

Place Standard Report



Summary of a Place Standard pilot in Barmulloch

June 2023

Summary



The Place Standard is a widely used resource for discussing community issues and priorities. It encourages users to consider the quality of their neighbourhood by discussing and assessing 14 themes.

This report summarises findings from a Place Standard event in Barmulloch, Glasgow, which was a pilot for the [Wheatley Group](#) to explore the applicability of the tool for engaging with their customers. The event took place in March 2023 and was attended by eight community members, and representatives from six organisations with a role in the local area. The report includes the following sections:

- 1. Context:** Profile of the local area's population, geography and history, and a summary of recent developments within the community. (p.3)
- 2. About the Place Standard:** A description of the Place Standard and why it was chosen in this context. (p.5)
- 3. Our approach:** Summary of the approach taken to undertaking the Place Standard and our rationale for doing so. (p.6)
- 4. Findings:** summary of the discussions from the Place Standard event. The scores assigned for each theme are presented in the form of a spider diagram offering a visual representation of local priorities. (p.8)
- 5. Discussion and next steps:** summarises the key learning and next steps in responding to and addressing local priorities. (p.14)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the residents of Barmulloch and the representatives from the various organisations for participating in this exercise. Thanks are also due to Mark Nicol from the Wheatley Group for helping to facilitate the process and organise the event, and to Eive Currie who provided expertise and leadership at the event. We would also like to thank the Barmulloch Community Development Company for hosting the event at the Barmulloch Residents Centre.



Context

Barmulloch is a small neighbourhood in the northeast of Glasgow which was formerly rural, then developed as a housing area post World War II. Its boundaries east and west are two parks (Broomfield and Robroyston), and two roads to the north and south (Wallacefield Road and Royston Road) (see Figure 1). Some relatively recent changes to Barmulloch include the demolition of some of the original tenements and the building of new homes with gardens and driveways. In spite of demolitions among the tenements, a relatively high proportion of housing stock remains tenemental. Social housing providers in the area include ng Homes and the Wheatley Group.

Figure 1. Map of Barmulloch



Barmulloch is served by two community centres and a recreation hall, a library, a primary school and a secondary school. There are two small shopping areas within walking distance, with a number of local shops and take aways, a post office and a hairdresser. The local pub has recently closed. Public transport is provided by two bus routes.

Balornock and Barmulloch combined comprise one of the 56 housing neighbourhoods as defined by Glasgow City Council. The Balornock and Barmulloch neighbourhood profileⁱ (based on the 2011 Census and 2014 Housing Stock Estimates) states that owner occupation had decreased since 2011, with an increase in social rented provision and a doubling of private rented sector housing. There is a relatively high proportion of family terraced and semi-detached houses.

Another neighbourhood profileⁱⁱ for Balornock and Barmulloch produced by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health in 2015 as part of the Glasgow Indicators Project provides an overview of health and wellbeing in the area. It shows that the area has a relatively

older population than the rest of Glasgow and women live, on average, seven years longer than men. Life expectancy in the area is similar to the Glasgow average (with men being slightly lower). The employment rate is lower than the Glasgow average, there is a high percentage of young people not in education, employment or training, and the proportion of children living in poverty is high. Most of the residents – 90% – live within 500 metres of vacant or derelict land.



About the Place Standard

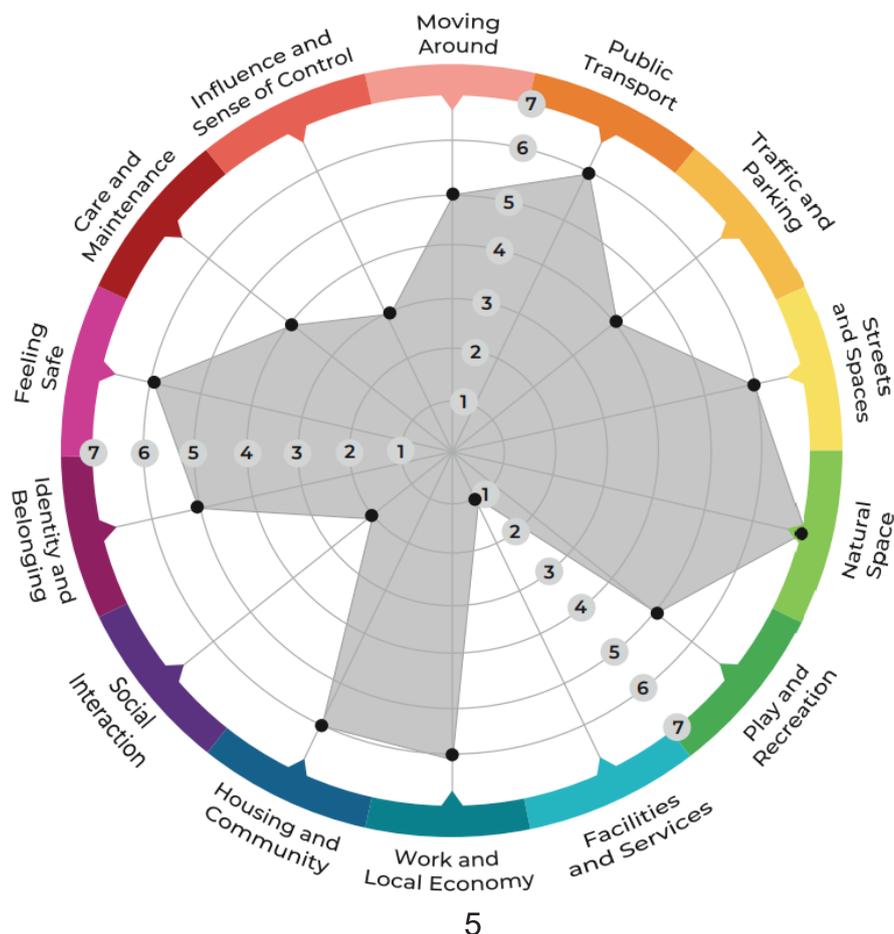


The [Place Standard tool](#) provides a framework for structuring conversations about the physical and social aspects of place. It has been adopted by the Scottish Government and rolled out nationally as a resource for communities, voluntary groups, local authorities, and other public bodies for identifying community aspirations and priorities. It has also been promoted by the [World Health Organisation European Healthy Cities Network](#), has been translated into ten languages, and is used widely across Europe.

The tool can be used in a variety of different contexts, and feedback can be gathered using a range of different methods, depending on community aspirations and needs (examples of how it has been used in Scotland can be found [here](#)). The tool encourages participants to think about the quality of their neighbourhood and the potential for improvement across 14 themes (see Figure 2). At the end of each themed discussion, groups are asked to agree on a score for that theme between 1 (very poor) and 7 (very good). Once a score has been agreed for each theme, these can be plotted to create a spider diagram (as below). This provides a clear illustration of the main priorities for a community.

However, it should be noted that the conversations that take place to decide on a score are equally important to capture, while it is likely that across some themes there may not be consensus in terms of scoring. For this reason, it can be useful to capture individual scores to assess differences between individuals and different population groups.

Figure 2. Example of a Place Standard scoring diagram



Our approach



The Wheatley Group approached the national Place Standard Team (by contacting Public Health Scotland) and GCPH to help facilitate a Place Standard event in Barmulloch. The intent was to undertake a Place Standard exercise to explore and assess the applicability of the tool as a practical approach for engaging customers of the Wheatley Group.

Following discussions between the Wheatley Group, the national Place Standard Team and GCPH, it was agreed that it would be useful to conduct an exercise in Barmulloch for two purposes: 1) to assess the issues important to the community and to secure buy-in for developing a group to take forward actions following the exercise, and 2) to allow the Wheatley Group to pilot the tool as a predominant means of engaging with their customers across Scotland in the future. The Wheatley Group invited local community residents and organisations with a role in the community to participate.

On the 7th March 2023, eight community members (customers) along with representatives from six organisations attended a Place Standard exercise held at Barmulloch Residents Centre.

The organisations represented on the day were:

- Wheatley Housing Group including:
 - Locality Housing Director
 - Local Housing Officers
 - Community Improvement Partnership Lead
 - Anti-Social Behaviour Lead
 - Wheatley Foundation Director
- Glasgow City Council Neighbourhood and Regeneration Services
- Police Scotland (Local Community Police Officers)
- Toon Speak (Youth Development)
- Barmulloch Community Development Company (Resident's Centre Management)
- Scottish Community Safety Network (Head of National Development)

Representatives from the National Place Standard Team and the Glasgow Centre for Population Health also attended to assist in the facilitation of the exercise.

The event, which was held at Barmulloch Residents Centre, began with a presentation by Eive Currie (Senior Planner, Glasgow City Council), who discussed the background to the development of the Place Standard tool, the links between place, health and health inequalities, and the purpose of the day. She also described how to use the Place Standard tool and provided examples of how it had been used elsewhere.

Following the presentation, attendees were invited to go on a walk-about of the local area during which customers had the opportunity to highlight the positives and not-so-positives of living in Barmulloch. On returning to the Residents Centre, attendees were divided into two groups, one of customers and one of officers and professionals (the groups were kept separate because the Wheatley Group thought customers would be more open and talkative if officers and professionals were at a separate table). The 14 themes from the tool were discussed at each table separately for about 30 minutes and scores from 1 to 7 (with the worst possible score being 1 and the best being 7) were agreed, after discussion within each group, for each of the themes (see Figures 4-7). Each table had a facilitator and a scribe to take notes.



Findings



This section captures the conversation from the walk-about and the discussion groups. Most themes combine comment from both the customers table and the officers and professionals table. There was general alignment in the thinking at both tables, but there were some themes (e.g., social interaction, identity and belonging, and influence and sense of control) that officers and professionals did not feel they could comment on since they did not live in the area.

Moving Around

Most people felt it was fairly easy to move around the area but thought it would be difficult for disabled people, particularly those in wheelchairs. They also thought it would be a challenge to push a pram. There was a recognition of the challenge of moving around narrow streets and pavements, and having to navigate around litter and dog dirt.

Public Transport

Most people thought that public transportation in the area was very poor, “*there is only one bus into the town and it only runs once an hour*”. Some expressed stronger opinions saying that it was rubbish. They thought the bus itself was ok but the waiting times were awful, buses were said to be unreliable and that once you were on the bus, it took ages to get to where you want to go.

Traffic & Parking

Parking was a major issue, with people saying that there were far too many cars parked on the pavement, making it difficult to get around especially for those in wheelchairs or pushing prams. Others stated that cars regularly went too fast in the area.

Streets & Spaces

People felt there were too many cars on the pavements and there was an issue with cars speeding on the roads. They said the streets are dirty and there are not enough litter bins. The green spaces are littered and untidy. It was felt that many in the area didn't care about the appearance of outside spaces.

Play & Recreation

People were unhappy with the opportunities for play and recreation. They said that the play park is too far away from their houses and is constantly vandalised. *“There’s broken glass everywhere and the kids don’t want to go out. In the evenings older teens hang about the area and intimidate the younger children.”*

They also said that there is no sports centre or swimming pool and one person said he couldn’t get swimming lessons for his daughter. They mentioned there wasn’t much for adults in the area either.

Natural Space

People felt the parks in the area are not maintained well. They said there’s a predominance of grass and not much else. They complained that no one bothers to pick up the rubbish. People said they don’t feel safe going into the parks at night and certainly wouldn’t let their children. Several mentioned that drug dealing is a major problem. People felt that the local open space provided one of the biggest opportunities for change in the area.

Facilities & Amenities

People said there is not much in the local area in terms of shops. There are a few local stores, a post office, a hairdresser, and a couple of take-aways. The pub has closed. They also said local shops are expensive.

Work & Local Economy

Awareness of local opportunities to volunteer was very low – it was said that advertising is poor. People said that training opportunities were limited and, when available, were too expensive. They felt there are not many job opportunities in the local area either – the closest are Lidl and Asda.

Housing & Community

Customers felt that the housing in the area doesn’t meet their needs. Several stated that they were overcrowded and that most places aren’t adapted for disabled people. Some said there was too much dog mess around and far too many cars parking on the pavement. Others said that their neighbours aren’t very tolerant and that they are always complaining about their children playing. On the other hand, one customer said that he was very happy in his Living Well complex.

Social Interaction

Customers felt there was little opportunity in the area for social interaction. One stated, *“There’s nothing going on – absolutely nothing here. You’ve got the community centre but that’s it.”* Another said that they haven’t made friends in the ten years living here. There are no community events and no restaurants, cafes, or pubs.

Identity & Belonging

Despite the lack of opportunity for social interaction, most customers (especially those who had lived in Barmulloch for many years) thought that they generally feel part of the community. One said, *“It’s the right place for me. I’m fine, I love it here”*. However, another resident who had recently moved within the area was not so sure, *“My neighbours are a pain and it makes me feel isolated”*.

Feeling Safe

Some customers who had lived in Barmulloch a long time felt safe. *“I’ve been here my whole life – I feel safe most of the time. It’s familiar. While I feel safe, I don’t think it’s safe to let my kids out after dark. There are too many drugs in the area.”* Others said they feel safe during the day but not after dark. They didn’t think the park was safe and were concerned about drug dealing and speeding cars. They felt the park needs better lighting.

Care & Maintenance

Customers were very concerned about the state of care and maintenance in the area. Some said that their windows won’t open and when they reported it to City Building, they came out but did not fix the issue. Most felt that the roads are in a terrible mess, with a lot of potholes. They also thought that the streets were dangerous with cars *“running up and down”*. Some stated that their house stairs and paths are in poor condition and need levelled because they are a trip hazard. Others said the houses were too warm with too many radiators and no way to control the temperature.

People also said there is a lot of fly-tipping, general litter, and broken glass. There’s a lot of drink and drugs (both selling and doing), especially among young people, which needs to be sorted. Dog mess can be found on the majority of streets, with Cardow and Quarrywood Road being the worst. The whole area feels uncared for.

Influence & Sense of Control

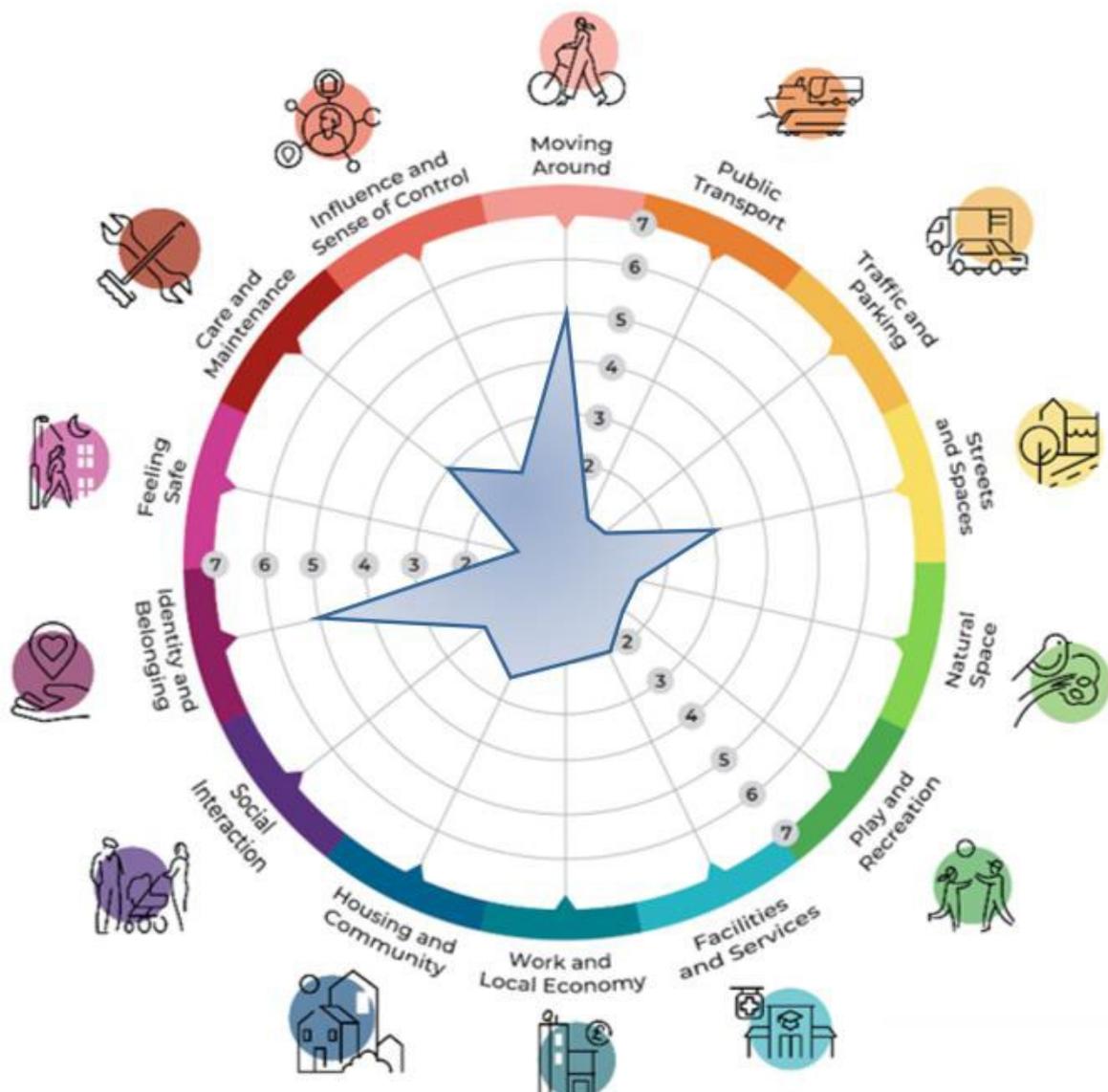
There were mixed opinions around how much influence people had locally. One person said that she felt that people listen to her when she has a (housing) issue and others agreed. Another, however, stated *“this is the first event we have been to when someone is interested in what we think. We don’t think anyone really cares.”*



Scoring wheels

The groups provided a score out of 7 for each of the 14 themes, with the lowest possible score being 1 and the highest being 7. These scores were plotted on a spider diagram, creating a visual representation of the discussion, and highlighting priority areas.

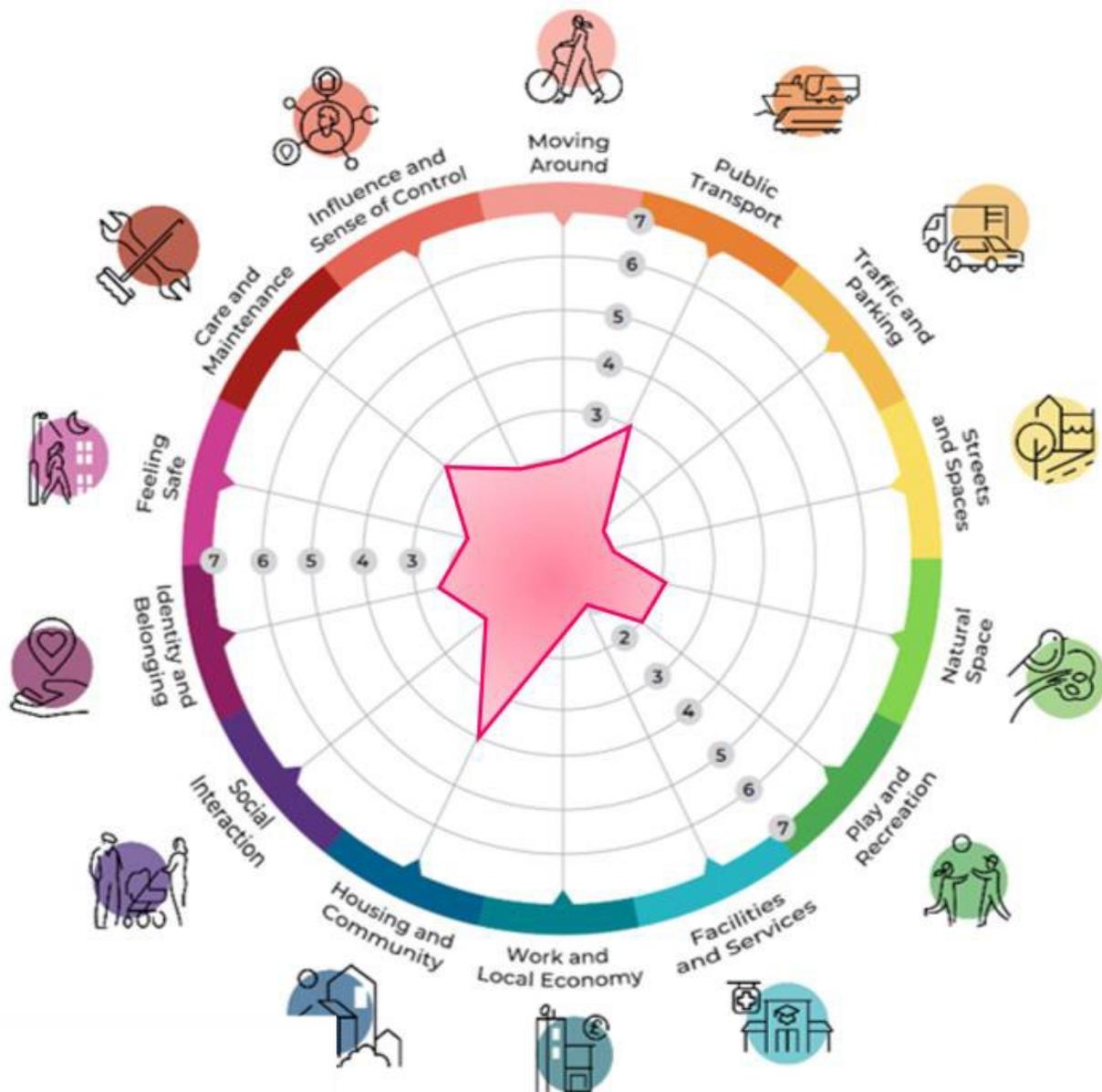
Figure 3. Customers scores



The customers group highlighted several areas in their neighbourhood which they thought could improve, based on their lived experience of Barmulloch. The themes with the lowest scores were:

- Public Transport
- Traffic and Parking
- Natural Space
- Feeling Safe
- Influence and Sense of Control

Figure 4. Officers and professionals scores

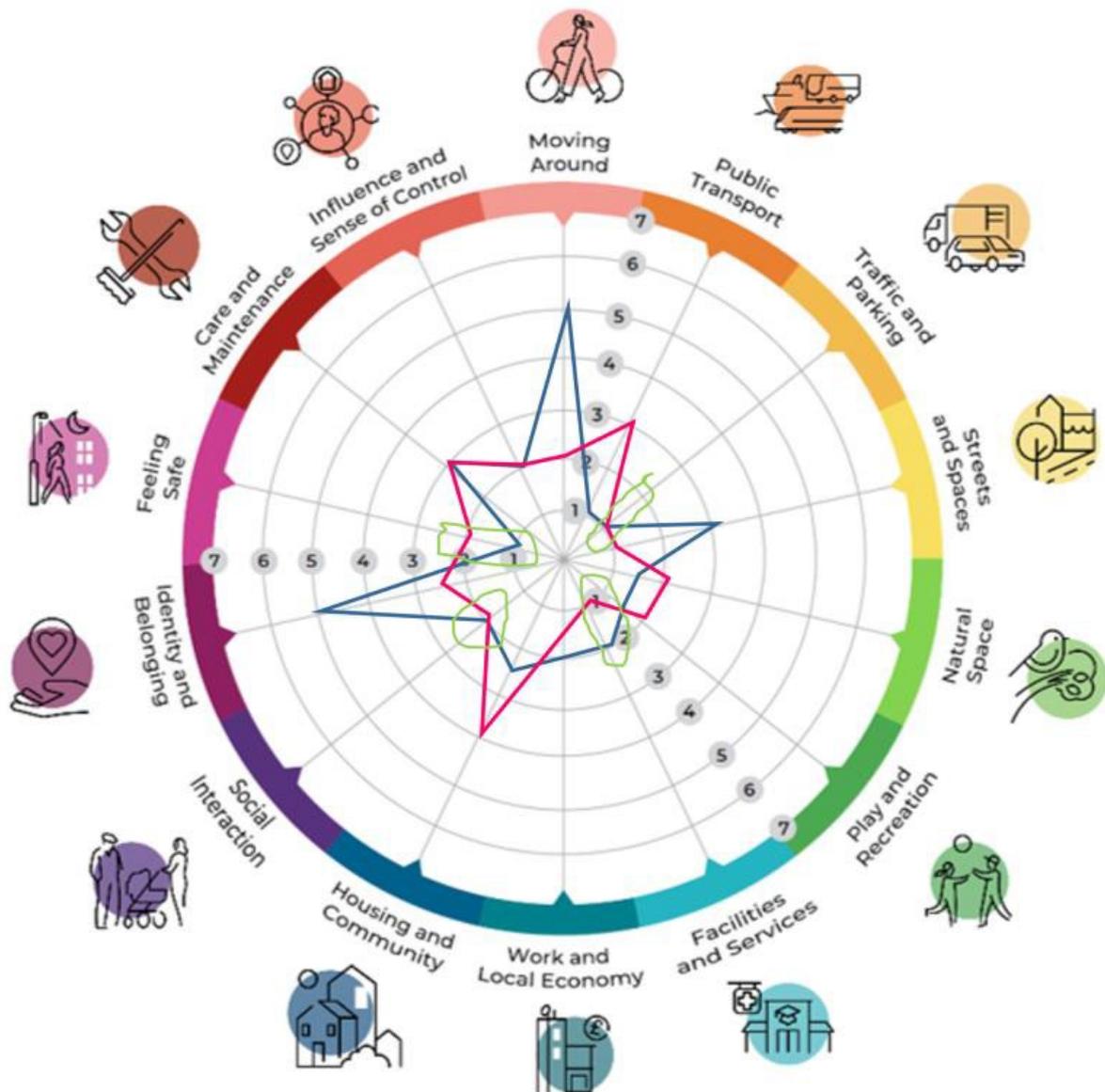


The officers and professionals who all work in the Barmulloch area found some themes difficult to score (e.g., Social Interaction and Identity and Belonging) because they don't live in the neighbourhood. They recognised that residents were best

placed to provide information on what it is like to live in the area. The group scored the themes in similarly to the customers group. The lowest scoring themes were:

- Traffic and Parking
- Streets and Spaces
- Facilities and Services
- Feeling Safe
- Influence and Sense of Control

Figure 5. Overlaying the scores



Over-laying the two sets of scores provides a clear picture of where the groups agree about priorities in the neighbourhood. Both groups gave low scores to the following:

- Traffic and Parking
- Facilities and Services
- Social Interaction
- Feeling Safe

Discussion and next steps

This report summarises a pilot of the Place Standard tool in Barmulloch. It is not a definitive representation of the views of community residents but instead captures the conversation at a point in time. Four themes (Traffic and Parking, Facilities and Services, Social Interaction and Feeling Safe) were scored almost the same by both groups and merit further discussion. The customer's group also had concerns about Public Transport, Natural Space and Influence and Sense of Control.

Representatives in the officer's and professionals group raised how difficult it is to get local people to engage with them and felt the Place Standard tool offers a potential solution. They were keen to find out why people didn't participate in existing activities. Others within this group thought the Place Standard tool opened their eyes to a wide variety of important attributes of a neighbourhood that they hadn't previously considered. For some, it was the first time they were making the connections between all the elements which make up a place and the linkages between them. There was also discussion among the officer's and professional's group of the potential of conducting a Place Standard exercise aimed at specific age groups, females, males, LGBTQ+ groups, etc.



The Wheatley Group has organised a problem-solving group made up of customers, officers and professionals who attended the exercise. The findings of this report are informing the group of the issues raised and actions are being put into place to address them. Involving customers along with officers and professionals with a role in the area allows for joint ownership of the actions and ensures that customers continue to have a say in neighbourhood improvements that are important to them. Establishing an action group that comprises all parties involved in the exercise is an excellent way of managing expectations that may be raised during the workshop. It is important that the exercise is not an end in itself and that at least some of the issues raised are addressed in a timely fashion, and if not, then customers can understand why there are delays.

The Wheatley Group was impressed with the pilot of the tool and thought it is a useful way to engage customers, officers and professionals in encouraging them to think about the quality of the neighbourhood across 14 themes. The Wheatley Group have developed an internal report based on this one to serve as a template for reporting future exercises. They plan to utilise the Place Standard tool as a primary means of engaging its customers throughout Scotland.

GCPH was pleased to be involved in the pilot exercise and to help facilitate the conversation and write the report as the Place Standard tool encourages a ‘co-productive’ and ‘inclusive’ approach to placemaking. Our involvement builds on our approach to help develop the capacity to create healthy neighbourhoods and allow residents more of a say in their local area.



It's great to see the Place Standard Tool being applied practically, with local residents and service providers side-by-side, examining what's working, what's not and why, together, and outlining the things that can be done to improve citizens' living places and shared spaces. This really is community empowerment in action, and we're delighted to be a part of this exciting pilot, to demonstrate what community participation can do, to help improve community safety in Barmulloch and across Scotland."

Dave Shea
Head of National Development
Scottish Community Safety Network

ⁱ Glasgow Housing Strategy 2017-2022: Neighbourhood Profiles (<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36553&p=0>) last accessed March 2023.

ⁱⁱ Barlonock and Barmulloch Neighbourhood Profile. Understanding Glasgow: The Glasgow Indicators Project. Glasgow Centre for Population Health (https://www.understandingglasgow.com/profiles/neighbourhood_profiles/1_ne_sector/8_balornock_and_barmulloch) last accessed March 2023.



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