



Local Development Plan Place Standard

Tool engagement with Kingussie High School S3 students 13 – 14 years.

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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 current Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan can be accessed here:

- <https://cairngorms.co.uk/planning-development/ldp-2021/>

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 discussion, 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 Place Standard Tool available to engage different audiences. During the entire engagement programme with the Kingussie High School students (aged 11 – 17 years) the Place Standard tool for young people was used.

In total at Kingussie High School sessions were run with a range of classes and ages, comprising of the S1 Geography students (aged 11- 12 years), S3 Geography students (aged 13 – 14 years) and the Highers criminology class students (aged 15 – 17 years). This report focuses on the session with the S3 students.

The session with the S3 students was conducted on the 13 November 2024 across all three geography classes covering all the S3 students. The students were divided into small groups of 2 - 4 students. The 14 topic sheets were handed out in booklets with



two topics and the students worked through the two topics and if they finished given another two topics to look at.

At the end of the session there was a brief group discussion. Each group was invited to tell the rest of the class about one issue / problem they thought was most important and the other groups were asked to comment on the concern and agree or disagree. The whole class was then invited to vote on whether the issue / problem was important, needed addressing and offer any possible solutions / remedy.

The sessions with the S3 students comprised of:

- 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: In groups formed on the basis of where they live or spend most of their time the students worked on topics from the Place Standard tool.
- Part 3: Group discussion on key issues in the different places covered by the groups.

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 localities that they live in or where they spend most of their time. The demographic of the group was 13 – 14 years male and female students at Kingussie High School located within the National Park boundary. The whole S3 geography cohort consists of 59 students.

Kingussie High School is one of two High Schools in the Cairngorms National Park. Records suggest that there has been a school in Kingussie (or the ancient parish of Ruthven) since the time of the Columban missionaries, and although today a smallish school by national standards, we maintain a long and proud academic record which precedes the 1872 Education Act. The school caters for children from the age of 11 up to 18 and has as its motto the Gaelic 'Du Dichiollach' – with diligence.

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>



S3 Students Results

The results from each topic have been reported here under their respective topic headings with the questions included from the Young People Place Standard tool. Where more than one group worked on the same topic, these have been entered under different group headings and an average (mean) score calculated for the final compass diagram reporting.

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

This group offered no suggestions as to 'what is good now?'. They did however offer suggestions for what could be better. These included improvements to the play park in Newtonmore, which the group reported did not look good because the equipment is rusty. They also thought the Market Stance flood lights should be free to the public instead of just the shinty team on the weekends. Limited access to lighting for outdoor recreational activities in Aviemore was also raised as being problematic.

Group 1 score: 4 / 7.

Group 2

In Kingussie the group felt the play park was good and provides a good place to frequent and meet friends. In Kincaig they also thought the park was good and well located in the village. In Aviemore the group thought the football pitch was great and in Dalwhinnie the group felt the access to the woods was good.

Thinking about what could be better, this group stated they thought the High Street in Kingussie is a really good space but that it could be wider. In Kincaig they felt there needs to be a space for young people to frequent. In Aviemore, the group stated there needs to be a place to go at night with less 'junkies' as there are too many at the play park. In Dalwhinnie the group stated that there is 'no good place to hang out'.

Group 2 score: 3 / 7.

Group 3



This group stated that the free buses (presumably providing access to opportunities to play, socialise and frequent etc) and the astroturf pitch in Aviemore is good now. They also reported the streets are generally clean.

When asked what could be better, they stated there needed to be a football pitch and shop in Kincaig, as well as more buses linking Kincaig with the other settlements in the area. They also stated a pump track in Kincaig would be good.

Thinking about the other settlements they would like to see a skatepark and swimming pool in Kingussie and Newtonmore. They also stated there was nowhere to do gymnastics and would like an astroturf pitch in Kingussie.

Group 3 score: 3 / 7.

Group 4

This group reported that in Aviemore the shelter and shops were good places to frequent. They also felt the green spaces and provision of quiet spaces is good now.

Thinking about what could be better, they stated the area needs more sports facilities and a basketball court.

Group 4 score: 4 / 7.

Nature: parks, woods, hills, and beaches

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

Group 1

Thinking about what is good now this group stated that there are lots of benches in Kingussie for picnics, with good signage and views of the mountains. In Aviemore the group stated that the skiing opportunities are good with 'some of the best sights in the UK'. In Kincaig the group stated that the woods are 'massive' and that the fact that there are no shops was a good thing as they destroy the views of nature. In Dalwhinnie the group praised Loch Erich as having 'amazing views' and noted it is a good tourist area.

Thinking about what could be better, the group stated there needed to be a few (or more) bins and dog bins in Kincaig. In Aviemore the group felt there should be less big shops, which got in the way of the mountains. In Kincaig the group stated there needs



to be more bins to keep the area clean. In Dalwhinnie the group agreed there needed to be a café so people have somewhere to go and sit, keep warm and meet friends.

Group 1 score: 4 / 7.

Group 2

This group thought the forests in Kingussie and rivers in Aviemore are good things now. Thinking about what could be better, the group stated there needs to be 'tighter rules about where people can go and walk'. They felt there needs to be more enforcement for people that don't respect the National Park. They also put in this topic that the play parks in Aviemore, Newtonmore and Kincaig needed improving.

Group 2 score: 5 / 7.

Group 3

This group stated that they liked the trees, greenery, woodlands, hills, fields and adventure in the National Park. Thinking about what could be better, they stated that the beaches (presumably at Loch Morlich and long the rivers), ponds. They also mentioned canals and the seashore (which doesn't have any bearing on the nature in the National Park).

Group 3 score: 6 / 7.

Streets, squares and buildings

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

Group 1

Thinking about what is good now, this group listed the following things in Newtonmore:

- Nice Church.
- Co-op.
- Wildcat Centre.
- Landscape, in particular the mountains.
- Views from the houses.
- Car charging.

When asked what could be better in Newtonmore the group stated there need to be wider streets, more shops, improvements to the play park (mentioning the poor quality of the swings) and the group reported that the shops that are there, are never open.



Group 1 score: 4 / 7.

Group 2

This group also focussed answers on Newtonmore. They stated that the folk museum and the fact that it is easy to access and get around in nature are good things now. They also like the Wildcat Centre, and golf course. They also praised the local events, and local businesses. They thought there was a good primary school, and the village is well served with traffic lights (a good thing).

Thinking about what could be better, the group stated that they thought the housing estate by the Grill, in Newtonmore, was a negative element of the town, blocking the views from other nearby houses at Spey Green. They also reported the forest in the Folk Museum needed fixing and the dualling of the A9 needed finishing.

Group 2 score: 7 / 7.

Group 3

In Aviemore this group praised Home Bargains and didn't want to see it gone. Thinking about what could be better, the group stated that rail travel could be free, and would welcome a shopping centre for local people, as the current retail provision is mainly aimed at tourists in Aviemore.

They felt Kingussie could be better with the addition of a football pitch, and better shops (like Home Bargains). In Kincaig they would also like to see a football pitch and a shop. They would also like to see a train station in Kincaig, in addition to a pub and takeaway.

They felt that Aviemore town centre has 'no vibes'.

Group 3 score: 2 / 7.



Traffic and parking

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

Group 1

This group felt that the traffic is ok now. Thinking about what could be better, the group reported that there needs to be more parking in Aviemore, Newtonmore and Kingussie. They also reported that there needs to be less potholes and roadworks in Aviemore.

Group 1 score: 4 / 7.

Group 2

This group reported that they rarely saw any traffic, however felt there was too much construction on / near roads making it difficult to get around. They also felt that tourists struggled on the winding roads.

Group 2 score: 3 / 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

This group reported that the buses are in good condition and the fact they are free for young people and old people was a good thing. Thinking about what could be better, the group thought rail travel should be free, and the trains could be in better condition. They also said there needs to be more bus services on Sunday, more services generally and quicker busses.

This group also wrote down that there needed to be a shop in Kincaig, more takeaway options generally in Kingussie, Kincaig and Aviemore (McDonalds).

Group 1 score: 5 / 7.

Group 2

This group was made up of students from Kincaig, Aviemore and Kingussie, so they reported that generally the transport is good everywhere, with less traffic in Kincaig.



Thinking about what could be better, the group stated that in Kincaig there are no trains, too few bus stops and long waiting times for a bus. In Aviemore the train tickets need to be cheaper and in Kingussie the public transport is overcrowded.

Group 2 scores: Kincaig: 1 / 7, Kingussie: 4 / 7 and Aviemore: 5 / 7.

Group 3

This group praised that fact young people get free bus travel, and the buses are easy to use. They felt the buses are fairly safe and allows them to listen to music / daydreaming.

Thinking about what could be better, the group stated that the school bus timing is too late, and sometimes overcrowded. They also felt that bikes contribute to increased traffic. They thought cycling is not safe and bike lanes are needed.

Group 3 score: 4 / 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 felt that the bike shelter and streetlights are things that are good now. Thinking about what could be better they mentioned the cycle paths, cheaper petrol, better turning circles and more zebra crossings.

Group 1 score: 3 / 7.

Group 2

In Newtonmore, this group reported the path between Newtonmore and Kingussie was good now. They also reported there is a good provision of outdoor seating and good streetlights and winter lighting. Thinking about what the group could be better stated that the potholes and curbs need improving. They also stated that the path down to the train station needed attention / improving. They also reported the crossing by the Eilan needed improving and general crossings to the cycle path / pavement could be improved.

Group 2 score: 6 / 7.



Group 3

This group reported that they thought the Speyside Way was good now and the bike trails are 'ok'. Thinking about what could be better, the group stated that they thought it would be better not to let people and tourists walk through farmland. Although they thought the Speyside Way was good, they did feel it needs to be more accessible for wheelchairs and prams. They thought the bus companies should allow bikes on busses and there should be more bike tracks in Kincaig.

Group 3 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 reported that sometimes people have come before to visit and talk to students at the Kingussie and Newtonmore schools. However, they reported that 'many times we have been asked for our opinion, but it's rarely acted on'.

Group 1 score: 2 / 7.

Group 2

This group reported that they thought the fact that people are coming to the school to talk to them, and actually listen was a good thing now. They would like this to lead to action. Thinking about what could be better, they reported that they would like free train travel. They would also like to see a place / space created where they could go and share ideas, visits from politicians and voting on issues in school.

Group 2 score: 3 / 7.

Group 3

This group thought that the football pitch, swimming pool and shops in Aviemore were good now, and that there are lovely cafes and restaurants in Kingussie. They didn't report anything being good about 'Having our say and being listened to'.

Thinking about what could be better, the group stated that they wished more people had agreed to getting a McDonalds in Aviemore.



One student stated they wished the Kingussie Community had listed to them about the football goals in the Market Stance in Kingussie.

Group 2 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 stated that the area is nice and green, and there isn't a lot of vandalism. Thinking about what could be better, the group stated the potholes need attention, and that there is 'a lot of litter and dog litter everywhere', one student even reporting finding a bottle of human pee. The group said that litter seemed to be worst at Station Road in Newtonmore. This group reported that the school buses are very dirty.

They also stated that there is very little to do in Newtonmore, only the pub and the park and that young people (teens) need more things to do.

Group 1 score: 3 / 7.

Group 2

Thinking about what is good now, this group reported that there is not a lot of vandalism evident and most of the buildings are in use. They did however report there are some places / buildings not being used that could be utilised.

Relating to traffic (reported on this sheet) this group would also like to see free train travel. They also thought there should be services along the A9 local to the Badenoch area. They felt there was more entertainment needed in Newtonmore, Kingussie and Aviemore and a Megabus stop in Kingussie.

Group 2 score: 5 / 7.

Group 3

This group reported that there are lots of bins around Newtonmore which is good now. They also stated they thought the Co-op is great in Kingussie because it's nice and tidy.



Thinking about what could be better, the group reported there needed to be less vandalism in Kingussie in the public toilets and more bins in Aviemore along the main street.

Group 3 score: 4 / 7.

Feeling Safe

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

Group 1

Thinking about Kingussie, Inveruglus and Inch the students didn't have any comments about what was good now in relation to feeling safe. They did state that there needs to be less vandalism at the toilets next to the doctor's surgery in Kingussie. They also thought Kingussie could be better with more standing lights on the streets as they felt it was too dark.

Group 1 score: 6 / 7.

Group 2

This group felt that it was safe in Kincaig, and Kingussie. However, they felt Kincaig would benefit from a bus stop next to the new builds. They felt that the variety of shops and the Co-ops in Aviemore and Kingussie was good now.

They did report that in Aviemore, feeling safe can be dependent on how many people are 'out and about drunk'.

Group 2 score: 4 / 7.

Feeling proud and part of my place

'How proud do I feel about my place?'

Group 1

The students thought that the bike paths and outdoor places were a good thing and an enjoyable element to living in the area. They also reported that they liked the Christmas trees in the squares at Christmas. Around Kingussie, they praised the historical sites, mentioning Ruthven Barracks as an asset. They also liked the fact there was a 'man in an orange jacket picking up litter in Kingussie'.



Thinking about what could be better, the students reported there needed to be more 'backroad' buses and buses in general serving the area. Elaborating on the things that could be better with buses, the students stated there needs to be more buses from Kingussie in the mornings at the weekends, and better connections between Kingussie / Aviemore and Grantown. They suggested there should be a bus stop on the A9 near Kingussie as a lot of the services go via Aviemore, but don't stop in Kingussie. Thinking about the need for more buses on the backroads the students felt that there needed to be bus stops / services serving Insh, Farr, Ardgail, Freshie and Invereshie. The group also agreed Kincaig needed a shop and train travel should be free for under 23's.

Group 1 score 4 / 7.

Group 2

This group stated that they liked the (access to) nature in the morning in Aviemore and the duck pond in Kingussie. Thinking about what could be better to make them feel more pride in their communities, they stated Kincaig needs a shop or 'something interesting', this group also said they think there needs to be an additional bus stop near the new housing. In Aviemore, they felt, there needs to be less holiday homes. In Kingussie the students suggested there should be a cheaper alternative to the Co-op.

Group 2 scores: Kincaig 5 / 7, Aviemore 6 / 7, and Kingussie 6 / 7

Meeting and talking with people

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

Group 1

This group felt that Newtonmore and Kingussie, are healthy, populated with friendly trustworthy people. They also praised the Highlife services (libraries and gyms) in Aviemore and across the area. Thinking about what could be better in terms of spaces / places to go and meet up with people the group stated the Badenoch Centre in Kingussie is too small.

Group 1 score: 3 / 7.

Group 2

In terms of meeting and talking to people this group felt Aviemore was the best location for this, with the sports pitch and Home Bargains supporting it. They also praised the



Co-op in Kingussie. In Newtonmore they felt the Clan Macpherson Museum was a good thing. Thinking about what could be better, they suggested more 'fun' places to go in Aviemore.

Group 2 score: 6 / 7.

Homes friends and neighbours

'Does my place feel like a community?'

Group 1

Thinking about what is good now the students, the students reported that there is a good sense of community in Newtonmore with friendly neighbours. In Kincaig they felt it was kept clean and was quiet and peaceful. They thought the shinty was good in Kingussie. In Aviemore they felt the fun fair was good, but Aviemore needed a more defined centre like the Eastgate centre in Inverness with more variety of shops. They felt the area was age diverse which is a good thing. In terms of events, they praised the Holy events, Highland Games, fun days and Santa Parade in Aviemore.

Thinking about what could be better, they had suggestions for additional services for example a shop in Kincaig and a football pitch in Kingussie. The students from Aviemore, reported they didn't feel safe due to social disturbances, people ignoring the rules and noise – which spoils it for everyone. They also felt there are too many tourists, contributing to too much traffic and litter.

Group 1 score: 4 / 7.

Group 2

This group thought the sports pitches in Aviemore was good in terms of community. Thinking about what could be better, the students felt Icon2 (barber) needed to come back, and that Aviemore would benefit from having a JD or Sports Direct shop.

Group 2 score: 6 / 7.



Jobs and places to work

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

Group 1

This group thought the following opportunities are good now: jobs in hospitality, apprenticeships, opportunities at the Newtonmore Wildcat Centre and charity shops in Kingussie. Thinking about what could be better, the group stated there needs to be a ‘better barbers’.

Group 1 scores: Kingussie: 3 / 7 and Newtonmore 6 / 7.

Group 2

This group reported that there is good provision for employment for younger people (for example cafes) in the National Park. In particular they stated there are lots of jobs available for young people in Aviemore. They had no suggestions for improvements.

Group 2 score: 4 / 7.

Schools, libraries, shops and other services

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

Group 1

This group felt the leisure centre in Kingussie and train station in Kingussie and Newtonmore are good now. Thinking about what could be better, the group felt that there needed to be a swimming pool and petrol station in Kingussie. They also felt there needed to be bigger shops, as felt limited to using the Co-op. They also stated they needed a gym in Newtonmore.

Group 1 scores: Newtonmore 4 / 7 and Kingussie 5 / 7.

Group 2

This group praised the free bus travel and regular services to Aviemore. They also thought the doctors, dentists and takeaways (in Aviemore) were all good things now. When asked what could be better, the group agreed there needed to be a local shop in Kincaig. They also thought there needs to be more buses to Newtonmore, and a bus on Sundays. Aviemore or Kingussie needs an orthodontist. They students said they would



welcome a take-away in Kincaig. They also felt the High School should be in Aviemore, reporting the current one in Kingussie needs improving / investment.

Group 2 score: 3 / 7.

Group 3

This group felt that the Co-op, schools, garage, hotel and swimming pool at the Balavil Hotel are all good things now in Newtonmore. Thinking about what could be improved they felt free Wi-Fi and better variety of produce in the Co-op would be beneficial.

Group 3 score: 3 / 7.

Group discussion

The groups agreed on the following proposals put forward by individual groups during the group discussion at the end of the session:

- An all-weather pitch was needed in Kingussie.
- A barber in Aviemore.
- More shops / retail provision in Newtonmore and Kincaig.
- Road maintenance was needed to address the potholes
- Accessibility could be improved by more dropped curbs and better railway access
- Free rail travel.
- More bus services from settlements outwith Aviemore to support activities in Aviemore.

Conclusion

Overall, the students were engaged with the exercise and needed minimal prompting / support to get through the workbooks. The groups provided lots of positive feedback about 'what is good now' and suggestions about how the area could be improved, including suggestions for services. The students worked in mixed groups and so the final compass diagram will represent the area covered by the catchment, which mainly focuses on the settlements of Aviemore, Kincaig, Kingussie and Newtonmore.

In terms of places to play and places to meet up with friends, none of the students scored this topic above 4 / 7. Although they praised some of the existing sports provision and access to nature, generally all groups felt there was a lot of room for improvement with an increase in available facilities needed. Outside of Aviemore, there is a need for



additional sports facilities. The poor play equipment in Newtonmore was also flagged as needing attention.

In terms of access to nature, all groups felt this was generally very good across the area. They did however feel that better controls on litter (and dog litter) are needed.

In terms of the built environment / public realm there was lots of positive comments about existing businesses and buildings. Comments for improvement mainly focused on the lack of shops, particularly in Kincaig.

Generally, the students' felt traffic was not an issue in the area, but did flag the poor condition of the roads as an issue. In terms of public transport, there was a consensus that rail travel should be free. They agreed there needs to be a significant improvement in the bus services, both in terms of access and availability and frequency. Better located bus stops would also increase the perception of safety in some area.

Thinking about moving around by active travel means, the students all agreed there needs to be more cycle routes and dedicated cycle paths in the area. Generally, the students felt the street lighting was ok.

In terms of the maintenance of the build and natural environment the students agreed that litter and dog litter was a key issue, alongside potholes.

Most of the students gave reasons as to why they feel proud of their places, with suggestions for improvement aimed at less holiday homes, better public transport and better retail provision.

In terms of local amenities and services, responses varied depending on location and responses were mainly targeted at services lacking in individual settlements. Common suggestions included better shops, swimming pools and more sports / recreational facilities. In terms of employment the students generally agreed that there are a lot of employment opportunities for young people.

The students generally felt their areas were good places to live at the moment, but could be better, with the inclusion of more services aimed at their age group.

General suggestions agreed by most of the students in the class included the need to:

- Provide more general waste bins and dog litter bins across the area.
- Provide more sports facilities in Kingussie and Kincaig, including swimming pools.



- Encourage more shops / better variety outside Aviemore, in particular Kincaig.
- Improve public transport in terms of buses.
- Offer free rail travel.
- Increase the availability of cycle paths in the settlements of Kingussie, Newtonmore, Aviemore and Kincaig.
- Improve the play / recreational areas in Newtonmore.
- Improvements to accessible routes / paths through and around settlements.

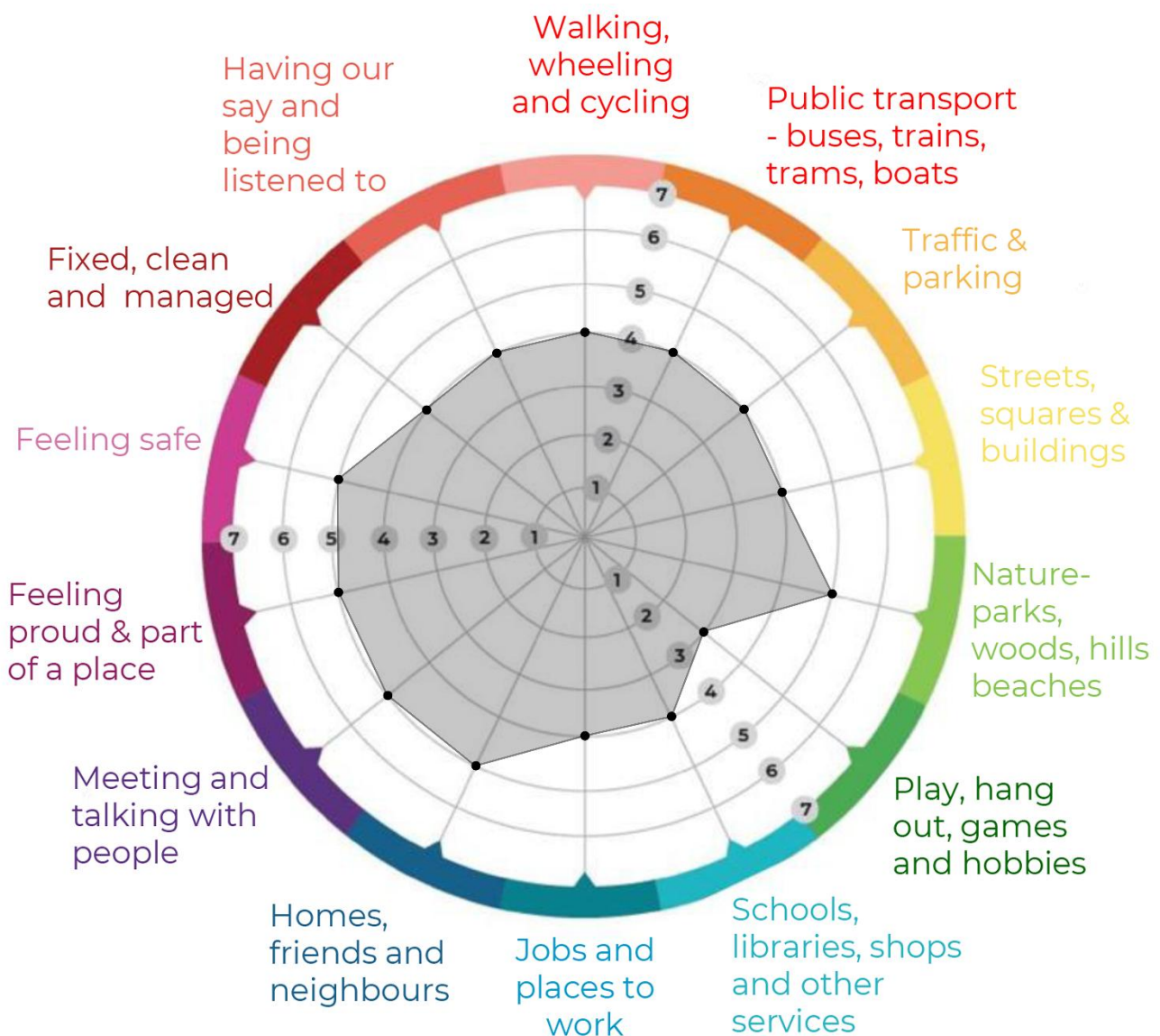


Figure 1 Compass Diagram showing the results for the Place Standard Tool scoring for the National Park, Kingussie High School Catchment area by the S3 Geography Students, 2024.



The Place Standard scores generated for each topic / question in each locality are presented here. Where one group scored different localities differently these scores have been combined to give the average (mean) score. All the group scores for each topic have been combined and an average (mean) score used. The figures have been rounded to one significant figure (whole numbers) for the purpose of the compass diagram reporting.

The compass diagram (Figure 1) shows that in the catchment area of the Kingussie High School students scored 'Play, hang out games and hobbies' the lowest. All the other average scores were recorded as four or five out of seven, making the compass diagram less useful in this instance. The more useful information, in this instance, is provided by the raw data and the summary provided earlier in this conclusion section.

This compass diagram 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 Young People
<https://www.ourplace.scot/place-standard-tool-children-and-young-people>
- Highland Council
https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1464017/kingussie_high_school/category/542/secondary
- Kingussie High School
<https://sites.google.com/kingussiehigh.org.uk/kingussiehigh>