing sites, to talking

about genuine issues.

It also meant community perceptions could be measured against technical analysis. It allowed community views to be gathered, recorded and presented alongside technical consideration before decisions were made.

Councillors were able to consider this information as part of a suite of documents that informed the site selection, so they could reach an informed view on the merits of potential sites, and were aware at the decision-making stage what community reactions were likely to be.

Although the process did not always result in the participants changing their views on the merits of new development sites, the Council was able to break opposition down to planning issues, which allowed comparison with technical input to understand if the comments were substantiated by professional and technical input, or not.

We are currently developing the site development briefs which combine technical information, Place Standard output and placemaking principles. We are drawing these together to create visuals, including 3D flythrough technology, to inform of our preferences for the sites. The insights produced by the Place Standard has meant we could respond to the material planning issues raised by communities.”

**Find out more online**

Information about the process can be found in North Ayrshire Council’s recent Planning Performance Framework:

<https://hopscotland.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/north-ayrshire-council-ppf7-2018.pdf>



Illustration of Place Standard influence on Local Development Plan.

## NORTH STANEYHILL, LERWICK

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Planning Stage</b> | Masterplan  |
| <b>Leadership</b>     | Malcolmson Architects and Iglu Studio with client Hjaltland Housing Association and Shetland Islands Council  |
| <b>Participants</b>   | Residents of the immediate vicinity and wider Lerwick. Phase one: 56 in person and 20 online. Phase two: 65 in person with three completing the tool on line. |



*“For the design team, it was enormously valuable to gain residents’ insights and pick up on detailed concerns that proved helpful in the next stage of design. The comments and discussions helped us to understand the community’s aspirations for the new development.”*

*Paul Morsley, Director, Iglu Studio*

The two design partners to a new housing development in Lerwick share their joint experience of using the Place Standard to inform the masterplan for the site.

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

In 2015, Hjaltland Housing Association (HHA) acquired a site on the north side of Staneyhill in Lerwick, where it could develop up to 350 new affordable homes over ten to 15 years. However, the exposed hillside location potentially posed significant design challenges, so HHA commissioned a masterplan to achieve a vibrant, safe and desirable place to live, that also took into account the needs of the surrounding community.

To inform this masterplan, HHA’s appointed design partners ran a consultation exercise with the existing adjoining community, involving local people in the design process in a very focussed, site-specific way. Iglu Studio brought to the project its earlier experience of using the Place Standard tool in design charrettes.

### **How was the Place Standard tool applied?**

The community consultation was conducted in two phases in 2016 – the first in May and June, and the second in December 2016. It was promoted via a dedicated website, social media, leaflets and the local press and broadcast media; and the events were open to all residents – those local to the immediate area as well as the people of wider Lerwick.

Phase one introduced the project and sought suggestions for the new development. The Place Standard tool was used during this phase to provide an understanding of how local residents felt about the existing Staneyhill area.

It began with pre-consultation discussions and presentations at meetings of Lerwick Community Council and Staney Hill Community Association. A questionnaire based on the Place Standard tool was launched online, and an exhibition about the proposed project was held at two nearby shopping centres. Leaflets with the questionnaire were available here for completion, and were also delivered to 600 households in the immediate vicinity.

Two hour-long sessions – the first in May and the second in June 2016 – saw participants working in groups of seven or eight people (with two facilitators per group) to complete paper versions of the tool. A successful consultation event using the tool was also held with pupils at the new Anderson High School, adjacent to the proposed site.

Phase two, in mid-December, was focused on gauging public reaction to the design team's outline proposals, which had taken on board the comments and results from the Place Standard exercise in phase one. As in the first phase of consultation, various methods (including a questionnaire) were used to gather public views, this time on the draft proposals.

An afternoon public drop-in session at the Staney Hill Hall attracted some 65 local residents, who were able to see the proposals on display boards, view the video of the site, and complete a questionnaire that included a Place Standard evaluation of the proposal. They also had the chance to give their views via post-it notes and in conversation with the design team.

That evening, during a public workshop at the same venue, seven local residents assessed the outline proposals against the Place Standard criteria – either by completion of the Place Standard questionnaire, via post-its, or in conversation.

A further public presentation took place in late 2017, this time in preparation for the adoption of the Masterplan as Supplementary Guidance associated with the Shetland Local Development Plan.

*“The Place Standard tool was a new experience for our design team, and was very easy for us and the community to understand quickly. This made the public consultation a more meaningful experience for everyone.”*

*Iain Malcolmson  
Director  
Malcolmson Architects*

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

Phase one highlighted significant concerns around a lack of existing amenities, access to open space, waymarking of pedestrian routes, off-street parking, links to the city centre, types of existing housing, road layout, and drainage / flood management. These highlighted issues provided core principles to guide the masterplan.

For the design team, it was enormously valuable to gain residents' insights and pick up on detailed concerns that proved helpful in the next stage of design. The comments received and discussions held helped us to understand the community's aspirations for the new development.

Using the Place Standard over two phases – with the first focused on the existing site without any development proposals – meant that feedback was honest and open about the site in broad terms. This gave the design team a base level against which ideas and proposals could be assessed and adjusted at an early stage.

The second use of the tool set against an early draft of the masterplan allowed the core underlying principles of the masterplan to be reviewed and discussed without too much focus on the detail. With the masterplan taking into account local residents' views from the first phase, the masterplan principles were more readily accepted at the second phase event.

The exercise identified how the proposed masterplan responded to the priorities and needs of the existing community: safety for children, a focus on housing; a need for substantial open space for play and recreation and community use; safe traffic management and provision for getting around on foot and by bike.

The final production included the Masterplan and three Development Framework books. The Masterplan and Codes / Parameters have been adopted as Supplementary Guidance by the Shetland Islands Council (SIC)

Since the North Staneyhill community consultation, Iglu has been working with SIC on further projects using the Place Standard tool, as well as with PAS on a number of other community engagement projects which use the Place Standard tool.



## What lessons do you wish to share?

“The Place Standard tool was a new experience for our design team, and was very easy for us and the community to understand quickly. This made the public consultation a more meaningful experience for everyone. We were able to engage in detail with residents of all ages, backgrounds and abilities, allowing us to build an accurate picture of what the community felt about the project and directly address any concerns. Local people were impressed that they had been listened to and had influenced the final outcome.

Finally, I would urge designers and consultants using the tool to carefully consider, at tender stage, the time commitments involved.”

Iain Malcolmson, Director, Malcolmson Architects

“Using the Place Standard tool as part of the consultation process provided a common base for local people to meet and discuss, as a group, the challenges the site presented, and to explore how these might be addressed. It provided a neutral framework for airing conflicting views, without it being about specific people or personalities.

The use of the tool at two separate events six months apart was felt to be a good approach, as it gave time for the design to be progressed. However, we also felt that the tool should be used regularly throughout the development programme to highlight any positive or negative impact from the development which could be assessed against the Place Standard results.

In addition, using the tool for a greenfield site such as North Staneyhill presented some interesting challenges, both among participants and more surprisingly among the team, some of whom had not used Place Standard tool before. The final Consultation Report proposed two particular lessons:

- The first is about clarity in presentation: “If the tool is to be successfully applied to a proposed development (not an existing environment), it is vital that the proposals are set out in a form that is immediately comprehensible to participants from a wide range of backgrounds, who are not necessarily familiar with the design process or its products.”
- The other, which arose in phase two, is around trust and making ‘promises’ that might not be within our power to keep: “We were conscious

that we were asking people to assume that all those engaged in bringing the project to fruition would use their best endeavours to fulfil the many promises made or implied in the display material. That is, it need hardly be said, rather a big ask... We were particularly struck by the reputation that Hjalmland Housing Association clearly enjoys in the community. Because people had a high degree of faith in HHA, they appeared to believe that the odds were very much in favour of the successful implementation of the proposals”.

Managing expectations is a key aspect of any conversation process. It is essential to listen and record what is said, but not to promise what cannot be delivered. At Staneyhill, the initial consultation discussed the community’s priorities, the site and masterplan requirements openly and without any implicit promises made.

The second consultation presented the draft masterplan, with the conversations held in the first engagement reflected in the design. Where the design did not address all issues, honest discussions were had to explain the reasoning behind the design decision, but also to explore any potential alternatives.

The third consultation provided the opportunity to ‘sense check’ the design, programme or action plan, against the earlier conversations for a final solution that embedded the community feedback into the core of any proposals.

With Iglu having been involved in a substantial number of community events and engagement activities over the past four years, we would suggest that, if this can be funded, there is significant benefit in longer term engagement processes that are embedded through a series of engagement events and opportunities for reflection and return.”

Paul Morsley, Director, Iglu Studio

## Find out more online

[www.hjalmland.org.uk/properties/developments/north-staneyhill](http://www.hjalmland.org.uk/properties/developments/north-staneyhill)

[www.shetland.gov.uk/planning/documents/NorthStaneyhillMasterplan-DevelopmentFrameworkDocument-BOOK1.pdf](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/planning/documents/NorthStaneyhillMasterplan-DevelopmentFrameworkDocument-BOOK1.pdf)

**“Hjaltland Housing Association has very high aspirations for its Staneyhill site and it is hoped this project will set the standard for new housing schemes throughout Shetland for many years to come. It was therefore imperative that a true and meaningful consultation was held with all the communities surrounding the site and the Place Standard tool enabled this to happen.**

**Before embarking on this process, we had no prior experience of using the tool but are very pleased with the results, and we're delighted the community feedback and input has been incorporated into the three development framework books to form the design guidance for the next stages.”**

## NEW WALKING AND CYCLE ROUTE, GLASGOW

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Planning Stage</b> | Design proposals, funding application                          |
| <b>Leadership</b>     | Sustrans Scotland and Glasgow City Council                     |
| <b>Participants</b>   | Glasgow City Council, South City Way partners and stakeholders |



*“We feel that it’s been a very useful tool for informing the iterative design process. At Sustrans Scotland, we recognise the need for deep, meaningful community engagement, and this is an excellent tool for providing a structured dialogue with the community.”*

Matthew MacDonald and Stewart Inglis of the sustainable transport charity Sustrans Scotland explain how it uses the Place Standard to inform its investment decisions, with reference to a new cycleway project in Glasgow.

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

We have embedded use of the Place Standard tool in one of our funding delivery models called Community Links PLUS – a design competition for big, game-changing infrastructure projects that rebalance streets in favour of people moving about under their own steam.

As an organisation, we were keen to support the use of the Place Standard, and felt that it would be a valuable addition to the competition process – both as an engagement tool and as a means to enhance project designs. Our intention is for these projects to deliver not just sustainable transport corridors, but also holistic placemaking and public realm improvements, and to enhance the local economy.

The wide-ranging scope of the Place Standard is therefore well-suited to our aims. We embedded it into the competition to ensure that we build up an understanding of how the community feels about the place where a project is being proposed, and to inform our funding decisions. The aim is for Place Standard outputs to feed into the concept designs as well as the decision-making process. The panel that makes the funding decisions has access to the Place Standard report and output, so can weigh the proposals being put forward against that.

### **How was the Place Standard tool applied?**

Community Links PLUS projects use the Place Standard tool in engagement as part of an extensive three-stage assessment process. Representatives of the community and stakeholders are gathered by the competition applicants in a workshop setting to assess the project locations.

We recognised the importance of using the tool correctly, and provided training for competition applicants through members of the Place Standard Alliance. As well as ensuring proper application through the competition, this training had the

added benefit of upskilling applicants, enabling them to use the Place Standard in their future work.

The winner of the inaugural design competition, held in 2015-16, was Glasgow City Council's South City Way, forecast for completion in autumn 2019. It is a 3km-long segregated cycleway linking the densely-populated Southside of Glasgow with the city centre, via Queen's Park, Victoria Road and the Merchant City district. The project will also improve facilities for those on foot, creating more vibrant streets and improving the look and feel of the area.

Glasgow City Council used the Place Standard as part of a wider consultation event with the community and other stakeholders, staged at the City of Glasgow College Riverside Campus in May 2016. This event fed into the Council's South City Way submission for the third and final stage of the competition.

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

We have seen that, when the tool is used, the proposed designs take into account the needs and wants of the community. In the Place Standard workshop for the South City Way, there was plenty of discussion around particular design details and features, highlighting focus areas for the project and the content of the final competition submission. These included factoring in future developments in the project area, maximising placemaking opportunities and the interaction of walking and cycling infrastructure with public transport services and parking.

Central to the discussion was the importance of supporting the ongoing regeneration efforts in the area. Past planning and policy decisions had been harmful and the importance of making good decisions for the future was stressed throughout.

Once a project has been awarded funding, goes into construction and is completed, we'll be able to go back in with the cohort group which we'd brought together for the original Place Standard exercise, and see what the perceptions of the place are post-construction. As well as this enabling us to understand the impact of the South City Way, this will contribute to the process of monitoring and evaluating the overall effectiveness of Community Links PLUS as a funding delivery model.

### What lessons do you wish to share?

"We feel that the Place Standard has been a very useful tool for informing the iterative design process. At Sustrans Scotland, we recognise the need for deep, meaningful community engagement, and this is an excellent tool for providing a structured dialogue with the community.

The Place Standard continues to be a part of the competition process, a means to engage the community and stakeholders in Community Links PLUS projects and to help shape the content of projects."

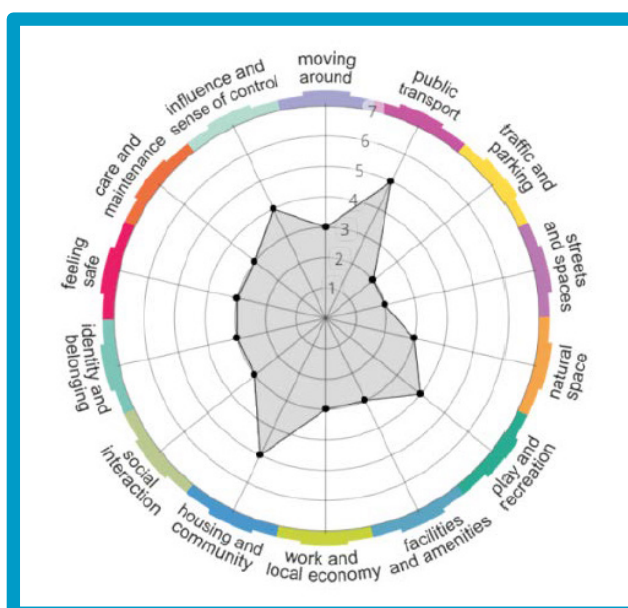
Matthew MacDonald, Head of Infrastructure and Delivery, and Stewart Inglis, Community Links PLUS Project Coordinator, Sustrans Scotland

### Find out more online

[www.showcase-sustrans.org.uk/projects/south-city-way/](http://www.showcase-sustrans.org.uk/projects/south-city-way/)



Photo from consultation event at Glasgow City College.



Completed Place Standard assessment for South City Way