

Place Standard Engagement with Young People in East Lothian



Image 1 Place Standard tool engagement session in Ross High, Tranent

Place Standard – How Good is Our Place?

Methodology

Play Scotland, in partnership with Planning Aid Scotland, facilitated five engagements with Secondary Schools throughout East Lothian in September 2023. A further two Secondary Schools were invited to attend but did not have capacity to participate at this time. These consultations were undertaken to fulfil the duties laid out in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019¹ to engage with children and young people and incorporate their views in the Local Development Plan. The tool used to engage at the sessions was The Place Standard tool, A Version for Young People²

The sessions followed the same format, with an ice breaker, explanation of the session and why the information was being collected, and then a digital scoring of the themes using Mentimeter³. The one exception to this was Ross High, Tranent, where instead young people moved to different parts of a classroom that was assigned a score, making for a more physically interactive experience. As the sessions had limited time, it was not possible to discuss all of the themes at length, so young people were given an opportunity to discuss the four themes that most interested them, and this provided some rich qualitative data in addition to the scores.

Sessions were designed to fit around the school day, and therefore had slightly variable lengths, and schools were asked to select pupils to engage with the session that would find participation most useful and interesting. Each group brought a diverse range of views to the session. There was no selection or targeting for particular ability groups, however we were able to engage with the full secondary school age range overall.

Young people were asked to score themes on a scale of 1 – 7, to fit with the adult version of the tool (Image 2). These scores were then plotted on a graph (from the core Place Standard tool⁴) which can be seen in each individual report.

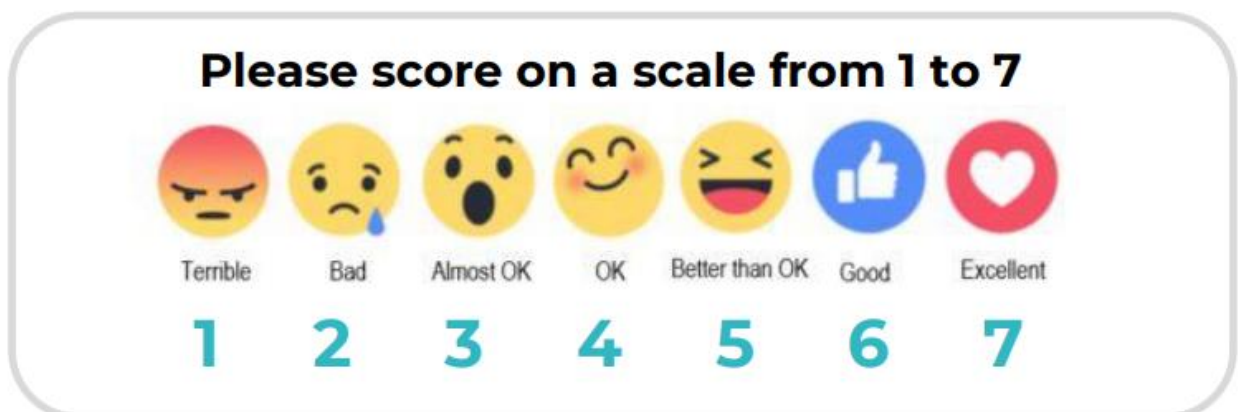


Image 2 Scoring criteria for Place Standard Tool, A Version for Young People

¹ [Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2019/12/section/1)

² [Place Standard Tool for Children and Young People | Our Place](#)

³ [Enter the Code to Join & Vote on a Presentation - Mentimeter](#)

⁴ [The Place Standard tool is a way of assessing places. | Our Place](#)

East Lothian overall results

Every secondary school in East Lothian was invited to participate in the engagements. Positive responses were received from five of the secondary schools, and a range of age groups were engaged with during the sessions.

The spread of the secondary schools engaged with can be seen here in image 3.

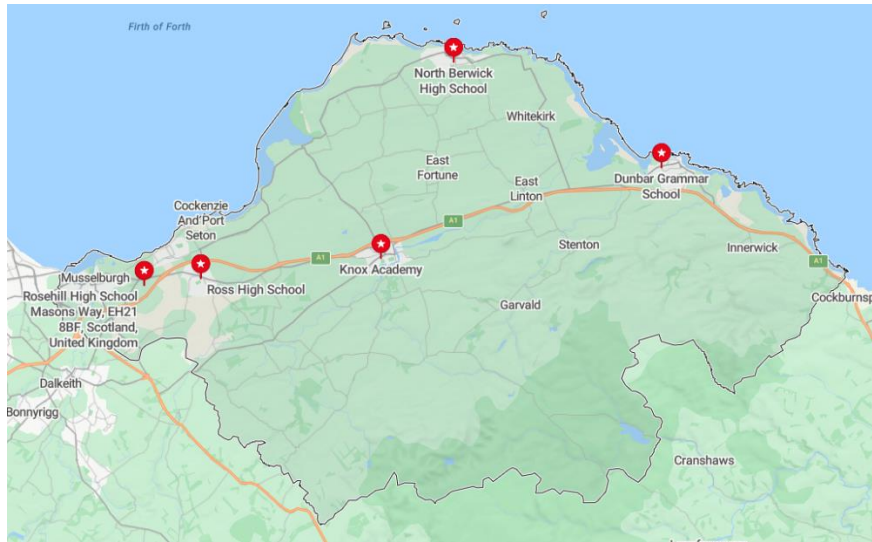


Image 3 East Lothian Secondary Schools engaged with in September 2023

108 young people from different parts of the local authority participated in the engagements with representatives from every year group within secondary schools (11 – 17 year olds). Many of the young people were studying geography and being involved in the research gave them the opportunity to reflect on their area and the provision of services locally.

The scores for the schools were aggregated to give an overall score for East Lothian. The results are shown in the figure below. The green shading shows the themes that were chosen for discussion by young people in each school.

| | Haddington Knox | Dunbar | North Berwick | Ross Rosehill High | East Lothian |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Walking, wheeling, cycling | 6 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| Public Transport | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Traffic and Parking | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Streets, squares & buildings | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Nature - parks, woods, hills, beaches | 5 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| Play, hang out, games and hobbies | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Schools, libraries, shops, services | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Jobs and places to work | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Homes, friends and neighbours | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Meeting and talking with people | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Feeling proud and part of a place | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| Feeling Safe | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| Fixed, clean and managed | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| Having our say and being listened to | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Average scores across all themes | 4.71 | 4.36 | 5.07 | 4.64 | 4.21 |

Figure 1 Table of aggregated scores for East Lothian (green shading indicates themes chosen for discussion).

These aggregated scores were then plotted on the Place Standard tool. It should be noted for all responses that the spider-gram of the results is done using the core Place Standard tool as there is not currently an online version of the young person's one.

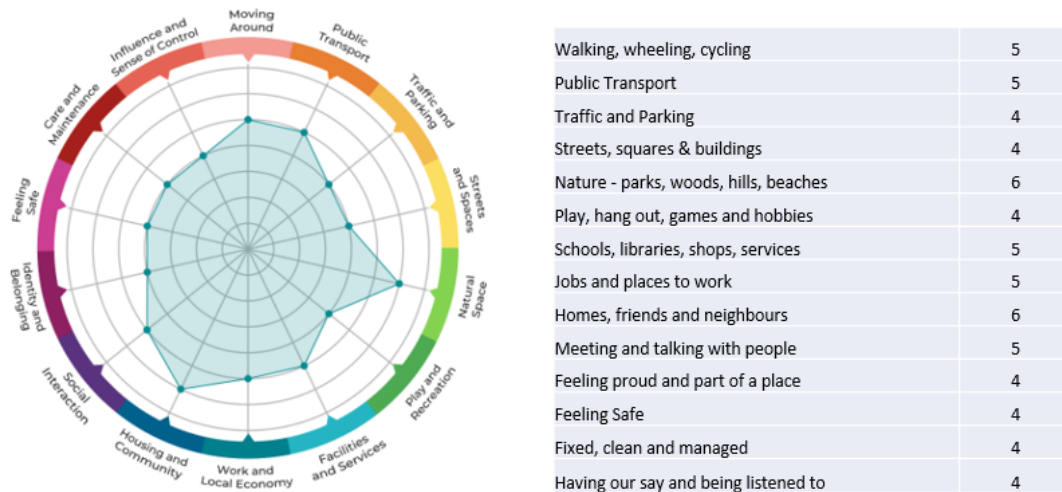


Figure 2 Plotted Place Standard scores for East Lothian

Overall, young people were most keen to speak about three themes, these were 1. Public transport, 2. Play, hang out, games and hobbies and 3. Feeling safe, with 4 out of 5 of the groups opting to discuss these themes. Overall, 9 out of 14 themes were discussed.

A highlight of the engagements was the high score given to North Berwick under the theme – Nature – parks, woods, hills and beaches.

Where I go and what I do



Figure 3 Scores gathered at North Berwick High School using Mentimeter

The theme that scored highest overall in East Lothian was Homes, friends and neighbours with an average score of 6.

The theme that scored lowest overall in East Lothian was Traffic and parking, with an average score of 3.



Key issues for young people in East Lothian:

The **availability, reliability and safety of public transport**. Those who commented were keen to use environmentally friendly options for travel, however they needed to feel safe when they were on board and for the service to be reliable and regular.

All young people who commented on the subject appreciated the free bus pass that allowed them to travel free of charge on the bus service, “Bus pass is very good so you can go out with your friends”.

Some commented that they would like this free travel pass extended to other forms of public transport particularly trains, “Train should be free on young Scot card too”.

Young people appreciated the **access to nature** they had in much of East Lothian. They were able to identify lots of places that they could go to hang out. However, they had particular suggestions for improvement in their own local areas, including the **repair and maintenance** of play facilities.

The **need for more facilities for older children** (teenagers) was raised as some felt that there were lots of places for young children to go, but fewer places for young people to have recreation time with their friends, “Teenagers have to use parks etc as spaces to hangout as there is nowhere else to go”.

Cost of recreational services was an issue for young people who responded on this theme, “We have to have subscriptions/memberships to play sport at local facilities (not just one-offs), and it costs money”.

Young people want to **feel safe** getting around where they live. Some young people identified places that they would avoid in the dark as they felt unsafe, “Unsafe walking in the dark”. Young people named particular places where more lighting might help them feel safer when walking in the dark.

Other situations, like being on buses in the late evenings, were identified as times when they might feel unsafe.

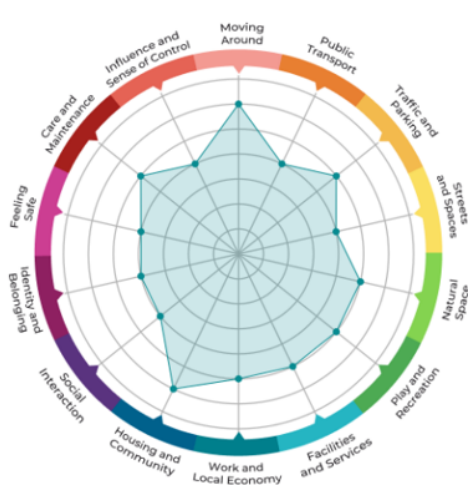
Traffic safety, including feeling safe as a pedestrian and as a cyclist was also raised. Young people wanted speed limits to be observed, “Grammar school (has) lots of traffic. Speed limit is not followed”. To encourage active travel, young people wanted safe routes to cycle that were free from cars, as currently they felt that “Cyclists need to be wary of drivers”.

Recommendations for improvement from young people in East Lothian

- More cycle paths and active travel options
- Improvements to recreation options for young people that are free
- More support for mental health issues that are accessible for young people
- Lighting to improve safety on routes regularly used by young people
- More public transport options that are free for young people, and increased reliability, regularity and safety of the bus service.

The rest of the report provides the individual findings for each of the secondary schools, identifying the themes the young people chose to discuss during the engagements.

Knox Academy, Haddington



| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Walking, wheeling, cycling | 6 |
| Public Transport | 4 |
| Traffic and Parking | 5 |
| Streets, squares & buildings | 4 |
| Nature - parks, woods, hills, beaches | 5 |
| Play, hang out, games and hobbies | 5 |
| Schools, libraries, shops, services | 5 |
| Jobs and places to work | 5 |
| Homes, friends and neighbours | 6 |
| Meeting and talking with people | 4 |
| Feeling proud and part of a place | 4 |
| Feeling Safe | 4 |
| Fixed, clean and managed | 5 |
| Having our say and being listened to | 4 |

Figure 4 Plotted Place Standard scores from Knox Academy, Haddington

Session dynamics

60 young people from S3 (14 and 15 year olds) attended the session with 5 facilitators supporting the discussion.

The group chose to discuss four themes in particular, these were Feeling Safe, Home, friends and neighbours, Play, hang out, games and hobbies and Public Transport.

Feeling safe

39% of young people who commented said that they felt unsafe sometimes. This was usually due to particular circumstances “when its dark outside” and “intimidated by large groups hanging about” or in particular areas “the Nungate” “Braes Bridge”. However the majority of young people who commented felt safe and were aware of measures that protected their safety, such as “lots of zebra crossings”, “police officers” and “neighbourhood watch”.

Home, friends and neighbours

87% of young people who commented were positive about their home, friends and neighbours. “People are nice, generous, kind, helping, lovely” “Old people warm my heart in this town”. The minority of other responses were for a range of reasons including “expensive” and “doesn’t feel like a community.”

Play, hang out, games and hobbies

Young people were able to identify a wide range of places to play and hang out during a brainstorming session.



Image 4 Brainstorming activity – Places to hang out, Knox Academy, Haddington

40% of young people who commented wanted more to do in the town and suggested improvements to infrastructure and facilities, including improvements to the pool, pitches and parks. There were several comments around the provision of some facilities being aimed at younger children rather than teens.

Public Transport

Over 60% of young people who commented were positive about public transport options, particularly the bus in Haddington. The free bus pass was mentioned as a positive aspect of transport for young people. There were also several comments relating to pollution and cycling being a good option for getting around the area “Cycling is a good way of getting around”.

Ideas for improvement

The young people provided some ideas for improvement during the session:

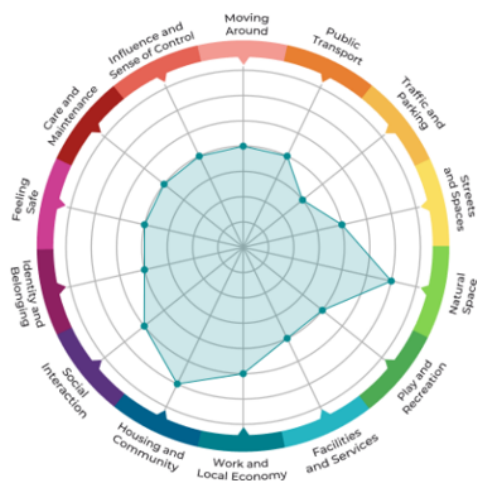
“Make more bike trails around Haddington so you can cycle more and we can help the environment”.

They also provided ideas of services they might like to see in their community, including a cinema, bowling and a trampoline park.

Feedback from session

Young people were generally positive about Haddington's session, and we gained comments such as "I liked 'speaking' on my phone ", "I love the staff that came. Come back again" and "I thought the session went well because I got to hear all my friends' ideas".

Dunbar Grammar, Dunbar



| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Walking, wheeling, cycling | 4 |
| Public Transport | 4 |
| Traffic and Parking | 3 |
| Streets, squares & buildings | 4 |
| Nature - parks, woods, hills, beaches | 6 |
| Play, hang out, games and hobbies | 4 |
| Schools, libraries, shops, services | 4 |
| Jobs and places to work | 5 |
| Homes, friends and neighbours | 6 |
| Meeting and talking with people | 5 |
| Feeling proud and part of a place | 4 |
| Feeling Safe | 4 |
| Fixed, clean and managed | 4 |
| Having our say and being listened to | 4 |

Figure 5 Plotted Place Standard scores from Dunbar Grammar, Dunbar

Session dynamics

10 young people from S1 – S3 (11 – 14 year olds) attended the session with 2 facilitators supporting the discussion.

The group chose to discuss four themes in particular, these were Feeling safe, Play, hang out, games and hobbies, Public transport and Schools, libraries, shops and other services.

Feeling safe

Issues around feeling safe seemed to focus on road safety in Dunbar, with 40% of young people who responded on this theme mentioning issues around traffic, including “Grammar school lots of traffic. Speed limit is not followed”.

Play, hang out, games and hobbies

Young people mentioned a range of places where they were able to hang out, including “Lauderdale Park, Hallhill (sports centre), youth clubs Tuesday nights”, and “school has lots of after school activities”. However 46% of those who commented on this theme said that they would like to see some improvements in facilities for young people.

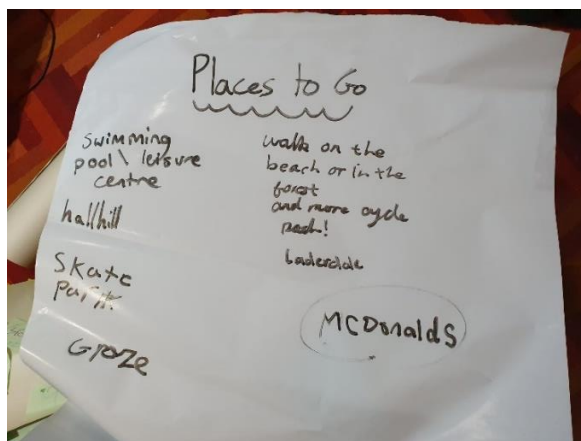


Image 5 Places to go in Dunbar Grammar brainstorming session

Public transport

72% of young people mentioned issues around public transport, particularly around improvements to the bus and train service (frequency and reliability), “(We want) more buses and fewer stops on the routes”.

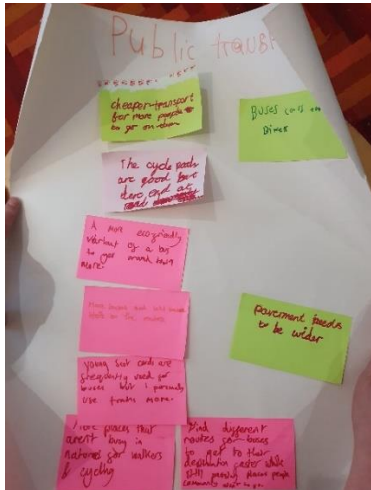


Image 6 Public Transport in Dunbar Grammar brainstorming session

Schools, libraries, shops and other services

Young people would like to see improvements in the range of shops available in Dunbar. 66% of young people who commented on this theme made suggestions about the kind of shops and activities they would like to see in the town. “Want: Cinema, shopping, bowling, gym. All the fun stuff is in Edinburgh”.

Ideas for improvement

Young people in Dunbar recognised and appreciated their ready access to nature, with a score of 6 given for that theme. However they did want a wider variety of things to do in the town without having to travel to Edinburgh, such as a cinema or bowling.

Where I go and what I do

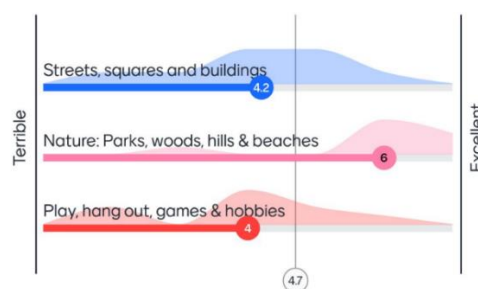
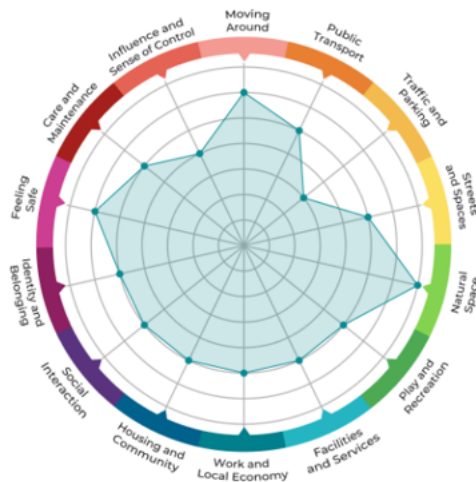


Figure 6 Scores gathered at Dunbar Grammar using Mentimeter

Feedback from Session

The feedback from the Dunbar session was positive. Someone said, "I liked today because of the discussions. I didn't really not like anything" and "I found it really enjoyable to converse with other students and talk about the local area. I personally believe everyone had a say".

North Berwick High School, North Berwick



| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Walking, wheeling, cycling | 6 |
| Public Transport | 5 |
| Traffic and Parking | 3 |
| Streets, squares & buildings | 5 |
| Nature - parks, woods, hills, beaches | 7 |
| Play, hang out, games and hobbies | 5 |
| Schools, libraries, shops, services | 5 |
| Jobs and places to work | 5 |
| Homes, friends and neighbours | 5 |
| Meeting and talking with people | 5 |
| Feeling proud and part of a place | 5 |
| Feeling Safe | 6 |
| Fixed, clean and managed | 5 |
| Having our say and being listened to | 4 |

Figure 7 Plotted Place Standard scores from North Berwick High School, North Berwick

Session dynamics

14 young people from S3 – S6 (13 – 17 year olds) attended the session with 2 facilitators supporting the discussion.

The group chose to discuss four themes in particular, these were Having our say and being listened to, Jobs and places to work, Play, hang out, games and hobbies and Traffic and parking.

Having our say and being listened to

There was some discussion about whether or not young people felt they were listened to in North Berwick. 40% of young people who commented felt that more needed to be done to take their views into account, however 26% of young people felt that there was lots of information available for them to be involved with their community “It’s easy to get involved in tasks and get your voice heard if you want it to be”. The young people highlighted a perceived lack of resources for mental health service for young people, with 33% of young people stating that awareness raising (of mental health issues) was needed in addition to more training for staff.

Jobs and places to work

Young people participated in a mapping exercise to identify where the shops, schools and other amenities were in the town. Almost half the young people who responded on this question were positive about employment and volunteering prospects in North Berwick and commented that there were “many job opportunities”.

However, around 30% of young people who responded on this theme commented that they felt undervalued as young workers, “I don’t feel respected in workplaces as I’m junior staff”.

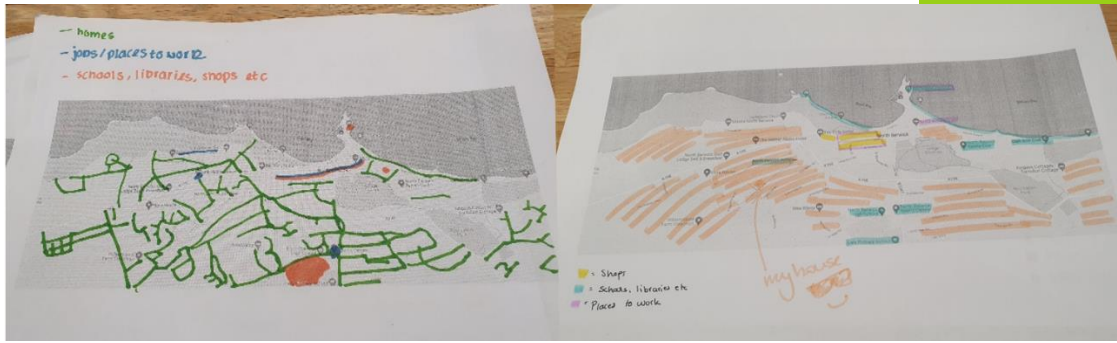


Image 7 Mapping activity undertaken at North Berwick High School

Play, hang out, games and hobbies

Over 60% of the young people who commented on this theme were positive about the play opportunities in North Berwick, with mentions of the sports centre and youth project as activities they could access “Youth project has seating and there is lots of things to do.” Again the access to natural resources was seen as an advantage of living in the area.

Traffic and parking

Young people were aware of debate around pedestrianisation of the high street, with over 70% of those who commented on this theme saying that parking was an issue in the town. They reflected on issues of “Too many cars and not enough spaces”, however this group were not in favour of pedestrianisation as they thought it might limit access for older people. Ideas such as a “park and ride” and “more regular buses” were suggested as a solution for this issue.

How do I get from one place to another?

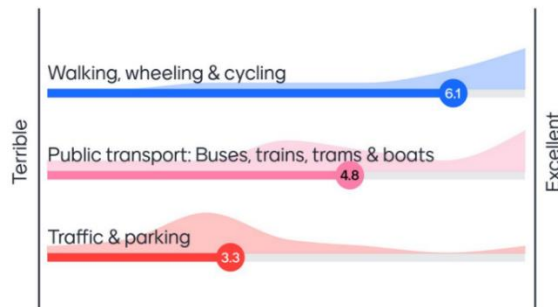


Figure 8 Scores gathered at North Berwick High School using Mentimeter

Ideas for Improvement

In addition to the ideas for improvement in regard to traffic and parking, young people’s key ideas for improvement were around having more support for mental health issues that are accessible for young people.

Feedback from Session

The young people’s feedback at the end of the session was also very positive - with comments ranging from “very informative”, “very well run” and “good levels of interaction”. The team were described as “very approachable” too.

Rosehill High School, Wallyford



Figure 9 Plotted Place Standard scores from Rosehill High School, Wallyford

Session dynamics

12 young people from S1 – S3 (11 – 14 year olds) attended the session with 2 facilitators supporting the discussion.

The group chose to discuss four themes in particular, these were Nature – parks, woods, hills and beaches, Public transport, Feeling safe and Homes, friends and neighbours.

Nature – parks, woods, hills and beaches

91% of young people who responded on this theme were able to identify a wide range of natural environments that they could access regularly. These included North Berwick beach, and parks within the local authority area. At the end of the session, some expressed concern about the number of new houses that were getting built on what they thought were forest or green areas, where they liked to hang out.

Public transport

100% of the responses in regard to public transport from young people were positive about getting around Wallyford and the surrounding area. “Use buses to go to other towns”. There were also positive comments about active travel “Ride my bike on the roads and pavements”.

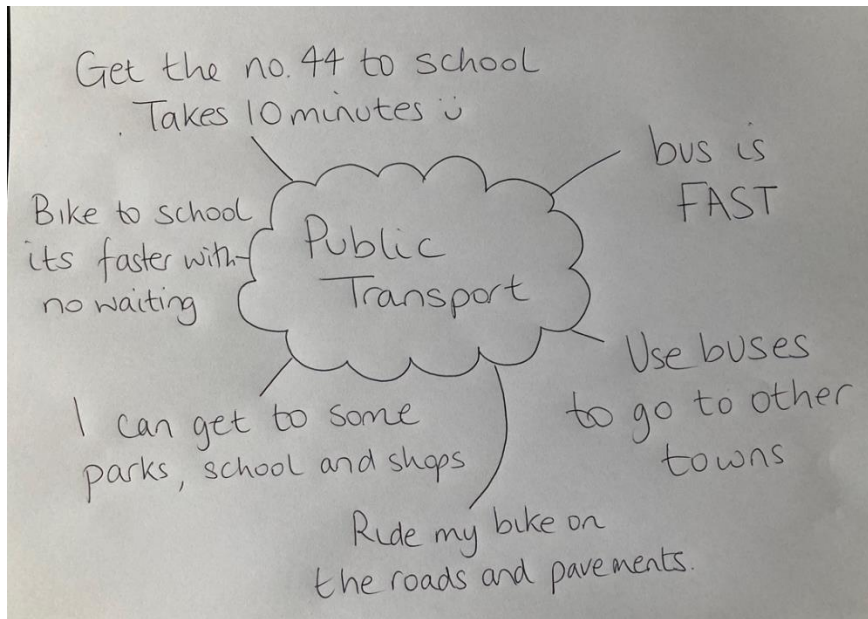


Image 8 Public Transport comments from Rosehill High School

Feeling safe

60% of young people who responded on this theme reported that they sometimes feel unsafe, particularly when walking in the dark. “(Feel) unsafe at the drift” (a path in Wallyford area).

Homes, friends and neighbours

Discussion ranged within this theme from access to doctors appointments (with 18% of those who responded saying it was difficult to get a doctors appointment) to the need for more amenities within the community, particularly shops, library and sports clubs.

Ideas for Improvement

The young people’s main suggestion for improvement was around enhancing safety in places where they had to walk through, for example the drift path and certain housing estates. It was suggested that lighting could be enhanced to improve safety.

Feedback from Session

Young people attending the session were thoroughly engaged and were keen to stay on and discuss issues. One young person asked if we were coming back again to speak more about the themes. Members of the group said that they appreciated having their voices heard.

Ross High School, Tranent



| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Walking, wheeling, cycling | 6 |
| Public Transport | 5 |
| Traffic and Parking | 4 |
| Streets, squares & buildings | 4 |
| Nature - parks, woods, hills, beaches | 5 |
| Play, hang out, games and hobbies | 3 |
| Schools, libraries, shops, services | 5 |
| Jobs and places to work | 3 |
| Homes, friends and neighbours | 6 |
| Meeting and talking with people | 4 |
| Feeling proud and part of a place | 3 |
| Feeling Safe | 4 |
| Fixed, clean and managed | 3 |
| Having our say and being listened to | 4 |

Figure 10 Plotted Place Standard scores from Ross High School, Tranent

Session dynamics

12 young people from S1 – S5 (11 – 16 year olds) attended the session with 3 facilitators supporting the discussion. This session was run in an interactive way, with young people moving around the room depending on the score they gave a particular theme.

The group chose to discuss four themes in particular, these were Play, hang out, games and hobbies, Public transport, Feeling safe and Jobs and places to work.

Play, hang out, games and hobbies

24% of young people who responded on this theme felt that there was good provision for active play, including pitches and pump tracks. There were a couple of mentions of specific play equipment that was in need of repair.

Public transport

There were positive comments about the free bus pass “Bus pass is very good so you can go out with your friends”. However 56% of those who responded on this theme said that there were issues with the bus, including “Bus app is terrible and not accurate” and “If you miss a bus it takes 20-40 minutes to get another”.

Feeling safe

Over 70% of young people who responded on this theme reported that they sometimes felt unsafe. “Bus after 11pm with drunk people”, “Kids have easy access to vapes”. Lighting, and more precautions against anti-social behaviour were seen as solutions to these issues “Have more... precautions like security cameras, warning signs stating no vandalism, alcohol or vaping or smoking in social spaces...”.

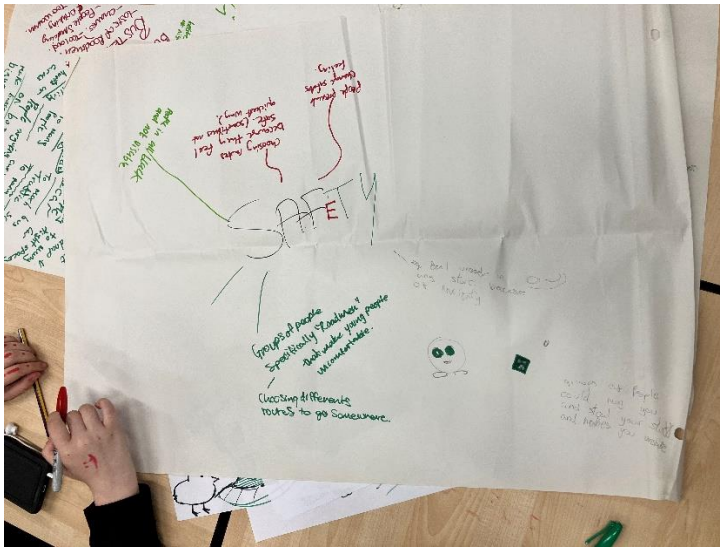


Image 9 Safety in Ross High School, Tranent brainstorming session

Jobs and places to work

Over half the young people who responded on this theme (56%) were unhappy with the job opportunities locally, “Not many opportunities - no variety, most jobs unsuitable for young people/work experience”. The jobs that are available are seen as “service” rather than “professional” jobs, “Not a lot of specialist jobs, mainly service”.

Ideas for Improvement

While appreciative of the free bus pass, young people suggested that train fares should also be free, and this would further encourage them to use public transport, which would be better for the environment, “More emphasis on public transport means less traffic and CO2 emissions”.

Feedback from Session

The young people said that they enjoyed being part of the engagement and that they felt that it was good to help improve the area for young people in the future. Most of the young people were really positive about being involved and they like moving around and picking where they wanted to stand. They also said that it was great that we were listening to their opinions.



Image 10 Mural displayed in Ross High from a previous engagement with the Children’s Parliament