



Local Development Plan Place Standard

Tool Engagement with Grantown

Grammar School

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(November 2023 – March 2024)

Introduction

The Place Standard tool is a way of assessing places and was utilised as part of the early stakeholder engagement process to inform the preparation of the next Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan.

The Place Standard tool provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place, based around fourteen questions. It allows participants to think about the physical elements of a place (such as the buildings, spaces, and transport) as well as the social aspects (for example whether people feel they have a say in decision making).

The tool provides prompts for discussions, allowing participants to consider all the elements of a place in a methodical way. The tool pinpoints the assets of a place as well as areas where a place could improve.

There are several versions of the tool available to engage different audiences. During the engagement with the Grantown Grammar School pupils (aged 11 - 12 years) the Place Standard tool for young people was used.

Three sessions were run with the pupils during their geography lessons between November 2023 and March 2024. There were three sessions during this period. There were three parts to the engagement sessions:

- Part 1: A general introduction to the planning system in the National Park, its function, outcomes and the importance of the Local Development Plan.
- Part 2: A quiz to determine / gauge the pupils understanding of the information in Part 1.
- Part 3: In pairs or threes, the students worked on topics from the Place Standard tool, with a final a wrap-up and summary session the end.



The information was collected on sheets printed from the Place Standard tool and the results summaries here in this report.

Respondent details

The group was assessing the Cairngorms National Park as a whole, however included comments about specific areas where relevant. The demographic of the group 11 – 12 years male and female students at Grantown Grammar High School located within the National Park boundary.

Grantown Grammar School is one of two high schools in the Cairngorms National Park. The community leisure facility which is integrated with the existing school and swimming pool, provides both school and community with leisure facilities. The school caters for children and young people from the age of 11 years up until 18 years. Details about the exact geography of the school's catchment can be found here:

- <https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=531a30ee33564231866ff94e96607f26>

Results

The results from each topic have been reported here under their respective topic headings with the question included from the Young People Place Standard tool. Where the topic was covered by more than one group across all the sessions the final score is the average taken from all groups.

Play, hang out, games and hobbies

‘What are the spaces for play, recreation, sport and hanging out like in and around my place?’

Group 1

The group responded that there are lots of businesses for local people available in the area. In Nethy Bridge and Tomintoul there are visiting (vans) coming to the settlements offering pizza on Friday in Nethy Bridge and a ‘chippy’ on Mondays and a similar offering for Tomintoul during the week.

When the group was asked could be better responded they felt there should be more things to do in Tomintoul, Nethy Bridge and Boat of Garten. They felt there should be more street lighting in the smaller settlements in particular in and around the new



housing in Tomintoul. They also felt it would be good to have a train station linking Grantown on Spey and Nethy Bridge.

Group 1 score: 6 / 7.

Group 2

Group two reported there are lots of good places to hang out and many mountain and hiking centres in the National Park they could use.

They reported the Wi-Fi was really bad next to the Craiglynne Hotel in Grantown on Spey. They also reported that less holiday homes in Nethy Bridge would make it a better place and it would benefit from a skills area.

Group 2 score: 6 / 7.

Group 3

The group stated that the availability and access to parks, nature and outdoors are good in Nethy Bridge and the surrounding area. The swimming pool was ok and that it was good there was a cinema for hire in Grantown on Spey. In Aviemore they also said the food centres were a good thing.

They felt that Grantown on Spey needed to be 'renewed' and tidied up. They felt it would be good if there was a game shop in the National Park as the closest one was in Inverness. In Nethy Bridge there could be more food shops and generally across the National Park with better offerings of cheaper healthier food. They felt their need to be less holiday homes and more homes available for local people.

Group 3 score for Nethy Bridge: 5 / 7, Grantown on Spey: 6 / 7.

Play: Overall average score: 6 / 7.

Nature: Parks, woods, hills, and beaches

'How well am I connected to Nature where I live?'

Group 1

Commenting on Aviemore the group said there are plenty of hills, open spaces and trees, but no dedicated places for bikes.



They reported they would like more bins, and benches in Aviemore. They also stated there was a rubbish / litter problem in the parks / green spaces and would welcome bike trails and bike paths / lanes in the town centre.

Group 1 score: 4 / 7.

Group 2

This group said the woods at Nethy Bridge are very good, with good access to rivers and a good local community in the settlement.

When asked what could be better, they said less litter, and more bins. They also said there needs to be less dog mess.

Group 2 score: 7 / 7.

Group 3

This group listed the following places that they thought are good now:

- Loch Morlich
- Loch Vaa
- Tennis court at Rothiemurchus
- Anagach woods
- Pump track at Boat of Garten
- The new bike / pump track planned / being built in Rothiemurchus.

When asked what could be better, they reported they would like to see more things to do in Boat of Garten and Rothiemurchus. In Rothiemurchus specifically they would like to see development at the old quarry perhaps making it into a skate park for young people.

Group 3 score: 4 / 7.

Nature: Overall average score: 5 / 7

Streets, squares and buildings

‘What are the streets, squares and buildings like in my place?’

Group 1



Group one responded saying the main square in Grantown on Spey was good, however the town needed more parking and less restrictions.

Group 1 score: 4 / 7.

Group 2

The reported they would like to see the Candy Coo shop expanded in Grantown on Spey. They said the settlement of Cromdale was good as it was next to the river Spey. They felt there needed to be more shops and restaurants in Cromdale.

Group 2 score: 4 / 7.

Group 3

This group discussed what is good in Grantown on Spey. They said that the shops, surrounding areas, schools and roads are all good. They reported the area is clean, and everyone is very kind. They also felt there are lots of things to do in the town.

When asked what could be better, they said that there could be more entertainment because not all people can access all areas of the outdoor spaces. They suggested there could be a transport van that goes up the “hills and things” to give people more access to the outdoors. They also stated that public transport needs to be improved, less potholes and more parking.

Group 3 score: 6 / 7.

Streets, squares and buildings average score: 5 / 7.

Walking, wheeling and cycling.

‘How easy is it to walk, wheel or cycle to places I need to and want to go?’

Group 1

This group stated they feel there are plenty places to cycle, and good bike parks in Grantown on Spey, Boat of Garten and Carrbridge.

They did however feel there could be more cycle paths between the towns in the area. Also, they stated the bike path between Boat of Garten and Nethy Bridge is unusable.

Group 1 score: 5 / 7.



Group 2

This group reported that they felt everything is within walking or cycling range in the National Park. They did however state that the sidewalks are often bumpy making it hard to move around in wheelchairs. They expressed concern that there are no bike lanes and a 'horrible' bus network.

Group 2 score: 3 / 7.

Walking, wheeling and cycling average score: 4 / 7.

Public Transport- Buses, trains, trams, boats

'How easy is it to get to where I need to or want to go by bus, train or other forms of public transport?'

Group 1

They responded that the bus stops in Grantown on Spey are good. When asked what could be better, they stated that there should be cycle lanes all the way between Grantown on Spey, Carrbridge, Boat of Garten and Nethy Bridge.

They also said there should be crossing areas near the council housing in Grantown on Spey, so people don't have to cross the main road further down the High Street. They also thought it would be a good idea to have a / better taxis services in Grantown on Spey. They also wanted to know why the train station was closed in Grantown on Spey and questioned if could it be reopened?

Group 1 score: 3 / 7.

Group 2

This group said the current public transport was fun to use and when that if it was electric it would be good for the environment and more financially beneficial.

Thinking about what could be better they stated they would like to see louder electric cars (for safety). There should be more public transport serving Carrbridge and information about public transport should be clearer.

Group 2 score: 4 / 7.



Public transport average score: 4 / 7.

Traffic and parking

'How does traffic in my place affect me when I am out and about?'

Group 1

This group felt the traffic is ok but could be better. They said parking was not good because cars are always parked on the side of the road. They said the A9 is 'horrible' citing safety concerns. They also said the High Street in Grantown on Spey is 'terrible' with regard to parking and traffic.

The score reflected the fact that they thought things were better in Nethy Bridge and Boat of Garten

Group 1 score: 5 / 7.

Group 2

This group stated they thought road works taking too long was an issue in the National Park. They said they were concerned about speeding in the settlements. They also felt, however that the speed limits were too low in some areas. They thought the parking was good in Aviemore at the retail centre.

Group 2 score: 3 / 7.

Group 3

This group felt that all the new 20mph speed limits are a good thing. There was good parking where available and felt that most of the roads are safe with not much traffic.

They felt there needed to be more buses. They also reported that there is not enough parking. At crossroads, they felt it was slightly dangerous because of cars speeding around them and suggested perhaps more speed bumps are needed. They also reported that a lot of the roads are damaged with potholes and in poor condition.

Group 3 score: 5 / 7.

Traffic and parking average score: 4 / 7.



Having our say and being listened to

'When things happen in my place, how easy is it for me to say what I think and being listened to?'

Group 1

This group felt people got things done in Tomintoul. They felt they would like their opinions heard a bit more particularly in Carrbridge. They also felt computer / online services could be improved / offered and utilised to enable more people to have their say and be listened to.

Group 1 score given: this group was split between 4 / 7 and 7 / 7 but eventually agreed on 7 / 7.

Group 2

This group felt they were listened to when it came to the following topics: the leisure centre, nature, shops and areas next to the river. However, they felt they needed and wanted a shopping centre, more activities and more safe places due to 'scary teenagers'.

Group 2 score: 5 / 7.

Group 3

This group did not have an answer for what is good now. However, they felt the toilets could be made better and felt no politicians were / are coming to talk to them was a bad thing.

Group 3 score: 5 / 7.

Having our say and being listened to average score: 6 / 7.

Fixed, clean and managed.

'Are there spaces or buildings that need cleaning up or fixing in the area around me?'

Group 1

This group felt the leisure centre was good. They felt the toilets in the school could be better and the 'giant' potholes in the roads needed to be fixed.

Group 1 score: 4 / 7.



Group 2

This group felt the food offerings and trees were good. They felt some buildings needed more care in particular painting. Bathrooms could be improved. Dulnain Bridge needed a corner shop and or a better post office. They also stated they feel people needed to follow the speed limits.

Group 2 score: 4 / 7.

Group 3

This group felt the following buildings and spaces in Grantown on Spey were good now: the school buildings, hotels and parks. They reported that they felt the town had good-quality buildings, a good High Street, evidence of sustainable energy, lots of greenery, bike trails and a good leisure centre.

When asked what could be better, they said that litter was an issue in the Dulaig Park and that it needed more lighting, the potholes needed fixing in Grantown on Spey, and Cromdale would be better with a Co-op. They also said there should be better quality traffic lights, less graffiti (notably in the Dulaig Park) and better internet provision.

Group 3 score: 5 / 7.

Fixed clean and managed average score: 4 / 7.

Feeling Safe

'How safe and/or comfortable do I feel in my place?'

Group 1

This group responded about two places Tomintoul and Carrbridge. In both places they reported they felt safe. In Tomintoul they said they would welcome a park with a swing, and in Carrbridge they would like a bigger safer park.

Group 1 score: 3 / 7.

Group 2

This group stated they have never felt scared or unsafe / uncomfortable. They felt they have people they can talk to about their concerns and thought the 20mph speed limits



were important to feeling safe. They further commented that the swimming pool and trees were good.

They felt a safe skate park and monkey jungle would be an improvement to the area.

Group 2 score: 6 / 7.

Feeling Safe average score: 5 / 7.

Feeling proud and part of my place

'How proud do I feel about my place?'

Group 1

This group felt that swimming in the river, Landmark (activity attraction), the local people and the footpaths and bike trails all made this a good place to live.

They reported the girl's toilets at the school could be better. The area needed more clothing shops, and / or a shopping centre. They also would like to have a skate park and ice rink in the National Park.

Group 1 score: 4 / 7.

Group2

This group also said the leisure centre was good, and clean. The area offers good natural beauty and historical monuments. They stated there could be a wider range of activities and shops, and also better bus connections (in particular busses) to and from Grantown on Spey.

Group 2 score: 6 / 7.

Group 3

This group said in Carrbridge the shop, bridge and park were all good things. They felt there should be more electric charging car points in the future, and more cafes. Regarding Grantown on Spey they had no suggestions stating they thought it was 'perfect'.

Group 2 score: 4 / 7.



Feeling proud and a part of my place average score: 5 / 7

Schools, libraries, shops and other services

‘What is my place like for accessing services we need?’

Group 1

This group (the only group who reported on this topic) felt the primary school was good. They reported there needs to be more cafes in Carrbridge, a slightly bigger shop and a small doctor’s surgery. They also felt the primary school at Carrbridge needed expanding.

Schools, Libraries shops and other services score: 5 / 7.

Jobs and places to work

‘Are there opportunities for people to work, trained or volunteer locally?’

Group 1

This group (the only group to report on this topic) stated their parents work locally and are happy with their jobs. They did however have concerns about power outages affecting jobs and places to work (including working from home) in the area.

Jobs and places to work score: 6 / 7.

Homes friends and neighbours

‘Does my place feel like a community?’

Group 1

This group reported that they enjoy living in their respective neighbourhoods. However, stated that it gets loud at night. They liked that there are lots of other children the same age in the community and that not much could be better as the people and other children are all nice.

Group 1 score: 6 / 7.



Group 2

They reported the neighbours and gardens were good. They would like more children their age (Braes of Castle Grant) and improvements to the roads and internet services.

Group 2 score: 3 / 7.

Homes, friends and neighbours average score 5 / 7.

Meeting and talking to people

'Are there spaces / places where I go to meet and talk with friends and other local people I trust?'

Group 1

This group reported the parks in Carrbridge were good now. To improve things, they would like more young farmers clubs. They would like more places to go. They also said more trees would be good.

Group 1 score: 4 / 7.

Group 2

This group said that Grantown on Spey was good. They mentioned the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) community centre as an asset and there were lots of big spaces to use. They thought there should be more things to go to. They felt the area would benefit from covered spaces, funky benches and thought litter (in particular vape pens and cigarettes) was an issue. They also commented on poor internet availability, and rubbish and litter concerns, generally, in the area being bad.

Group 2 score: 4 / 7.

Meeting and talking with people average score: 4 / 7.

Conclusion

All the classes from the school engaged well with the exercise and generated discussion on a number of topics which highlight concerns in the Cairngorms National Park from the children's perspective.



There were a lot of positive comments about Grantown on Spey, with other suggestions mainly focused on the smaller settlements of Boat of Garten, Nethy Bridge, Cromdale, Carrbridge and Dulnain Bridge (smaller settlements within the catchment area for the school). They reported the National Park offered good access to nature and an abundance of outdoor activities and green spaces. They also commented that they were happy with the existing leisure facilities and generally felt it was a good place to live.

However, they did make a number of suggestions for improvements during the discussions that could be taken into account when preparing the next Local Development Plan, including:

- Better lighting in play parks used by the children.
- More activities, places to go and covered spaces.
- Poor quality internet was a recurring theme.
- More bins needed as generally poor litter management in the area was a concern.
- More shops or / and a shopping centre
- Bike lanes / more paths in and around settlements.
- Development at the old quarry in Rothiemurchus for a skate park or children to use.
- Better located crossings near existing and new housing.
- More housing for local people.
- More / improved public transport in the National Park (in particular better connections with Grantown on Spey).
- Reopening of the railway linking Grantown on Spey to the settlements.
- More parking.
- Better road management (in particular the fixing the potholes.)
- Larger / new shops in smaller settlements of Cromdale, Carrbridge, Dulnain Bridge.
- Better healthcare provision in smaller settlements (in particular Carrbridge).

The place rating scores garnered from the group for each of the topics have been collated and presented in Figure 1.

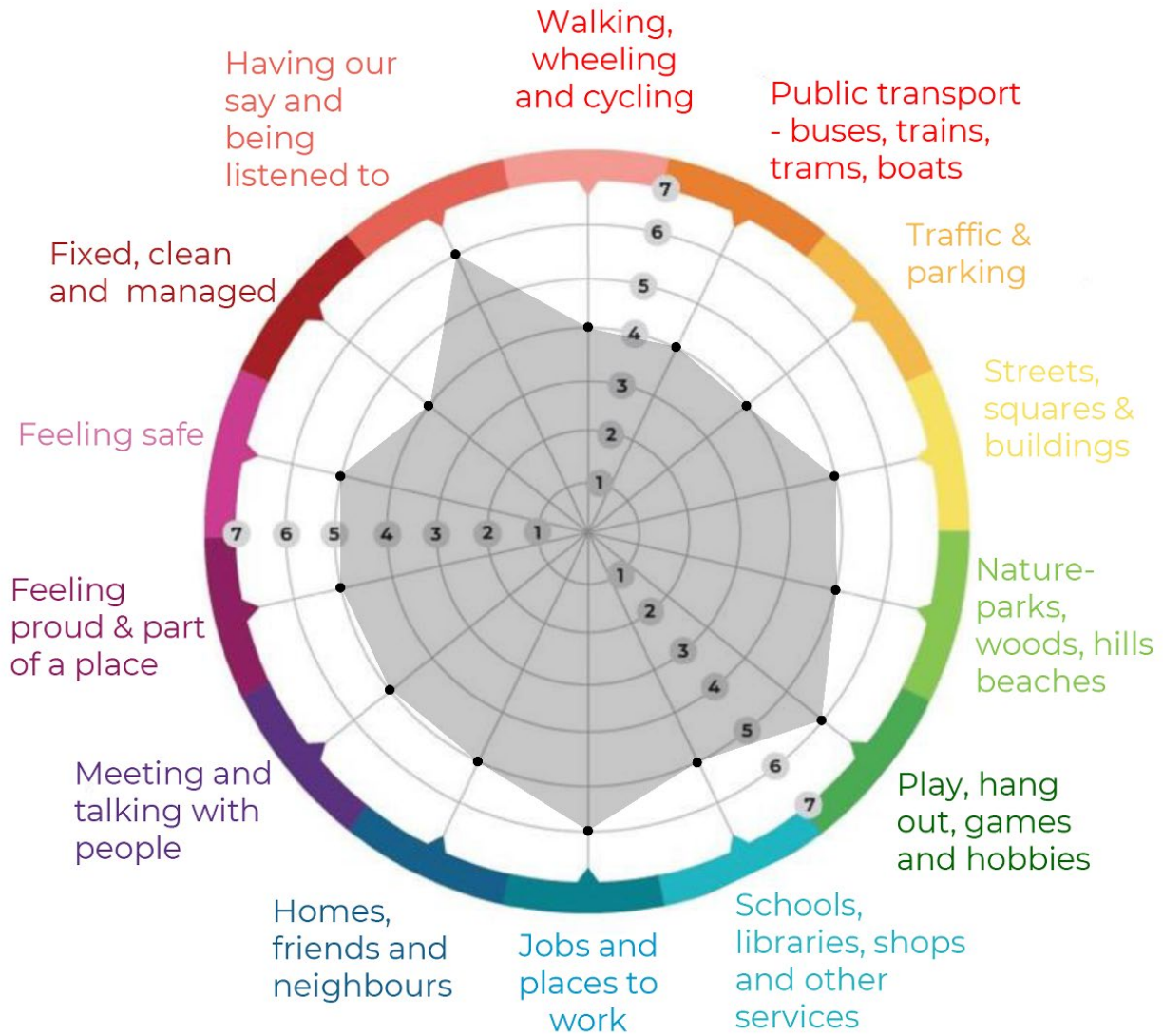


Figure 1 Compass diagram with the year 6 Geography class students from Grantown Grammar School.

The diagram shows that the children feel they are able to have their say and be listened to. There was also a positive response in terms of jobs and places to work and places to play, hang out, games and hobbies. All the other topics scored either 4 or 5 out of 7. The individual comments discussed earlier in this report are perhaps of more value than the graph itself in this case.

Figure 1 will be compared to similar diagrams from the other engagement activities we are currently running to give an overall picture of how the different groups feel about the



Cairngorms National Park and to identify common areas for future potential improvement which the next Local Development Plan can help address.

References

- Place Standard Tool for Children and Young People
<https://www.ourplace.scot/place-standard-tool-children-and-young-people>
- Highland Council
https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1463980/grantown_grammar_school/category/542/secondary
- Grantown Grammar School
<https://grantowngrammar.wordpress.com/>