

# Place Standard tool with a Climate Lens

Summary Update Report | Summer 2022



Public Health  
Scotland



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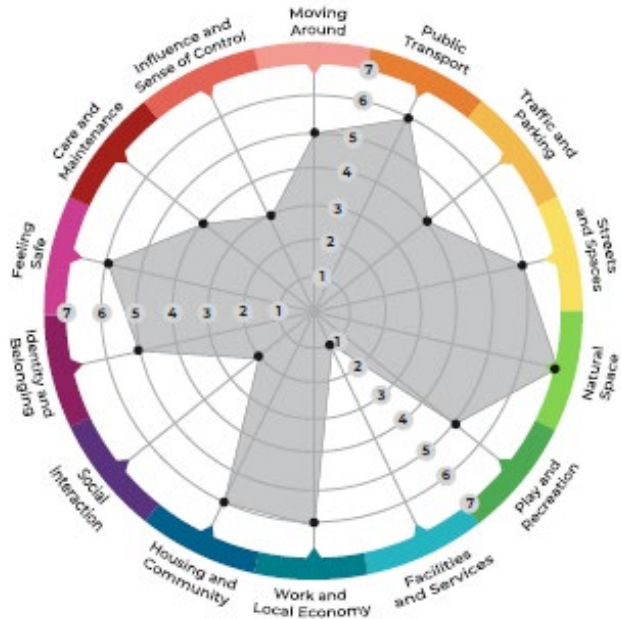
SSN Sustainable  
Scotland  
Network

ekos  
Economic and Social Development

# Project Overview

The Place Standard tool<sup>1</sup> (PST) provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place, based around how place impacts on health and wellbeing.

The 14 themes within the Place Standard Tool (PST) allow individuals or groups to think about the physical elements of a place (such as the buildings, spaces, and transport) as well as the social aspects (like whether people feel they have a say in decisions) and economic aspects (like access to jobs and training). It can help to identify and prioritise actions needed to improve places and support health and wellbeing.



The PST, in use in Scotland since 2015, does not formally consider climate change as a standalone topic or as part of the existing themes. Since 2019, the Place Standard team and national partners have been working to produce a revised version of the PST. As part of this improvement process climate change emerged as a priority to be addressed and strengthened. However, in addition to increasing some content around climate issues within the updated PST (PST2.0), a need was also identified for a more in-depth tool for considering the place-based dimensions of climate change holistically.

In response, this project was conceived, to develop and pilot a version of the Place Standard Tool with a Climate Lens (PST CL). The objective is to help improve understanding of how climate change might play out in a local area, and support communities to design their future place with this in mind. This might mean considering how a place will transition to a net zero future when fossil fuels are no longer used or how their place could better cope with extreme weather and changes to infrastructure, supply chains, health and wellbeing, that will be impacted by long term climate change.

## Project partners

The project was funded by Public Health Scotland (PHS) and the Scottish Government (SG) on behalf of the Place Standard partners. The project was delivered in a collaborative way and involved the expertise of: Sniffer, Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN), Architecture & Design Scotland (A&DS) and EKOS, alongside that of the funders, and the projects which took part in piloting the tool.

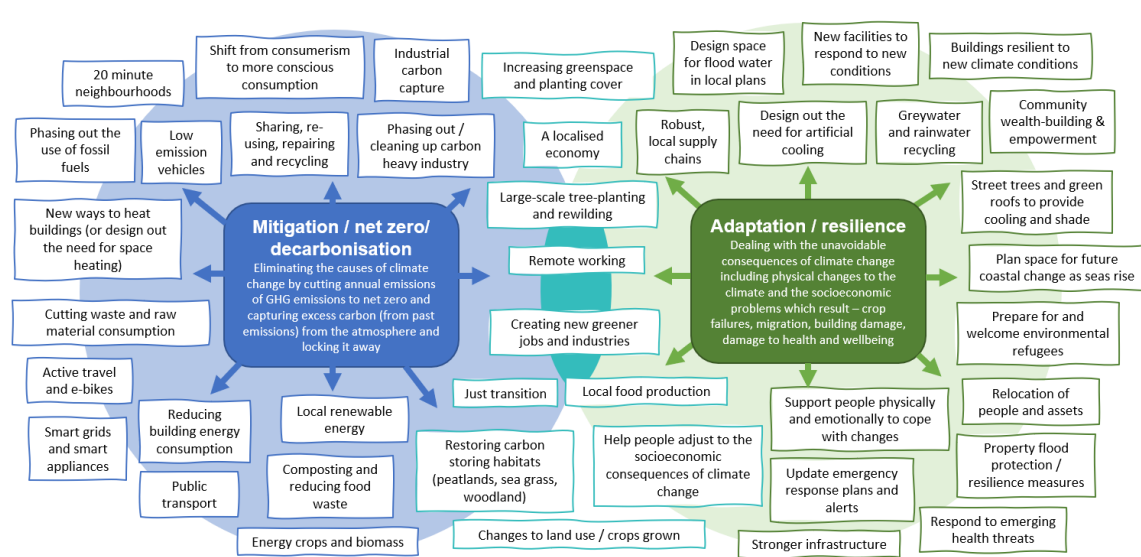
<sup>1</sup> [www.placestandard.scot](http://www.placestandard.scot)

## Why consider climate change in our placemaking?

- Place has an enormous impact on people's lives and on their health and wellbeing by shaping their opportunities and their choices.
- Climate change poses increasing threats to health, wellbeing, prosperity, biodiversity, whilst place-based action to address climate change offers huge potential to provide health, social and environment co-benefits.
- The places we design today will face very different challenges in future. A responsible approach to placemaking therefore demands consideration of how climate change will impact our places and how the way we live will need to adapt.
- Most of the solutions to the climate emergency, require us to think in a collaborative place-based way, which means framing our thinking within a physical setting and social context. Place-based approaches are essential in taking local action.
- Climate change will widen the gap between rich and poor. Climate solutions must also address inequality and disadvantage. If we take a place-based approach to tackling the climate emergency, we can collectively design local solutions to a global problem which also address other community priorities. For example, promoting health and wellbeing, social justice, community wealth building, fair work, and community empowerment.

## How will climate change impact our places?

Climate change will affect our places in many ways. Changes are needed both to rapidly reduce carbon emissions and to adapt to the physical and social impacts from the changing climate that are already inevitable as illustrated below:



### Place-based dimensions of climate change: Sniffer, 2022

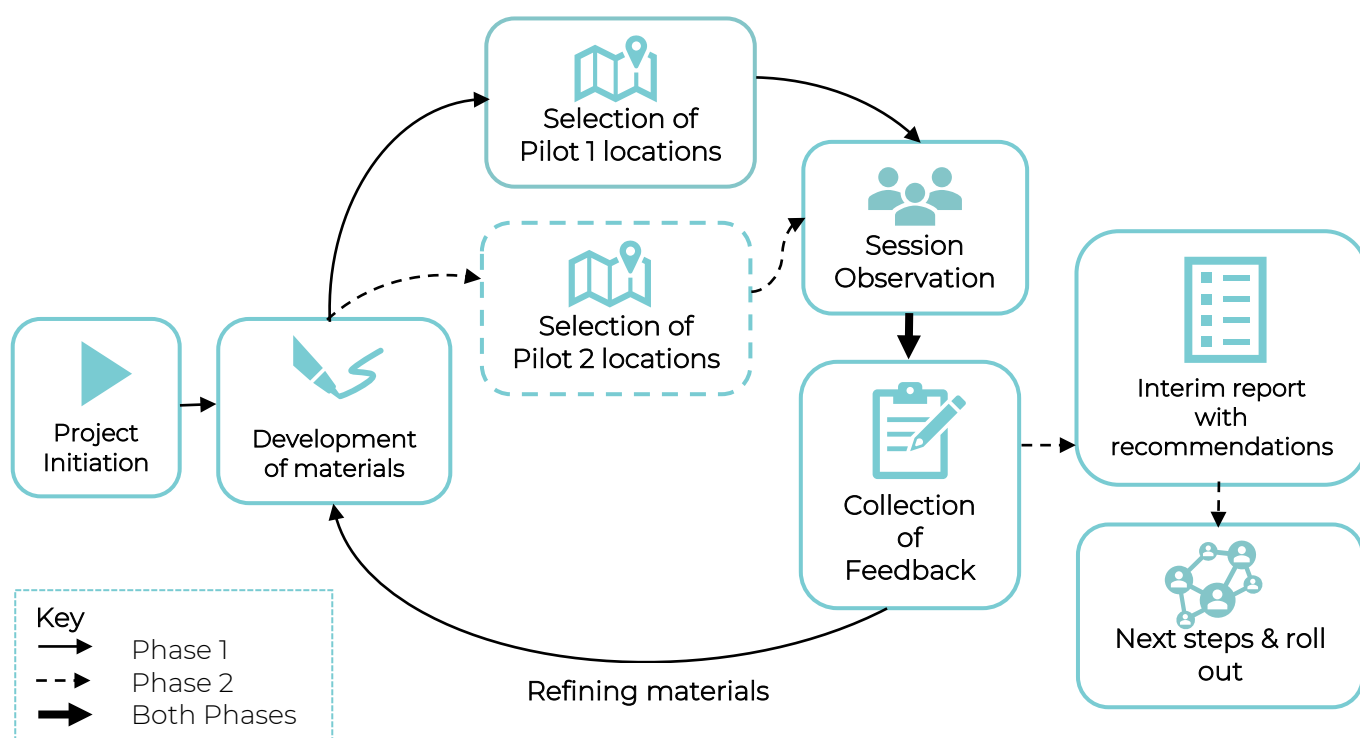
Changes which might occur to our places as Scotland decarbonises are shown in dark blue boxes, changes which might occur from acting to increase resilience / adapt to climate change impacts are shown in green. Mitigation and adaptation are not always neatly separated. Some actions help places to cut emissions *and* increase resilience – these are shown in turquoise boxes.

# What is the Climate Lens and how was it developed?

The PST CL materials are a suite of tools for facilitators and organisers of PST sessions which can be used in addition to the existing updated PST resources to help place-making conversations consider the two interrelated aspects of how people and places need to address climate change. The 'Climate Lens' takes the form of:

- extra guidance and questions in the main PST guidance,
- a climate change prompt document for facilitators,
- a glossary of terms,
- online and in person-tools to help facilitators host effective PST CL sessions.

## Overview of the development process



The draft PST CL tool and supporting guidance were developed collaboratively and trialled with real-life place making projects across Scotland.

## How the CL materials have evolved

The project was designed to encourage feedback and allow iterative improvement of the Climate Lens materials as the project developed. Evaluation evidence generated in the form of surveys and session observations was used:

- to document learning from individual placemaking projects,
- identify common/shared learning across the pilots, and
- identify potential solutions to common issues encountered when using the tool.

Findings from the first phase of the pilot were used to develop the draft PST CL materials further, before issuing the materials to a second phase of pilots to test. Feedback from the second phase and the wider placemaking has fed into the final Climate Lens materials. These incorporate the suggested wording changes and additional resources / tools to help those organising and facilitating future PST CL sessions.

## Pilot projects which tested the PST CL

A total of 10 pilot projects were chosen to represent the varied communities, scales, landscapes and placemaking projects being undertaken across Scotland.

**First phase pilots** - The initial pilots held PST CL sessions between September and November 2021, and are summarised below:

Name	Overview of pilot	Location	Lead
Buckhaven Neighbourhood Plan	Community regeneration project to develop a neighbourhood plan. In person PST CL session held focusing on a community facing multiple deprivation.	Buckhaven, Fife	Fife Council
Climate Ready Strathdon	In person PST CL session held as part of a project to create a place-based climate change adaptation strategy in an isolated rural location.	Strathdon, Aberdeenshire	Aberdeenshire Council
Edinburgh's Thriving Green Spaces	City wide placemaking to inform the city's parks and greenspace strategy and develop masterplans for strategic sites (including Inch Park). In person PST CL sessions including walkabout of the green spaces.	Edinburgh	City of Edinburgh Council
Greater Pollok Placemaking	Part of wider placemaking addressing socio-economic issues, green space, and community access to Pollok Park, included in person PST CL sessions including walkabout of the area.	Greater Pollok, Glasgow	Glasgow City Council

These projects while considering a range of scales of area, and a variety of project types, all held in person PST CL sessions and were led by Local Authorities. Second phase pilots were chosen to reflect different project leads and session types. The second phase pilots were held between December 2021 and March 2022.

## Second phase pilots

Name	Overview of pilot	Location	Lead
Climate Action Town Blackburn	Working with place-makers and communities to initiate collective action in small towns with little previous involvement in climate action; to facilitate long lasting change and deliver coordinated climate action. Mixture of online and in person PST CL sessions.	Blackburn, West Lothian	A&DS
Climate Action Town Holytown		Holytown, North Lanarkshire	
Climate Action Town Stevenston		Stevenston, North Ayrshire	
Key Agencies Green Recovery: Stewarton	Partnership project with East Ayrshire Council and the community in Stewarton to develop a local development framework with potential to link in with a forthcoming community action plan. Online PST CL sessions.	Stewarton, East Ayrshire	A&DS & Key Agencies Group
Live Life Morvern	Community placemaking project focusing on an empowered, remote rural community with a high degree of climate action knowledge and enthusiasm. Online PST CL sessions.	Morvern, Lochaber, Highland	PAS (Planning Advisory Service)
One Carluke	Part of an ongoing placemaking exercise to develop community led place plans, establish a local climate change action group, and regenerate the local area in line with community ambition. In person, indoors PST CL session.	Carluk, South Lanarkshire	ONECAN and South Lanarkshire Council

# Key Learning

Responding to the climate emergency requires a transformation of Scotland's places over the next 20-30 years. There is much to do and a limited window for action. The PST CL pilot raises some important questions which need to be resolved.



## **The relationship between the PST and the PST CL**

When asked whether they felt that the CL would be useful in all types of placemaking or if there were settings where it would not be appropriate to consider climate change; feedback was unanimous with facilitators and participants struggling to envisage a situation where it would not be appropriate or responsible to address climate change when considering the future of our places. Whilst the need remains for a generic version of the PST as one of its strengths is the flexibility of application to different settings and different agendas, however those using the tool felt that in many cases the CL should be considered the preferred approach. This is because designing places without considering large scale transformative trends would be short-sighted.



## **Roll-out across all communities**

A particular strength of the PST is in addressing inequalities and therefore its use has been particularly supported in settings facing socioeconomic disadvantage. Evidence tells us that the poorest communities in Scotland are likely to be the most vulnerable to climate change impacts but are least responsible for the carbon emissions that are fueling the climate crisis. The role of facilitators in emphasising the co-benefits that tackling climate change can have for other local priorities, will be important in maximising engagement without adding anxiety especially in communities who may already be under stress. The open questions and holistic nature of the PST enables conversations which may begin with immediate community priorities to easily expand to more tangential or daunting issues such as climate change and make them more immediately relatable to people's everyday lives. Because of this, the PST CL can empower communities, enabling them to be part of collaborative action tackling local issues that also respond to the climate emergency.

Additionally, the pilot found that there is a real need for PST CL sessions to also take place with more affluent communities in Scotland because these communities have the largest per capita carbon footprints.



## Visualising future scenarios

The pilot demonstrates that while the PST CL facilitated real consideration of changes in today's weather and how to increase resilience to cope with current conditions; without linking to future projections of change, it is difficult to get people to think beyond current extremes and make a mental leap to consider the transformation to society that is inevitable over the next 2-3 decades. People tend to be able to envisage the next incremental change but not the transformative changes that we are facing and need to embrace. Visualising what good adaptation looks like is harder for most audiences, than asking them to think about what a net zero place might be like. There is an appetite to develop new tools to support this process.



## Ongoing review and agility of resources

Given the considerable pace of decarbonisation needed to meet Scotland's climate change ambitions and resilient places, the PST CL materials will need to be refreshed regularly to ensure that the tool continues to be relevant. As evidence becomes clearer and policy and pathways for action evolve over time, asking more challenging questions of local communities will be necessary as they progress local climate actions.



## Joining up the pieces

Climate action and placemaking is a crowded, complicated, and busy space in Scotland. It is easy for organisers and facilitators to feel overwhelmed by the considerable activity emerging in this area, and often limited read across between:

- local place plans,
- local development plans
- regional land use partnerships,
- local climate action plans,
- climate action hubs,
- climate action towns,
- SECAPs (Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans) etc

The PST CL offers the potential to create better linkages between all these activities by offering a shared perspective / language and by illustrating the potential for joined up co-benefits. Holding PST CL sessions involving key actors in these activities will allow placemakers to forge connections with, support and be supported by community-led activity across Scotland such as Transition Towns, SCCAN regional network activities and other local health, wellbeing and environmental action and community development. The PST offers opportunities for collaboration and can provide outputs which are useful to a multitude of parties, i.e.: Local Authorities creating Local Outcome Improvement Plans, emerging community land trusts etc.



# Next steps for the project

The pilot phase of the PST CL project is ending and there is real enthusiasm for incorporating climate change into the Place Standard and finalising the Climate Lens so that materials are ready for use in placemaking across Scotland as soon as practicable. The following activities are timetabled to enable this:

## Next steps for delivery Summer 2022

- Animation materials produced for social media introducing place-based dimensions of climate change.
- A webinar / recording developed to present the materials for facilitators and participants.
- Resources added to the Our Place and Place Standard websites.
- A launch event

## Further Information...

To be updated on developments with the PST CL and to be notified when the final PST CL is released for use, please visit: <https://www.ourplace.scot/Place-Standard-Climate>

For more information about Place-based approaches: <https://www.ourplace.scot/>



[www.ourplace.scot](http://www.ourplace.scot)