

Place Standard

Rural Economic Development

35 The Mall,

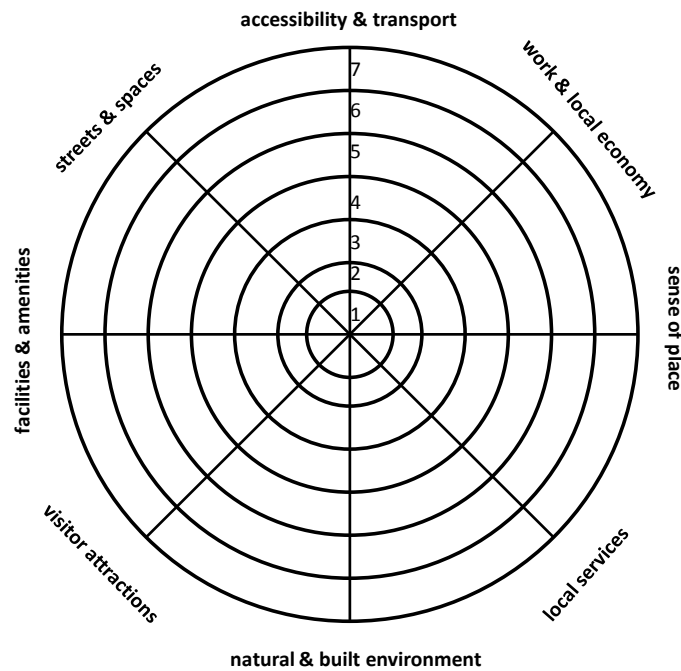
Waterford



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae Phort Láirge
Waterford
City & County Council

Place Standard

The Place Standard is a tool to evaluate the quality of a place and can also help users to identify their priorities. The tool is simple and free to use. It consists of a set of questions which cover both the physical and social elements of a place. Prompts are provided to help users answer the questions. When all questions have been completed, the results are shown in a simple diagram.



Why Place is important

Research shows that the places where we spend our time have an important impact on our lives. The way a place looks, functions and feels can influence our health and wellbeing, and the opportunities we have access to. Improving the quality of places can help to tackle inequalities. Understanding the existing and potential strengths of a place can inform good decision making, allowing resources to be targeted to where they are most needed. This approach can deliver better results over the long term. The tool can also support the design and delivery of successful places, creating quality development where people want to live.

Area

The tool allows different sizes and types of places to be assessed. This can include whole towns or villages in urban or rural locations. The tool can be used to assess existing places as well as places that are still being planned. Whatever the place, the area to be evaluated should be agreed in advance by those involved.

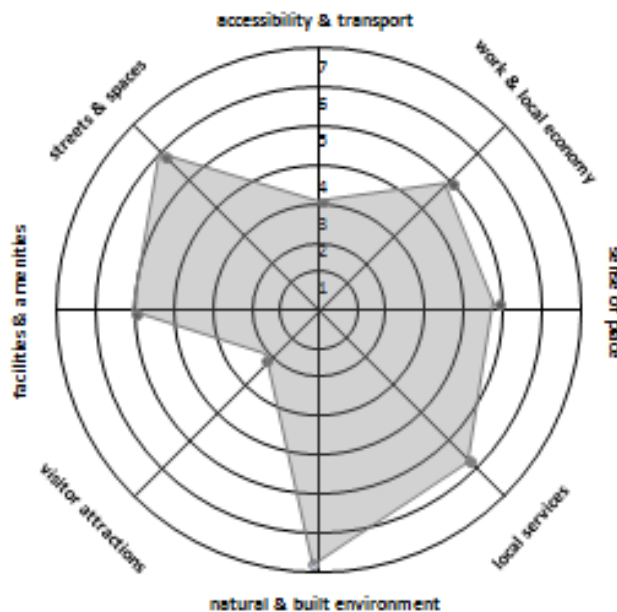
How to Use

You can either complete the tool on paper at an event or it can be done online.

- Record who you are, noting if you are an individual or representing a group, and agree the area you are going to assess.
- Answer each question by recording a rating on a scale from 1 to 7. Some prompts are provided as a starting point for discussion. The rating should be agreed amongst the group carrying out the assessment. Space is provided to record the reasons for your answers.
- When you have answered all the questions, plot each rating on the 'compass diagram'. In this example (below) the "visitor attractions" question was rated as '2'. The next question, 'natural & built environment', was rated a "7". A line should be drawn between each point.
- After completing the diagram, you can reflect on the results by agreeing priorities and actions. Space is provided for you to list the main issues.

Output

The diagram that is produced is easy to understand. It shows at a glance the areas where a place is performing well and where there is room for improvement. Where a place has been assessed as good, the shape will be fuller, reaching towards the edge of the circle (in the example below: 'natural & built environment'). Where it is viewed as performing poorly the shape will be smaller, remaining towards the centre (eg: visitor attractions).



There is no benchmark or minimum standard. The tool is used to determine the strengths and assets of a place and to indicate areas in which action may be taken.

When to use

The place standard tool can help you to achieve a number of aims. Communities can use the tool to assess what works about their place and where it needs to improve. This may be part of a wider discussion about the regeneration of an area, or it might be to inform a new place or development which is planned nearby.

Local authorities and Local Development Companies can use the tool to help plan their activities and prioritise appropriate action and create good places where people want to live.

What happens next

The place standard tool is part of a process, not the end of a process. In considering what you do next, you should think about opportunities to develop and build upon the conversations and relationships the tool has initiated.

The method allows assessment to be consistent and comparable over time to see if improvement has been made. In order to get the most out the tool you will want to record the qualities of the place and the reasons for your rating. This will be useful for people to set the ambition for their place.

Accessibility & Transport

The design and layout of a place can encourage walking and cycling by providing pleasant and safe routes that connect people to where they want to go. Access to a reliable and well-connected public transport service is also important for communities in any place.

Now consider the question:

Can I easily walk and cycle around the town/village and does public transport meet my needs?

Next, rate your place on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 means there is very little room for improvement. Record your rating on the compass.

You might want to think about the following:

- Do routes provide obvious and direct links with the places that people want to go, such as schools, shops, services and public transport?
- Are routes of good quality, in an attractive environment and pleasant to use?
- Do routes feel safe to use all year round and at different times of the day?
- Are public transport services frequent and reliable? Do they take people to the places they need to go?
- Is public transport accessible for all regardless of age, mobility or disability?
- If you wish, note why you rated your answer the way you did below:-

Work & Local Economy

Good quality work can offer important benefits through the income, activity, social networks and sense of identity and satisfaction that it can bring. A thriving local economy can provide work opportunities and help create lively and attractive places where people want to spend time.

Now consider the question:

Is there an active local economy and the opportunity to access work?

Next, rate your place on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 means there is very little room for improvement. Record your rating on the compass.

Here are some things that you might want to think about as you consider your rating:

- Is there an active local economy that helps to create a thriving place?
- Are there job opportunities that are available and accessible to local people?
- Are there effective services that help people to find and keep work available locally?
- Are there opportunities for people to gain skills for work such as education, training and volunteering?
- Are there opportunities and spaces for local businesses to start up and grow?
- If you wish, note why you rated your answer the way you did below:-

Streets & Spaces

Buildings, landmarks, greenery, views and natural landscape can all help to create an attractive, distinctive place that people enjoy being in. These features can also help people to find their way around.

Now consider the question:

Do buildings, streets and public spaces create an attractive place that is easy to get around?

Next, rate your place on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 means there is very little room for improvement. Record your rating on the compass.

Here are some things that you might want to think about as you consider your rating:

- Are there positive features such as local landmarks, historic buildings, public squares or natural features that make the place feel distinctive?
- Are there distinctive features and routes that help you to find your way around?
- Do buildings, features and public spaces look interesting and attractive?
- Are there negative features such as derelict buildings or vacant land? Does the design of the area help to lessen their impact?
- Is the experience of the place positive both day and night and in different seasons or weather conditions?
- If you wish, note why you rated your answer the way you did below:-

Facilities & Amenities

Facilities and amenities are the things that we need to live and enjoy life; this can include local shops, schools, services, libraries, GPs and places to eat, drink and meet friends. Access to good quality facilities and amenities is important in supporting people to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

Now consider the question:

Do facilities and amenities meet my needs?

Next, rate your place on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 means there is very little room for improvement. Record your rating on the compass.

Here are some things that you might want to think about as you consider your rating:

- Is there a range of facilities and amenities available to meet a variety of different needs?
- Do the available facilities and amenities help to support a healthy lifestyle?
- Are they within a reasonable distance and easily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport?
- Are facilities and amenities good quality and well maintained?
- Are the available facilities and amenities being used to their full potential? Will they continue to meet people's needs in the future?
- If you wish, note why you rated your answer the way you did below:-

Visitor Attractions

Visitor attractions, whether free or fee-paying, are an important part of the allure to visitors and add to the positive experience enjoyed by tourists. Tourist attractions can contribute to local economies, provide employment and stimulate infrastructure investment.

Now consider the question:

Are there attractions to entice visitors to the town/village?

Next, rate your place on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 means there is very little room for improvement. Record your rating on the compass.

Here are some things that you might want to think about as you consider your rating:

- Is there a range of attractions and amenities available to meet a variety of visitor's needs?
- Is there an adequate suite of facilities available to support visitor attractions?
- Are attractions within a reasonable distance and easily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport?
- Is there a good supply of accommodation options?
- Are the visitor attractions promoted and marketed to best effect?
- If you wish, note why you rated your answer the way you did below:-

Natural & Built Environment

The natural and built environment within a town/village or its hinterland can have a variety of meanings and can include items such as monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscape, seascapes, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways. The protection and enhancement of these assets help safeguard the local character and distinctiveness of towns/villages and its environs, providing local economic, social and environmental benefits.

Now consider the question:

Does the Town/village conserve its natural, built and cultural heritage whilst maximising its economic potential?

Next, rate your place on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 means there is very little room for improvement. Record your rating on the compass.

Here are some things that you might want to think about as you consider your rating:

- Is there a range of natural and built environment assets within the area and are they recorded?
- Are there adequate conservation measures in place to maintain/enhance the natural/built environment asset base?
- Are heritage and amenity assets within a reasonable distance and easily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport?
- Is there adequate signage/parking ?
- Are the heritage assets promoted and marketed to best effect?
- If you wish, note why you rated your answer the way you did below:-

Local Services

Understanding the town's or village's function is important as many towns and villages rely on each other for different facilities and services. Assessing the relationship with nearby towns/villages would prove useful to help shape how local services can be effectively delivered in the greater local area.

Now consider the question:

Are local services within the Town/village meeting local need and is there potential to link with other areas to enable more services to be provided?

Next, rate your place on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 means there is very little room for improvement. Record your rating on the compass.

Here are some things that you might want to think about as you consider your rating:

- Is there a range of local services that cater for different ages and abilities located in the town/village or nearby?
- Is there potential for service providers to share facilities to deliver their services?
- Are local services if not within a reasonable distance easily accessible by public transport?
- Is there adequate PR and awareness of the local services provided?
- If you wish, note why you rated your answer the way you did below:-

Sense of Place

How people feel about a place can be influenced by many factors, including how the place looks; how other people view the place; and the place's culture and history. Places with a positive identity, and where people feel they belong, can help to build strong communities.

Now consider the question:

Does this place have a strong identity and do I feel I belong?

Next, rate your place on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 means there is very little room for improvement. Record your rating on the compass.

Here are some things that you might want to think about as you consider your rating:

- Do people perceive the place positively?
- Do people feel connected to their neighbours and the community?
- Are the things that make the "sense of place" of the town/village apparent and celebrated?
- Are people positively engaged in their community? Are there groups and networks that help strengthen a sense of place?
- If you wish, note why you rated your answer the way you did below:-

