

Planning Committee

10.00, Thursday 1 October 2015

Placemaking

Item number	7.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

Executive summary

The Scottish Government has identified the creation of good places as a key strand of planning policy. This report sets out measures that Planning & Building Standards are taking to develop and deliver a Placemaking Agenda for the Council.

Links

Coalition pledges	P4, P8, P15, P17, P33, P40, P44
Council outcomes	CO7, CO8, CO10, CO16, CO19, CO21, CO23, CO26
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1, SO2, SO4

Placemaking

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee notes this report.

Background

- 2.1 Placemaking is about delivering good places. The Scottish Government sees good places as quality places which support communities both socially and economically and promote health and well-being. Good placemaking involves working together to create places that work and this has to involve the valuable knowledge held within communities about their place.

Later this year, the Scottish Government, NHS Scotland and Architecture & Design Scotland (A&DS) will launch the [place standard assessment tool](#) (Appendix 1). The aim of the place standard tool is to support the delivery of high quality places.

- 2.2 The Council has stated that one of its aims is to create 'great places' for the people of Edinburgh. The Council Pledges, the Council Strategic Outcomes and the Single Outcome Agreement set out the elements required for Edinburgh to be an economically, socially and environmentally better place. This is reinforced in the Council Business Plan 2015-2018, which sets out three strategic themes:
- Improve quality of life;
 - Ensure economic vitality; and
 - Build excellent places.
- 2.3 The Edinburgh Partnership and the community planning partnerships within Edinburgh are focused on resolving social, economic and environmental issues in their area and seek to plan and deliver better services to improve the lives of local people.
- 2.4 The Council's continued focus on place is reflected in the creation of an Executive Director of Place and through the Transformation Programme which will result in services being delivered at a local level wherever possible. This change provides the opportunity to promote and celebrate place within the City.

- 2.5 There are many strands of work within the Council that relate to placemaking and many Council services work with local communities to improve existing places and help deliver new services.
- 2.6 However, the Scottish Government sees Planning as having a key role in the delivery of successful places with the following policy statements within the [Scottish Planning Policy](#):
- Planning should take every opportunity to create high quality places by taking a design-led approach;
 - Planning should direct the right development to the right place;
 - Planning should support development that is designed to a high-quality which demonstrates the six qualities of successful place.
- 2.7 Through the Development Planning and Development Management processes, Planning and Building Standards is in a position to promote the right development in the right location to achieve better places. In addition, Planning and Building Standards also has a role in promoting understanding and raising awareness of good placemaking and practice within the Council, local communities and the wider city.
- 2.8 Planning and Building Standards has reorganised to align with the above objectives and created a Built Environment and Placemaking team to develop and progress the Placemaking Agenda. One of the priorities of the Business Plan for 2015-16 is 'to position Planning and Building Standards at the heart of Edinburgh's commitment to Placemaking'. This is reflected in the Service Improvements for 2015-16 which are set out in the [Planning Performance Framework 2014-2015](#). A Place Group has been established to develop initial thinking and proposals for the Placemaking Agenda.

Main report

- 3.1 Placemaking is an overall ambition to achieve better places within the City, not just new development but also how existing places are managed and improved. Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy. It is how we think and it also how we work.
- 3.2 Whilst Planning and Building Standards has a key role in the delivery of successful places, places are defined by more than just the physical environment. Council services, external partners and the community need to work together to create a holistic approach and to addresses the complexities involved in creating good places. It is about better joined-up thinking and working.
- 3.3 A shift in focus in how we think and work is required to embed Placemaking into the work of Planning and Building Standards and other Council services. To help

deliver this, the Place Group has identified three strands of work to be developed: Awareness, Understanding and Delivery.

Awareness

- 3.4 It is critical that there is awareness of what is meant by Placemaking and what makes a good place. There have been a series of training events within Planning and Building Standards to help that understanding. It is proposed to develop this briefing programme to the new service areas and members.
- 3.5 Planning already promotes 'After Dark' external seminars on related topics and there is scope to expand these further to develop an understanding of Placemaking within the City. The Festival of Architecture as part of the Year of Architecture and Design 2016 could be used as a catalyst to help celebrate place and diversity of place within Edinburgh.
- 3.6 A Placemaking communication plan involving the blog and social media would be an opportunity to promote the Council and other partner's activities relating to Placemaking and how Placemaking cuts across different services.

Understanding

- 3.7 On a local level, every place is different and every community will have different needs. It is important to understand what a place needs to make it successful, healthy and sustainable for the people who live and work there. The aim of the place standard assessment tool (Appendix 1) is to assist professionals and communities to assess the quality of places and to support the delivery of high quality places.
- 3.8 The assessment tool is organised around 14 themes; all of which are important to good places. Under each of the 14 themes is a question which participants are invited to discuss and also agree a score from between 1 and 7 (1 being there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 being there is little room for improvement). The scores are then plotted on a 'compass diagram'. When all the questions have been scored, each point on the compass can be joined to produce a graph which will show where a place is doing well and where there is room for improvement.
- 3.9 The tool encourages people to work together and to discuss places in a meaningful way. Unlike other assessments, the place standard tool considers people and the social life of a place as well as its built assets.
- 3.10 This tool builds upon the existing community plan process and would be useful to communities, community planning partnerships, development sector and wider public sector to consider planning and investment decision-making and identifying community initiatives. The place standard assessment tool is part of a process, not the end of a process.

Queensferry

- 3.11 A place standard assessment exercise was recently undertaken in Queensferry given the housing sites identified in the Local Development Plan. Between 90 and 100 people participated over 6 and 8 August 2015, assessing the positive and negative aspects of Queensferry. The outcome will be shared with Council services and developers for the large housing sites and they will be expected to reflect the issues in their submissions. For example, many participants raised concerns about the lack of a mix of housing within Queensferry.
- 3.12 This process is designed to provide a positive link between the needs of a community and developments that take place there. It provides the opportunity for development to be seen as part of the solution to local issues.
- 3.13 Planning is well-placed to promote the place standard assessment tool and to work with the new localities and neighbourhood partnerships with scope for the place standard assessment tool to be used to inform the next local community plans.
- 3.14 However, on a more immediate level, the place standard assessment tool can be used to inform thinking on a development site and how that site can help to address areas of improvement. It is proposed that Planning and Building Standards promotes and encourages the use of the place standard assessment tool for major and key development sites before pre-application discussions commence. This will require further discussion with planning consultants, major developers and major landowners who could benefit from involving the community at an early stage of thinking in terms of consensus building at an early stage.

Delivery

- 3.15 The National Planning Framework through the three policy principles makes Planning's role and direction clear. Embedding a Placemaking approach into all parts of the Planning process is the best way to achieve success. Each of these principles is discussed in turn.

Planning should take every opportunity to create high quality places by taking a design-led approach

- 3.16 A design-led approach is central to the Council's planning policies. Alongside local plan policies, the Council's supplementary guidance and non-statutory guidance seek to promote high quality places through good design. For example, the [Edinburgh Design Guidance](#) approved on 16 May 2013 sets out the Council's expectations for new buildings and spaces.
- 3.17 However, as such guidance is reviewed, it is important that it reflects Placemaking objectives. Even small-scale applications such as for lighting, security shutters or changing commercial activity at ground floor can impact on a place and it is important that guidance explains and reflects this thinking.

- 3.18 Planning should continue to develop guidance in discussion with other service areas such as the locality teams, to identify problems and requirements from its perspective and to support other Council initiatives; for example ensuring the right waste storage facilities are provided.
- 3.19 An example of guidance being developed in line with the Placemaking agenda is the finalised [Edinburgh Street Guidance](#) has been prepared in the context of [Designing Streets](#), the Scottish Government's policy on street design. This moves away from an approach to design that has centred on catering for cars, towards one that focuses on placemaking and sustainable forms of transport.
- 3.20 An action is therefore to ensure guidance is reviewed in line with the Placemaking agenda and this involves developing this in consultation with other Council services as well as the community.

Planning should direct the right development to the right place

- 3.21 The Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and Local Development Plan (LDP) are instrumental in directing where development should happen. The ambition is that the SDP and LDPs become more closely integrated with the community planning processes and reflect close working with the Community Planning Partnerships. The plans should become the spatial expressions of community planning and consideration needs to be given to how they deliver the aspirations of the community.
- 3.22 The SDP is under review and the first stage in preparing SDP2 is the Main [Issues Report](#) (MIR). It asks key questions including the scale and direction of development and whether the infrastructure and services needed to support that development can be provided. Delivering high quality places is a key theme in the MIR and it is important that the principles for development reflect the wider placemaking aspirations.
- 3.23 The MIR outlines principles to be promoted through LDP policies and development management including 'development which demonstrates good practice in place making'. This will be incorporated into the next LDP along with other relevant aspects of the final SDP2. However, consideration needs to be given to how the housing and other development sites in the current LDP are taken forward in terms of future masterplanning and the delivery of the draft LDP Action programme.
- 3.24 Work is currently being undertaken on the supplementary guidance for town centres, focussing on Morningside / Bruntsfield and Nicolson Street / Clerk Street. This is being developed in discussion with other Council services such as Economic Development, Licensing, South Neighbourhood team and Transport and will involve consultation with the community. It demonstrates the importance of understanding and capturing the broad issues that impact on a place and ensuring that planning guidance is more joined-up and reflects those broader issues as identified in the [Town Centre Toolkit](#).

Planning should support development that is designed to a high-quality which demonstrates the six qualities of successful place

- 3.25 [Creating Places](#) sets out six qualities of a successful place as follows:
- **Distinctive** – This is development that complements local features, and materials to create places with a sense of identity;
 - **Safe and Pleasant** – This is development that is attractive to use because it provides a sense of security through encouraging activity;
 - **Welcoming** – This is development that helps people to find their way around;
 - **Adaptable** – This is development that can accommodate future changes of use because there is a mix of building densities, tenures and typologies;
 - **Resource Efficient** – This is development that re-uses or shares existing resources, maximises efficiency of the use of resources through natural or technological means and prevents future resource depletion, for example by mitigating and adapting to climate change; and
 - **Easy to Move Around and Beyond** – This is development that considers place and the needs of people before the movement of motor vehicles.
- 3.26 Where the place standard assessment tool can help to assess the strength and weaknesses of the wider place, these six qualities of a successful place can be used as the basis for thinking about a specific development site. It is proposed to develop a placemaking methodology for assessing sites to guide the pre-application/ application process. Where this is carried out early in the process, more certainty can be provided for the developer and potentially avoiding protracted application discussions.
- 3.27 The Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) would be adapted to reflect the six qualities of a successful place and to draw out the issues.
- 3.28 It is proposed that the placemaking methodology would be expanded into 'place briefs' for key development sites, particularly when they are at the disposal stage and potentially informed by a place standard assessment exercise. The place brief process would involve discussions with a range of Council services and therefore achieve consensus and helping to provide clarity for developers on key sites.
- 3.29 The overriding aim of this work is to secure better outcomes for communities while also making more efficient and effective use of Council resources. Further reports to committee will be provided as these work-streams are developed.

Measures of success

- 4.1 The successful mainstreaming of Placemaking and the development and delivery of the Placemaking Agenda.

Financial impact

- 5.1 To date, the Placemaking agenda has been developed using existing staff resources. However, in order to progress certain strands of the work, it is likely that some costs will accrue, for instance, venue hire. Any additional costs or resources outside those covered by existing staff resources and budgets will be reported back to committee.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no significant risks associated with approval of the report as recommended.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 The aim of developing a Placemaking Agenda is to enhance the quality of an area and improve the ability of the community to participate and influence their environment. This has the potential to improve the quality of life and supports sustainable communities. There are no predicted negative impacts on equalities.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 Creating better places will lead to a minimisation of the use of natural resources and a reduction of carbon emissions. The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because bringing a focus onto Placemaking contributes directly to sustainability in a number of ways. These include creating sustainable communities, promoting walking and cycling supporting the identity of communities, fostering social interaction and creating a positive environment in which people interact.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 This report has not been subject to consultation but the place standard assessment tool has been piloted with a number of community groups and used in a major project in Queensferry. The place standard process is one of community engagement.

Background reading/external references

[Creating Places](#)

[Planning Performance Framework](#)

[Place Standard Assessment Tool](#)

[Scottish Planning Policy](#)

[Council Business Plan](#)

John Bury

Acting Director of Services for Communities

Contact: Will Garrett, Built Environment and Placemaking Manager

E-mail: will.garrett@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3636

Links

Coalition pledges	<p>P4-Draw up a long-term strategic plan to tackle both over-crowding and under use in schools.</p> <p>P8- Make sure the city's people are well-house, including encouraging developers to build residential communities, starting with brownfield sites.</p> <p>P15 –Work with public organisations, the private sector and social enterprise to promote Edinburgh to investors.</p> <p>P17 –Continue efforts to develop the city's gap sites and encourage regeneration.</p> <p>P33 – Strengthen Neighbourhood partnerships and further involve local people in decision s on how Council resources are used.</p> <p>P40 – Work with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust and other stakeholders to conserve the city's built heritage.</p> <p>P44 – Prioritise keeping our streets clean and attractive.</p>
Council outcomes	<p>CO7 – Edinburgh draws new investment in development and regeneration.</p> <p>CO8 – Edinburgh's economy creates and sustains job opportunities.</p> <p>CO10- Improve health and reduced inequalities</p> <p>CO16- Well-housed – people live in a good quality home that is affordable and meets their needs in a well-managed</p>

neighbourhood

CO19 – Attractive Place and Well-Maintained – Edinburgh remains an attractive city through the development of high quality buildings and places and the delivery of high standards and maintenance of infrastructure and public realm.

CO21- Safe - residents, visitors and businesses feel that Edinburgh is a safe city.

CO23 – Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster sense of community.

CO26 – The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives.

Single Outcome Agreement

SO1 – Edinburgh’s Economy Delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all.

SO2 – Edinburgh’s citizens experience improves health and well-being, with reduces inequalities in health.

SO4 – Edinburgh’s communities are safer and have improves physical and social fabric.

Appendices

The Place Standard Assessment Tool

Appendix 1 The Place Standard Assessment Tool

The Themes and Questions

	Theme	Question: <i>In my place....</i>
	Moving around	can I easily walk and cycle around using good quality routes?
	Public Transport	does public transport meet my needs?
	Facilities & amenities	do facilities and amenities meet my needs?
	Natural space	can I regularly experience good quality natural space
	Play and recreation	do I have access to a range of spaces and opportunities for play and recreation?
	Housing	does housing meet my needs and contribute to a positive environment for the whole community?
	Impact of vehicles	can I get on with my daily activities without impact from traffic and parked cars
	Streets and spaces	do buildings, streets and public spaces make getting around easy and enjoyable?
	Identity and belonging	Is there a positive identity and do I feel I belong?
	Social interaction	do I have access to a range of spaces and opportunities to meet people?
	Influence and sense of control	do I feel able to participate in decisions and help change things for the better?
	Care and maintenance	are buildings and spaces cared for?
	Feeling safe	do I feel safe?
	Work and local economy	is there an active local economy and opportunity to access good quality work?

The Compass Diagram

