

Queensferry Placemaking Exercise – Interim Report

Introduction

The Queensferry Placemaking Exercise is being run by the City of Edinburgh Council, Queensferry and District Community Council, and Queensferry Ambition. It uses the [Place Standard](#) tool developed by Architecture+Design Scotland, the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland. This is designed to encourage people to discuss and eventually rate aspects of their local environment.

The two initial sessions were held on Thursday 6th August and Saturday 8th August 2015. These were publicised in advance via posters, social media, and a notice in the Queensferry Gazette. Around one hundred people took part, and were formed into groups of around four to six to discuss the topics in the Place Standard tool.

This document will provide a brief ‘snapshot’ of what we have learnt so far, ahead of a third and final session. If you are interested in attending this session, please contact lucy.george@edinburgh.gov.uk

The Sessions

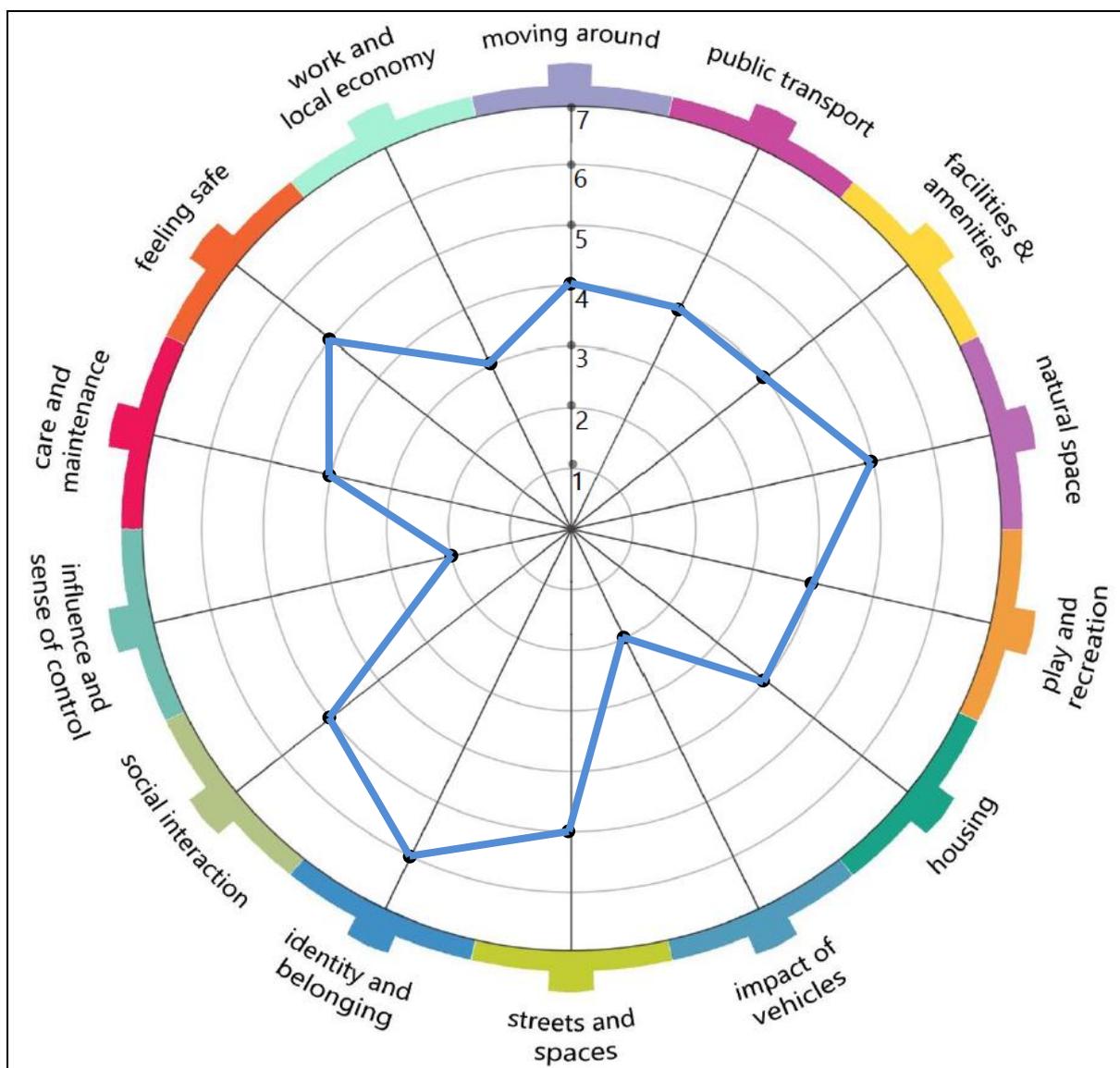
Participants were guided through the questions by a facilitator, who would ask questions to encourage discussion. A score, between 1 (much improvement needed) and 7 (little improvement needed) would then be agreed upon for the topic. The facilitator was assisted by a scribe, who took extensive notes throughout, ensuring that all viewpoints were recorded. Most group sessions took around about sixty to ninety minutes to complete.

Participants were asked to complete a feedback form on their way out, and around half did so. Their feedback on the exercise was generally positive. When asked how useful they found the event, 85% felt it was either ‘good’ or ‘really good’. There was a similar consensus on the usefulness of the discussions, where 83% found them either ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

When asked how they felt about the amount of time allowed, 48% felt it was ‘just right’, but 33% felt there was ‘not quite enough’. However, 78% of respondents felt the general delivery of the event was either ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

Results

The full range of scores will be examined in the final report for this exercise. For this interim document, the average rating for each topic has been calculated based on responses from both sessions. These scores have been plotted on the graphic below.



When averaged out, respondents scored Queensferry in the middle range on most topics, generally related to facilities and infrastructure. More negative responses concerned *work and local economy*, *impact of vehicles*, and *influence and sense of control*, whilst more positive topics include *identity and belonging*, *natural space*, and *feeling safe*.

As a simple average score cannot fully explain a place and issues it may face, the next section presents a number of the recurring issues raised so far.

Comments

Moving Around

- There was a general feeling that Queensferry was easy to move around on foot.
- However, most groups mentioned the poor state of the High Street, its low accessibility for those with mobility issues.
- The views on cycle paths were mixed, with some viewing them as poor, whilst others commenting on their increased quality due to recent improvements.

Public Transport

- Generally the bus services are seen as poor, both within Queensferry and for connections to other places. Comments centred on their prices, irregularity, and the withdrawal of services into Fife and West Lothian.
- There was also a view that this was dependent on where you live in Queensferry, as some areas are much better serviced than others.
- Train services are viewed more positively, but are seen as expensive and overcrowded.

Facilities and Amenities

- There was a lot of concern over the capacity of existing school and medical facilities being reached.
- Leisure facilities are limited, and those available (e.g. the pool at Queensferry High School) are in poor condition. Alternate facilities are available in surrounding settlements, but usage depends on access to a car.
- The town has a fair number of shops, but they are seen as catering more towards tourists than residents.

Natural Space

- Although there are few natural spaces within the village, Queensferry benefits from being surrounded by publicly accessible estates.
- However, access to these is dependent on having a car.
- There is concern that access to a lot of these will be lost with the new housing developments.

Play and Recreation

- While there are play parks within Queensferry, they are not distributed evenly. Some families have trouble accessing them.
- There is a general lack of recreational facilities (e.g. bowling alley, quality swimming pool, cinema).

- Teenagers and younger people are poorly catered for in terms of activities.

Housing

- The existing housing mix caters mainly for families, and there is a lack of smaller 1 or 2 bedroom properties for those seeking either an affordable first home or to downsize.
- Most groups raised the lack of a care home and sheltered accommodation as a problem. Those in need of such accommodation are forced to move outside the village.
- There was a general concern that the new housing sites will not cater towards these needs and provide more large and expensive family housing.

Impact of Vehicles

- Traffic congestion is seen as a problem across the village, especially along the High Street and the schools along Station Road. This is increased when there is an incident on the Forth Road Bridge.
- The High Street needs better traffic management, as it is constantly blocked by delivery trucks and tourist coaches.
- There is a lack of parking along the Waterfront.

Streets and Spaces

- Queensferry has a number of quality historic buildings, making it pleasant to walk around.
- However, the signage is quite poor in the centre, and should be improved to assist tourists with finding their way around.
- The poor quality of pavements and roads (e.g. potholes) was raised.

Identity and Belonging

- Queensferry is seen as having a strong community identity, separate from Edinburgh.
- However, some respondents felt this was more tied to their local area than Queensferry as a whole.
- There is a fear this sense may be lost with the new housing developments.

Social Interaction

- Queensferry offers a lot of clubs and organisations where you can meet new people based on a shared interest.
- Some felt there was a lack of facilities for these organisations, e.g. no dedicated community centre.
- Others identified the High School as a good space for such activities.

Influence and Sense of Control

- Many respondents felt their opinions were lost within the system.
- There was a view that public involvement in important issues has been lacking in the past, and where it has taken place it was a “check box” exercise where their views would not make a difference.
- Generally respondents felt they had little control or influence over events.

Care and Maintenance

- Buildings are generally well maintained.
- There are problems with litter and dog fouling in streets and parks.
- Gritting in winter can be selective, with quieter roads left untreated.

Feeling Safe

- There was a general feeling that Queensferry is a safe place to live and travel around.
- However, the lack of a visible police presence was raised by a number of respondents, and seen as a concern with the rising population.
- The recent spate of burglaries was mentioned a number of times.

Work and Economy

- The overwhelming view was that Queensferry is a dormitory town for Edinburgh and other settlements, and that access to work in these places is good – if you have a car.
- There is an active local economy, but it is centred on the tourist trade and service sector roles – restaurants, hotels, Tesco etc.
- A number of respondents highlighted the lack of ‘professional’-type jobs locally, and how big employers (eg Hewlett Packard) previously located there had left.

Final Session

At the request of the local community, there will be one final session in this exercise. If you could not make it along to the two previous sessions, we would welcome your opinions. Do you agree with what has been said already, or do you think other issues need to be raised?

The date for this session has not yet been arranged, but if you are interested in attending please contact lucy.george@edinburgh.gov.uk and we will confirm the details with you.