Planning Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 19 May 2016

Placemaking Update

Item number	9.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	

Executive Summary

On 1 October 2015, a report on how the planning system can promote good placemaking was noted by the Planning Committee. This report provides an update on Placemaking, setting it in a wider community planning context and linking it to the Council's Transformation Change process. It describes what has been achieved in the last 6 months and a programme of work for the next year.

Links

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

Report

Placemaking Update

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

1.1.1 notes the contents of the report; and

1.1.2 agrees the priorities for work set out in Appendix 3.

2. Background

2.1 Placemaking is about delivering good places. The Scottish Government sees the Planning system as being instrumental in the delivery of good places. Policy statements - Creating Places, Designing Streets, Designing Places and the introduction of the Place Standard have all provided advice and tools for local authorities in taking forward this objective.

2.2 On 1 October 2015, Committee noted the contents of a report on Placemaking. The report provided initial ideas about strands of work that would develop a Placemaking Agenda for Planning and Building Standards activities. This was set out under the headings of 'Awareness', 'Understanding' and 'Delivery.

2.3 Since then, much of the work has focussed on use of the Place Standard and consideration of Placemaking at a more strategic, Council-wide, level in line with the Transformation Change programme and in consideration of locality-based delivery.

2.4 This revised process is exemplified by the work that has taken place in Queensferry where use of the Place Standard has been the focus for multi-service involvement in local community planning.

3. Main report

3.1 The Scottish Government's draft Planning Delivery Advice Note (February 2016) on Housing and Infrastructure states:

 "The central aim of planning is to deliver high quality places for people that meet the needs of communities and support sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Planning supports this by setting out a place-based spatial vision."

The Advice Note goes on to say that "effective joint working is key to this - establishing a shared sense of responsibility, building partnerships and actively

engaging communities" and that the Place Standard is a useful tool for bringing parties together.

3.2 The requirements of the Community Empowerment Act place a parallel responsibility upon local authorities to work with communities in a way that brings together community planning and spatial planning.

3.3 This is reflected in the work that has been advanced since the last progress report in October 2015. At that time, the three strands of work were identified to help deliver a placemaking agenda: 'Awareness', 'Understanding' and 'Delivery'. Since then, they have evolved into 'the Role and Use of the Place Standard', 'Embedding Placemaking into the Planning process' and 'Awareness-Raising'.

Understanding		The Role and use of the Place Standard
Delivery	→	Embedding Placemaking in the Planning Process
Awareness		Awareness Raising
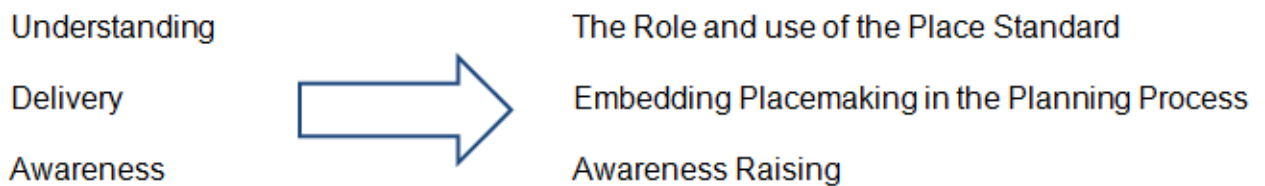
The Role and Use of the Place Standard

3.4 The first of these strands looks at the potential to use of the Place Standard to create links between community planning and spatial planning. At a strategic level, this can also serve to facilitate cross-service working and the development of locality plans.

3.5 The Place Standard has been developed by the Scottish Government, Architecture and Design Scotland and NHS Scotland. It was formally launched in December 2015 and is an important component of the placemaking toolkit. The work the Council carried out in piloting the Place Standard in Queensferry was promoted at the launch as good practice. Council officers and representatives of Queensferry and District Community Council attended to share their experience.

3.6 The outcomes of a Place Standard exercise - a compass diagram, reflect the qualities of a place and how effectively it works for those who live and work there. The outputs from the process cover a range of topics that cover responsibilities across many Council services. Therefore it acts as a tool which brings together different services to impact on an area in a holistic manner.

3.7 The Queensferry exercise (see Appendix 1) produced a compass diagram that illustrated local community concerns around issues of traffic, access to the countryside, housing mix and access to employment opportunities. These are set out in Table 2 of Appendix 1, which also shows how they will be taken forward in the form of strategic objectives for Queensferry.

3.8   Following the pilot use of the Place Standard in Queensferry, further exercises are being promoted to use the tool in the South Side, Corstorphine and in the east of the city in relation to areas around Brunstane. This is a joint Place Standard exercise with East Lothian Council linking to the Musselburgh area.

3.9   The objective of this approach is to test the Place Standard in a limited number of different situations, and assess its value as a tool that can be used across the Council. In particular, it is intended to assess the potential to use the tool as a model with the new localities. Appendix 2 illustrates the role that the Place Standard can play in linking community planning and spatial planning.

Embedding Placemaking into the Planning process

3.10   The Scottish Planning Policy states "Planning's purpose is to create better places". Embedding placemaking into the planning process is therefore a key aim of the placemaking agenda.

3.11   It is important that the whole of the planning process, from forward planning through the strategic and local development plans, and delivery of projects, has placemaking embedded within it.

3.12   Scottish Government policy on designing good places is set out in policy documents; Designing Places, Creating Places and Designing Streets. All of these policy documents are underpinned by the six qualities of successful places. These are:

-   distinctive;
-   safe and pleasant;
-   easy to move around;
-   welcoming;
-   adaptable; and
-   resource efficient.

3.13   The Planning Committee's role in promoting good placemaking is set out in current policy and guidance. The Edinburgh Design Guidance, the Street Design Guidance, Conservation Area Character Appraisals and many other pieces of guidance and policy seek to shape new development and changes in the physical environment in a manner that will deliver better places.

3.14   However, there are currently limited links between existing policy, guidance and processes that explicitly relates them to placemaking. It is proposed to review the guidance against the six qualities of successful places and, where necessary, amend the guidance to ensure that it leads to better placemaking. Of particular relevance is the Edinburgh Design Guidance, which was identified as a priority for review in the Annual Review of Guidance approved by Committee on 26 February 2016.

3.15   A further strand of work will look at the opportunity to develop briefs for specific sites. These will have a place-based approach, and incorporate the views and aspirations the local community. The format of the brief is innovative in as much as it specifically addresses the six qualities of successful places. The process will involve two stages: firstly, the gathering of community views - which could be done through a Place Standard exercise. Secondly, the brief will be written around the six qualities of successful places and incorporate the outputs from the first stage of the process.

3.16   An example of this new approach can be seen in the brief for the National Galleries Facility at Granton, which is a separate agenda item for this committee. It uses the principle of a Place Standard exercise to identify community need. This has been fed into the brief for the site, which itself is ordered around the six qualities of successful places to ensure it has a placemaking focus. Through this process the community will have three opportunities to input: firstly, through the Place Standard exercise - in relation to the general area, secondly, through the brief - in relation to the site development principles, and thirdly, through the planning application process - in relation to the proposal itself. This ensures the community is engaged throughout the whole process and maximises its opportunities to influence its own neighbourhood.

3.17   It is proposed to pilot variations of this approach over the coming year to test it against a range of circumstances.

3.18   Developing a place-based approach to Planning work will involve changes to some work practices. This is to ensure that Planning, alongside other services, recognises and responds to the holistic nature of communities and places by delivering services in a co-ordinated and joined-up manner. The driver for change in the way the Council responds to this will come thorough new structures and processes but the Planning and Transport service needs to ensure it is set up to play its part and help and consider what work practices might be improved to help deliver this.

Awareness-raising

3.19   The purpose of awareness-raising is to enhance knowledge and understanding of placemaking, and its underlying philosophy. Initially this has been targeted at Council staff, but the programme is now growing to include partner organisations, stakeholders and the wider public.

3.20   There are a number of activities that are already delivered by the Planning and Transport service which can be expanded to promote multi-disciplinary working across Council services in accordance with Transformational Change objectives. These include:

-    lunchtime seminars;

-    training workshops; and

-    promotion of the Place Standard tool.

3.21   A number of events have already taken place with local communities. A Place Standard workshop was held at a meeting of the Edinburgh Civic Forum. Community councils and community groups in Fairmilehead, Corstorphine and Cramond have been briefed on the Place Standard. A report back on the Queensferry project is scheduled to be discussed at the next Almond Neighbourhood Partnership meeting.

3.22   There are other key projects which have been identified that require specific resources and funding. These are:

- development of a placemaking website;

- involvement with the Festival of Architecture as part of Scotland's Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design 2016; and

- a placemaking event/symposium with wider city activities to celebrate place.

3.23   The objective of developing an awareness-raising programme is to provide information and generate interest in placemaking as a core planning objective. A second objective is to promote the idea of placemaking across the Council as an approach that can deliver better and more joined up service delivery.

3.24   The above three strands of work make up the current focus of the Placemaking Agenda. A work programme for the next year is set out in Appendix 3, and Committee is asked to agree these priorities.

4.   Measures of success

4.1   Completion of the Place Standard pilot exercises, a review of the Edinburgh Design Guidance against the 6 qualities of successful places and the continuation of a programme of awareness-raising would all constitute success in delivery of the Placemaking agenda.

5.   Financial impact

5.1   There is no direct financial impact flowing from this report. Resources required to run the Place Standard events can be covered from within existing budgets. Under the Awareness-raising work strand, some modest funding may be required to host guest speakers or for venue hire but that will be contained within existing budgets for training, or shared with partners where possible. Development of a Place website would require a budget and that will be assessed alongside other considerations into its feasibility.

6.   Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

6.1   This report does not raise any concern in relation to risk, policy, compliance and governance.

7. Equalities impact

7.1 This report will help to deliver the Council's aspirations to create better places. The processes described facilitate community involvement in placemaking and allows them to influence their environment. It has the potential to improve the quality of life and it supports the creation of sustainable communities. There are no predicted negative impacts on equalities.

8. 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 to achieve a sustainable Edinburgh 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.

9. Consultation and engagement

9.1 This report reflects work that has been carried out in the last six months and charts out a programme of work for the forthcoming year. The key strands of work described will involve extensive community engagement and the thrust of the report is to provide greater opportunity for communities to shape their environments.

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 Placemaking Committee Report

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges	P4, P8, P17, P33, P44
Council Priorities	CO&, CO8, CO10, CO16, CO19, CO21, CO23, CO26
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1, SO2, SO4
Appendices	Appendix 1 - The Queensferry Project
	Appendix 2 - Strategic place making
	Appendix 3 - Place making work priorities

Appendix 1

The Queensferry Project

1. **The local context**

   In 2015, a number of issues came together that suggested a community consultation process would benefit Queensferry. These were:
   - the construction of the Queensferry Crossing with its consequent local traffic impacts,
   - WHS status for the Forth Bridge and the potential increase in visitor related traffic,
   - resurfacing of the High St with associated closures,
   - LDP housing allocation that could potentially increase the population of Queensferry by 40%.

   All these issues had raised concerns among the local community about the future direction of the town. Some had been discussed the previous year in a charrette that focussed on the town centre (Shaping the Future of Queensferry) but many of the issues, such as the housing allocations, had not been the subject of previous discussions.

   Some of the more significant housing sites – Builyeon Road and South Scotstoun- had been added during the LDP process and have yet to receive final approval from the Scottish Government although they have been promoted by the Council. As a result, there was considerable interest in the process.

2. **The Place Standard exercise**

   At this time, Planning had been made aware of a new tool that was being piloted by the Scottish Government called the Place Standard. This seemed to fit the requirements of the situation so it was decided to work with the new tool and carry out a Place Standard assessment in Queensferry.

   The Place Standard evaluates the qualities of a place through use of 14 questions which cover the physical and social aspects of a place. When all the questions have been scored, the results can be shown in a simple compass diagram that displays the strengths and weaknesses of that place.

   Working closely with the Queensferry and District Community Council and Queensferry Ambition, it was agreed that this tool offered a means of engaging the community and understanding the issues from their perspective. The idea was to try and achieve outcomes for the community that integrated new developments and delivered a series of benefits for the town as a whole.

   The Place Standard exercises were carried out over three separate days in Queensferry High School in the summer/autumn of last year. These took the form of round table discussions. They were open sessions for whoever wished to participate together with a separate session for the schoolchildren. In all 32 tables of 5 – 8 people took part in the process.

3. **The outcomes**

The results were amalgamated into a compass diagram (see below) and shared with the community and the developers for the LDP sites. Specific issues that emerged from the round table discussions were noted and set against the 14 questions. These can be seen in Table 1 of this report.

The developers have been told that they should start to address the issues through their developments so they can be seen as part of the resolution of issues identified by the local community.
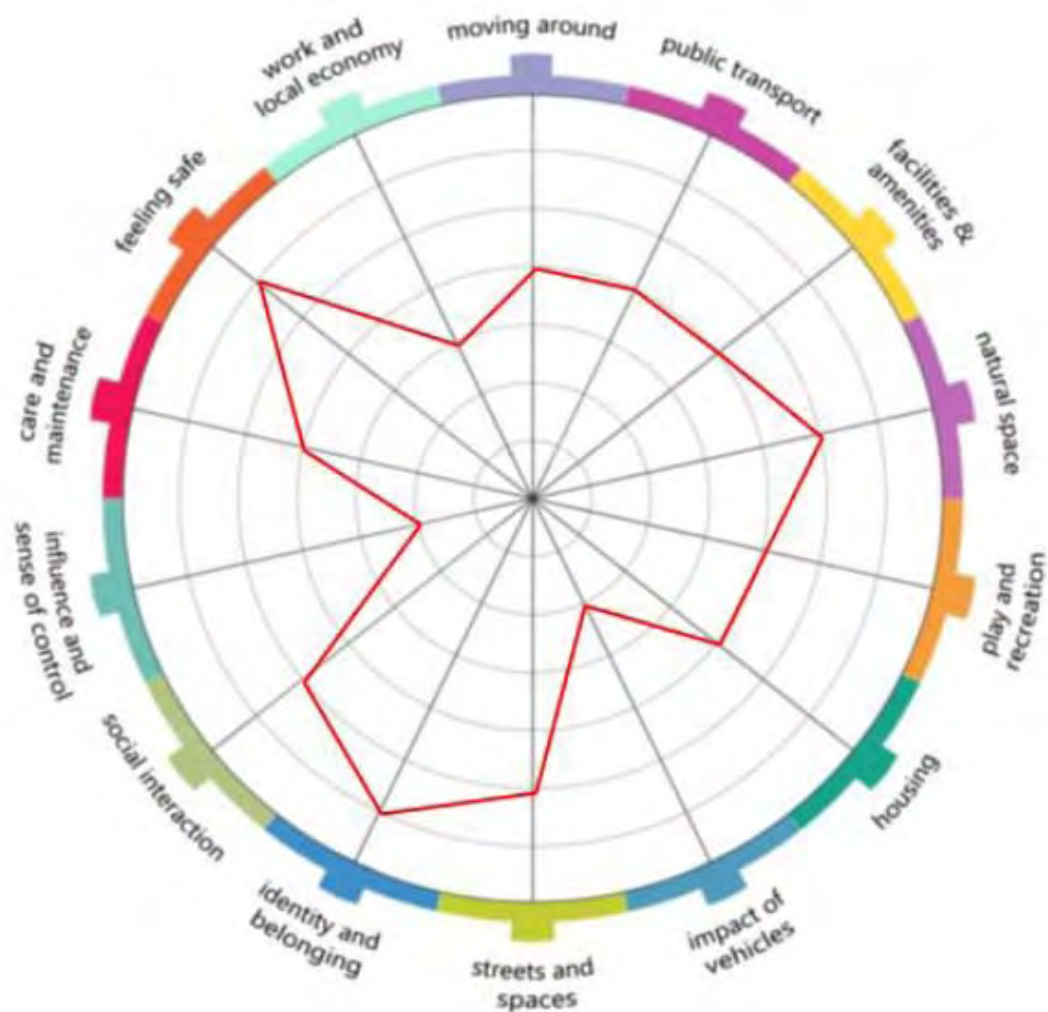
The outcomes show that Queensferry has a strong sense of identity and belonging and people generally feel safe. It scores well for social interaction and the quality of its streets and spaces and natural spaces. The low scores are related to traffic, work and the local economy and a lack of ability to influence things.

4. **Strategic outcomes**

Taking account of the outcomes from the Place Standard compass diagram and the contents of the discussions, it is possible to develop strategic outcomes for Queensferry. These are a set of objectives which take account of the exercise above and relate the outcomes to the changes that are taking place in Queensferry. It is clear, for instance, that local traffic levels and the impact of vehicles is a prime concern at the moment. The new development has the potential to exacerbate this so a strategic objective is to ensure that opportunities for alternative ways of getting around are put in place. Key routes – from the new developments to the town centre and to the station should be made easy to use for cyclists and pedestrians thereby minimising the need for vehicular travel.

The strategic objectives for Queensferry emerging from this exercise will be taken back to the community for consultation. They are listed below in Table 2 of this report.

The responsibility for addressing the strategic objectives lies with more than one authority. The developers will have a role to play as will the Council. The LDP Action Programme covers some of theses issues and this exercise provides a degree of reassurance over the contents of the Action Programme. The community themselves will also have some of the answers to enhancing the town.

5. **What's next**

   The strategic objectives will be the subject of a consultation exercise with the community. Once these have been agreed they will be passed on to the new Locality Team and/or the relevant service area for taking forward. It may be that an action plan is developed around some of the topics.

   In the first instance, the draft objectives will be shared with the Queensferry Infrastructure Group to ensure that there is widespread awareness and support for the objectives.

6. **Conclusions**

   The process to date has been an example of effective partnership working between the Council and the Community Council. In Queensferry, a long established and strong Community Council has provided very positive support. The process seeks to bridge the gap between spatial planning and community planning and it provides a thread between the needs of a community, as identified through the Place Standard, and what is delivered on the ground through the development process. The Scottish Government has been supportive of this project as it is the first that has been carried out by a local authority in Scotland using the Place Standard.

Table 1

Feeling Safe
- 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.

Care and Maintenance
- Buildings are generally well maintained.
- There are problems with litter, dog fouling and graffiti in streets and parks.
- Gritting in winter can be selective.
- Issues with cobbles on the High Street.

Social Interaction
- Queensferry offers a lot of clubs and organisations.
- 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.

Work and Local 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.

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 their views would not make a difference.
- Generally respondents felt they had little control or influence over events (particularly young people).

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.

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.

Moving Around
- General feeling Queensferry is easy to move around on foot.
- Most groups mentioned the poor state of the High Street.
- Views on cycle paths were mixed- some commented on their increased quality due to recent improvements and others commented on they are not well connected.

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.

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.

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 some areas in Queensferry are much better serviced than others.
- Train services are viewed more positively, but are seen as expensive and overcrowded.

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.
- Lack of a care home and sheltered accommodation.
- There was a general concern that the new housing sites will not cater towards these needs and provide more large and expensive family housing.

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.

Facilities and Amenities
- 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. 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.

Table 2

Developing Strategic Objectives

issue	score	Comment	Strategic objective	Priority
Work and the local economy	3	• Work available in Edinburgh • Local economy dependent on service industry • Few 'professional' jobs available locally	Assess potential for local employment opportunities – craft, workshop, office. Reinforce and extend High St.	high
Moving around	4	• Generally easy on foot • Cycle paths not very well connected • Poor state of High St	Improve pedestrian/cycle routes to key destinations – town centre, school, station. Ensure continued access to countryside/shoreline.	high
Public transport	4	• Poor bus service limited to certain parts of town • Good train connections but expensive.	Improve pedestrian routes to bus service.	medium
Facilities and Amenities	4	• Concern over capacity of school and medical facilities • Leisure facilities limited (esp swimming pool) • Shops cater for visitors	New Community High School (plus pool?) Funding agreed by SG.	medium
Play and Recreation	4	• Play parks not evenly distributed • Lack of recreational facilities (swimming pool) • Not much for teenagers	New Community High School (plus pool?) Funding agreed by SG.	medium
Housing	4	• Existing mix caters mostly for families • Lack of care home and sheltered/supported accommodation • Few starter homes	Seek better housing mix –esp for starter homes and supported accommodation	high
Impact of vehicles	2	• Traffic congestion a problem across the town • High St needs better traffic management • Lack of parking – esp along waterfront	Create new cycle links across proposed dev sites to station and into town centre. Reinforce and extend High St. Review parking options. Improve ped/cycle access to retail park and better pedestrian environment.	high
Influence and Sense of control	2	• Views of public not taken seriously • Little influence over things that happen to their town	Deliver on outcomes of Place Standard process.	high
Care and Maintenance	4	• Some general care issues in particular locations – dog fouling, litter, graffiti • Cobbles in High St need to be	Reinforce and extend High St.	medium

		maintained		
Natural space	5	• Publically accessible estates • Concern access to sea and countryside lost with new housing developments	Ensure continued access to countryside/shoreline.	high
Streets and Spaces	5	• high quality built environment • poor quality wayfinding	Assist Forth Bridge Tourism Group develop signage strategy	low
Identity and Belonging	6	• strong community identity • concern over loss of identity with volume of new housing	Funding in place for new community centre	low
Social Interaction	5	• good offer of clubs and organisations but lack of facilities • no dedicated community centre	Funding in place for new community centre	low
Feeling Safe	6	• generally safe place to live • lack of visible police presence		low

STRATEGIC PLACEMAKING

Appendix 3

Placemaking Work Priorities

	task	timescale	Lead /partners
Place Standard	Developing Place Standard process with Locality managers based on outcomes of pilots below.	May - Oct	Planning and Transport/ Localities managers
	South Side Place Standard exercise	June - Aug	Planning and Transport/ Localities managers/Community Council
	Brunstane Area/Musselburgh Place Standard exercise	Sept - Nov	Planning and Transport / Localities managers/Community Council/East Lothian Council
	Corstorphine Place Standard exercise	Sept - Nov	Planning and Transport / Localities managers/community Council
Embedding Placemaking in the Planning process	Audit of guidance – 6 qualities of successful places	Link to review of Edinburgh Design Guidance	Planning and Transport
	Pilot Place Brief – National Collections Facility at Granton	April/May	Planning and Transport
	Identify other pilot Place Briefs	May - December	Planning and Transport
Awareness-raising	Training	May - December	Place Group
	Talks/lectures	May – March 2017	Place Group
	Festival of Architecture	June	Planning and Transport /EAA/RIAS
	Symposium assessment	June – September	Place Group
	Website assessment	June - September	Place Group