

Co-creating Local Neighbourhood Plans with Children and Young People

A 'How To' Guide

A Place in Childhood
2024



Falkirk Council



About A Place in Childhood

We facilitate projects which enable the rights of young citizens to participate meaningfully in societal improvement, while building lifelong skills for a prosperous and equitable future. Children's lived experience combines with our research, policy and action expertise to help their communities adapt to the unprecedented challenges and uncertainty we all face. Through this we promote superior environments for children and young people which align with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This guide was written by Dr Jenny Wood (Co-director, Policy & Research) and Anna Gaffney (Policy and Projects Manager).

Contact us: To discuss the content, or ways we might support your project, you can contact Anna at anna.gaffney@aplaceinchildhood.org

Acknowledgements

We are incredibly grateful for the partnerships on the Children and Teenager's Neighbourhood Project which has led to this guide, as well as those on the Children and Young People's Just Transition Plans project. Our match funders and contributors are NHS Lothian, City of Edinburgh Council, Falkirk Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Borders Council, Shetland Islands Council, Paths for All, and Aberdeen for a Fairer World.

We would also like to thank all schools and their pupils who have taken the time to work with us to co-create such thorough and meaningful plans. We've learnt a huge amount from everyone in this process, and have so many learnings and stories to tell that can hopefully help guide others through the work. Children and Teenagers, you've been absolutely fantastic and what you've co-created will inspire others across the country, and beyond!

Final thanks go to the adults who took part in all Showcase events on the two projects, and were so eager, willing, and serious about hearing and taking children and young people's views forward.

Contents

About A Place in Childhood	1
Acknowledgements	1
Chapter 1	
Introduction	6
Why Focus on Place?	6
Why Engage with Children and Young People	7
Overview of the Plan Co-creation Process	10
The Core Phase	10
Supplementary Phases	10
The 'How To' Guide Structure	11
Chapter 2	
Our Place Right Now: Experiential Mapping	13
Part One: Planning The Local Tour	13
The How	13
Key Considerations when organising the walking tour	15
Part Two: Co-creating the Experiential Map	16
Key Considerations when Reflecting on the Tour	17
Why are these steps important?	17
Chapter 3	
The Future of Our Place: The Island Task and Finalising a Plan	19
Part One: The Island Task	19
The How	19
Part Two: Drawing The Plan Together	20
Key Considerations on the Island Map and Drawing the Plan Together	21
Why is this important?	21
Chapter 4	
Writing up a Draft Plan	23
Chapter 5	
Supplementary Phases	26

Consulting on our Plan	26
The How	26
Craigmillar, Edinburgh – Niddrie Mill Primary School	26
Inverurie & Port Elphinstone – Inverurie Academy	27
Key Considerations for Consulting on our Plan	27
Why is this important?	28
Developing our Local Projects	28
The How	28
Key Considerations for Developing our Local Projects	29
Why is this important?	29
Showcasing Our Plan	29
The How	30
Part one: Planning	30
Part Two: The Event	31
Key Venue Considerations for Showcase Events	33
Key Process Considerations for Showcase Events	33
Why is this important?	34
Chapter 6	
Case Studies	36
Case Studies: Walking Tours	36
Bainsford and Langlees - Falkirk High School	36
Inverurie & Port Elphinstone - Port Elphinstone Primary	38
Case Studies: The Tour Reflection Process and Priorities for Action	40
Inverurie & Port Elphinstone: Inverurie Academy	40
Shetland Westside Mainland – Aith Junior High School	42
Case Studies: The Island Task and Finalising Our Plan	43
Jedburgh – The Children of Jedburgh Grammar School	43
Inverurie & Port Elphinstone – Kellands School	44
Case Studies: Developing our Local Projects	45
Craigmillar, Edinburgh – Castlebrae Community High School	45

Huntly – Gordon Primary School	46
Case Studies: Showcasing Our Plan	48
Craigmillar, Edinburgh Showcase	48
Westside, Shetland Mainland Showcase	48
Chapter 7	
Supporting Information	50
Linking with Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence	50
Materials Checklist for School Sessions	51
Materials Checklist for Showcase Events	51
Tips for Meaningful Engagement with Children and Young People	52
Example Emails	54
To invite schools to be involved:	54
To invite stakeholders to a Showcase Event	55



Chapter 1



Introduction

This guide provides an overview of how to create neighbourhood or place plans with children and teenagers, to help integrate their views and ideas into broader decision-making frameworks relating to placemaking. The methodology outlined has been informed and refined through 5 years of APiC's placemaking work with children and teenagers, and specifically honed through The Children and Teenager's Neighbourhood Project, match funded through [Paths for All's Smarter Choices, Smarter Places programme](#), and 6 local partners. Through this, we have co-created five children and teenagers 20-minute neighbourhood plans in five different neighbourhood contexts across Scotland. Supplementing this, we worked in an additional two places in Aberdeenshire through the kind support of Aberdeen for a Fairer world and their associated partners in the Just Transition Communities Project of the North East Scotland Climate Action Network (NESCAN).

The objective of these projects was to create children's and teenagers' maps of their local areas from their perspectives and work with them to identify local opportunities for improvement and interventions that deliver cohesive places and reduce unsustainable travel. The plans created can now be used to inform decision-making across multiple departments which influence local placemaking. They are also supporting local community decision-making in some areas. The ambition is that at least some of the opportunities for local improvement identified by the children and young people will be realised through the alignment of ongoing projects, policy programmes and opportunities for intervention. You can read more about the outputs of this project [here](#).

This guide takes you through the process, including core and supplementary activities that lead to the co-creation of a cohesive plan. It is intended for use by anyone who seeks to integrate youth voice as part of their work in placemaking/community development.

Why Focus on Place?

The experience of living and moving around a place for children and teenagers can be significantly different to that of adults, despite requiring access to similar services, facilities, and resources. Children and teenagers have fewer choices around where they can go and what they can do, and therefore rely more heavily on local environments and free/affordable services to meet their needs.

The quality of place can significantly influence their ability to meet those needs with factors such as busy roads, broken pavements, litter, and anti-social behaviour detracting from their ability to move around their places safely or comfortably and with or without adult supervision.

Trends increasingly demonstrate children and teenagers (and adults) are leading more sedentary lifestyles with rising levels of mental and physical ill health. The opportunity to improve access to pleasant and enjoyable outdoor environments and opportunities will support in reversing these trends. Furthermore, improvements to local place and environmental quality supports improved outcomes for all generations and socio-economic groups. Figure 1 overleaf shows how a focus on the independent movement (mobility) of children and young people, and the opportunities they have within an environment (affordances) impact on the extent to which a place is child and youth friendly.

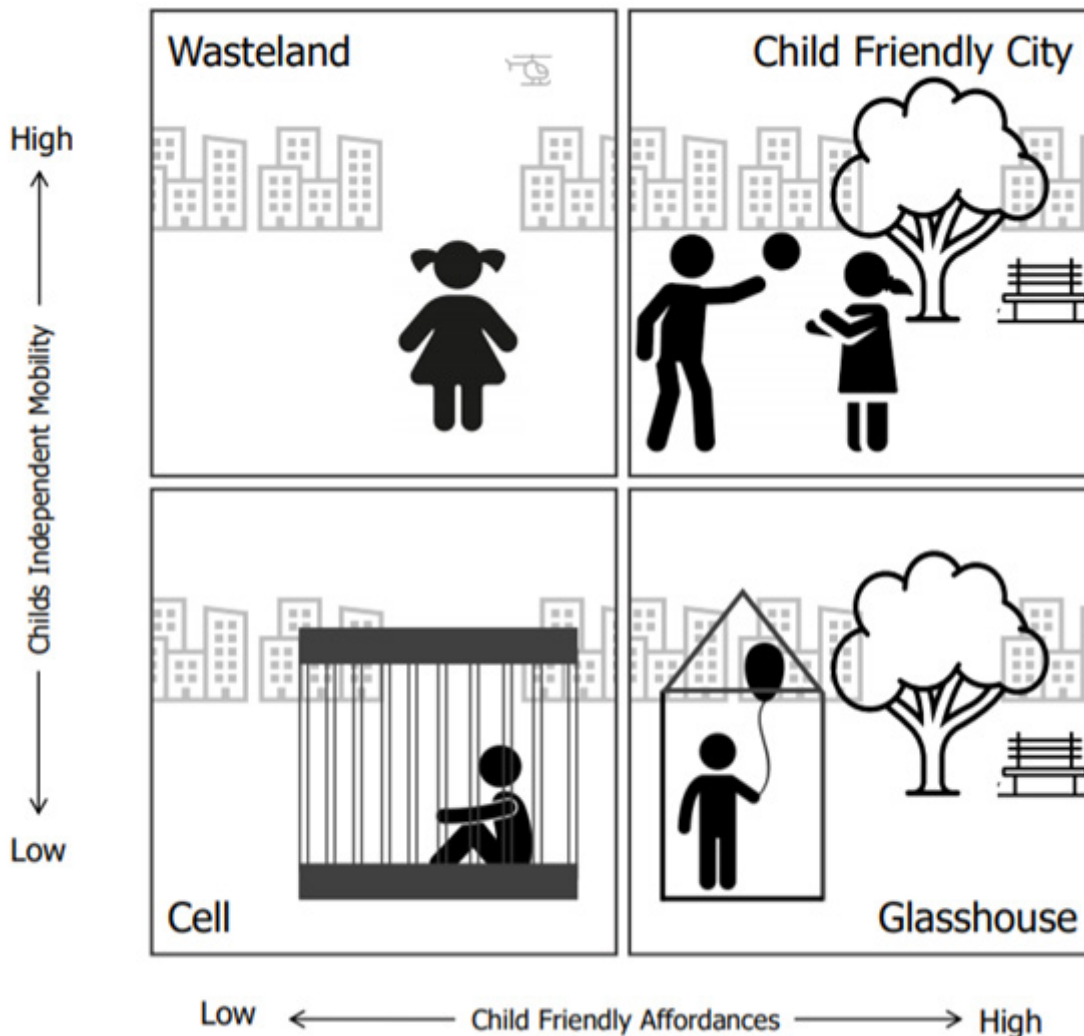


Figure 1 A matrix to show how independent mobility and child-friendly affordances can support more child-friendly environments, redrawn from [Kyttä \(2006\)](#).

Additionally, to design and deliver interventions which support local living, it is vital that “place context” is understood from all perspectives including those of children and teenagers. ‘Place context’ is the physical, social, and economic context of an area. Understanding the interrelationships between these elements is central to delivering good places and successful local living.

Why Engage with Children and Young People

A wide range of research describes the strong relationship children and young people develop with their environment. Younger children have a particularly strong affinity to nature and are very sensitive to local environmental changes. It is therefore logical to draw on the insights children and young people have, so we can understand what it is like to rely on local place (in a way that many adults do not have to). Meanwhile, teenagers often feel excluded from public space, and like their needs and ideas do not matter to other people.

If we choose not to engage children and young people in their local places, we turn a blind eye to the ways local living environments shape childhood in ways we may or may not intend, and we shut down our own access to key information on how spaces and places we live and work in could be better.

Extensive research in a wide range of disciplines shows that involving children and young people has wide ranging benefits from an individual, professional, and collective perspective. These are shown in Figure 2 overleaf. It is also vital to note that children and young people have a UN sanctioned right - Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - to be heard in the matters that affect them. They also have further rights such as:

- To freedom of expression (Article 13);
- To gather and organise their own activities (Article 15);
- To a healthy environment (Article 24); and
- To a broad education that teaches them about society and the environment around them (Article 29).

These rights were ratified by the UK government in 1991, and have recently been incorporated into Scottish law through [the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Incorporation \(Scotland\) Act 2023](#).

A right for children and young people to be engaged in the development of Local Development Plans, and also for statutory Play Sufficiency Assessments is also already part of the [Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#). Meanwhile, the introduction of Local Place Plans provides even further local-level opportunity for child and youth involvement, whereby their specific and detailed knowledge of their local environments can shine most strongly. The National Planning Framework 4, which sets the policy framework for the act, also takes a strategic focus on local-living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, as part of improving communities for more people and adapting to climate change. It has thus never been more important, and more fruitful, to engage directly with children and young people on local place projects.

For further information on how children's rights links with placemaking and specific Scottish Government Policy, The Improvement Service have published 'Children's Rights and Placemaking in Scotland How do children's rights 'fall into Place'?' [This can be viewed here](#).




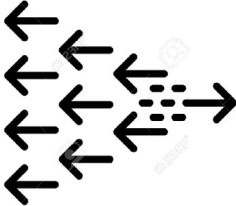



Children and Young People		Adults		Both	
<p>Significant Individual Value</p> 	<p>Having their views taken into account they can develop confidence, self-esteem, a greater appreciation of democracy, and how systems and services around them operate</p>	<p>Children and young people can bring insights to decision-making processes that an adult may never gauge alone</p> 	<p>Being smaller in stature means children can sometimes access places adults cannot, and see things that never catch the attention of adults. For example, dog poo, cigarette butts and street bins are often closer to the noses of young children, who can experience urban areas as especially smelly. They can also be very observant about the social dynamics within a space, and often have a visceral understanding of where is and is not safe.</p>	<p>Effective dialogue can benefit intergenerational relationships</p> 	<p>Which can also help tackle loneliness – something experienced most by younger and older people.</p>
<p>Learning How Change Can Happen</p>  <p>APIC A Place in Childhood</p>	<p>Being involved in decisions and local change gives children and young people valuable skills for their current and future trajectories. These include creative thinking, teamwork, and sensemaking. Many of these are skills we know we need as a society.</p>	<p>Children and young people tend to not have their own independent incomes, nor means of motorised transport</p> 	<p>This means that engaging them gives key insights into how and whether a place serves the needs of people on low incomes, and who need to travel through active and public means.</p>	<p>The creation of more child-friendly environments also confers benefits for inclusive environments</p> 	<p>Where the needs of more vulnerable populations are considered at the outset</p>
		<p>Children and young people's participation can act as a catalyst for engaging adults more constructively in the decision-making process</p> 	<p>Especially in considering more imaginative opportunities for improvement, and moving conversations beyond immediate barriers to opportunity.</p>		

Figure 2 The benefits of meaningful engagement with children and young people for them as individuals, for professionals, and for both.

Overview of the Plan Co-creation Process

The engagement we propose in this guide leads to the cocreation of a child or teenager plan of a specified local area, familiar to all participants. This incorporates all aspects of place that they think important to discuss. By establishing a broad base and container for young participants to have their say without limiting feedback, trust is built, issues are explored in depth, and there remains ripe follow-up opportunity for more specific deep-dive engagement, or cocreation of next steps.

The ideal group size for this process is 10-25 (though more can be involved through project extensions), and while the tasks may need to be facilitated slightly differently, activities have been **tried and tested to work with groups ranging from age 7 to 17** within a mainstream school context. **In small rural settings, the whole school can also be engaged through this approach, including those aged 4-6.** The activities also work well in either a standard class, or with composite groups incorporating a selection of children or young people from different year groups. With adaptation to timings, they could also work within non-formal settings such as a youth club. **We recommend that all sessions be facilitated by at least 2 people**, but also be mindful to not overcrowd the children or young people with too many adults in the room.

The Core Phase

The core process is two-phase:

- 1. Our Place Right Now:** The creation of a children or teenager's map of the local area from their perspectives (**Experiential Mapping**) and working with them to identify local opportunities for improvement (**Priorities for Action**); and
- 2. The Future of our Place:** discussion and design of an imagined more self-sufficient future for their local place (**The Island Map**). You can use this to understand additional themes and ideas participants might want to add to their final **Priorities for Action**.

Through these processes, the aim is for **high-quality discussion and trustful dialogue** around their local neighbourhood, drawing out differences in perceptions and needs as they may relate to differing identities or experiences. These tasks can be undertaken across the course of one full school day or could be split up into two half days.

Supplementary Phases

There are three additional activities that are beneficial for developing a more complete plan and incorporating a wider range of perspectives and next steps. These are:

- **Developing our Local Projects:** drawing on the participants' Priorities for Action, children or young people select their area of greatest interest and then spend some time working in groups or by themselves to design a project proposal. This helps establish what their highest priorities are, and gives them an opportunity to express their desires and ideas creatively to share with wider stakeholders.
- **Consulting on our Plan:** asking other local children and young people what they think of the plan created by the original participants (The Project Steering Group). Depending on what is workable within the school or community context, participants can share their ideas through either:
 - a simple survey that looks to understand level of, and build consensus, for the plan; or
 - by sharing the plan through assemblies or individual class discussions, to see if other pupils object to anything in the plan or would like to add to it.

- **Showcasing Our Plan:** sharing the plan with any other groups of children and young people from the same area who have taken part in the process, and with members of the community, council, or other stakeholders who may be able to support proposed plan actions to take place. From here, commitments to change, existing alignments with work underway, and potential next steps can be drawn up to create a solid legacy for the plan. Communication to the children and young people on what happens next should form part of this.

These Phases and how they link are illustrated in Figure 3 below.

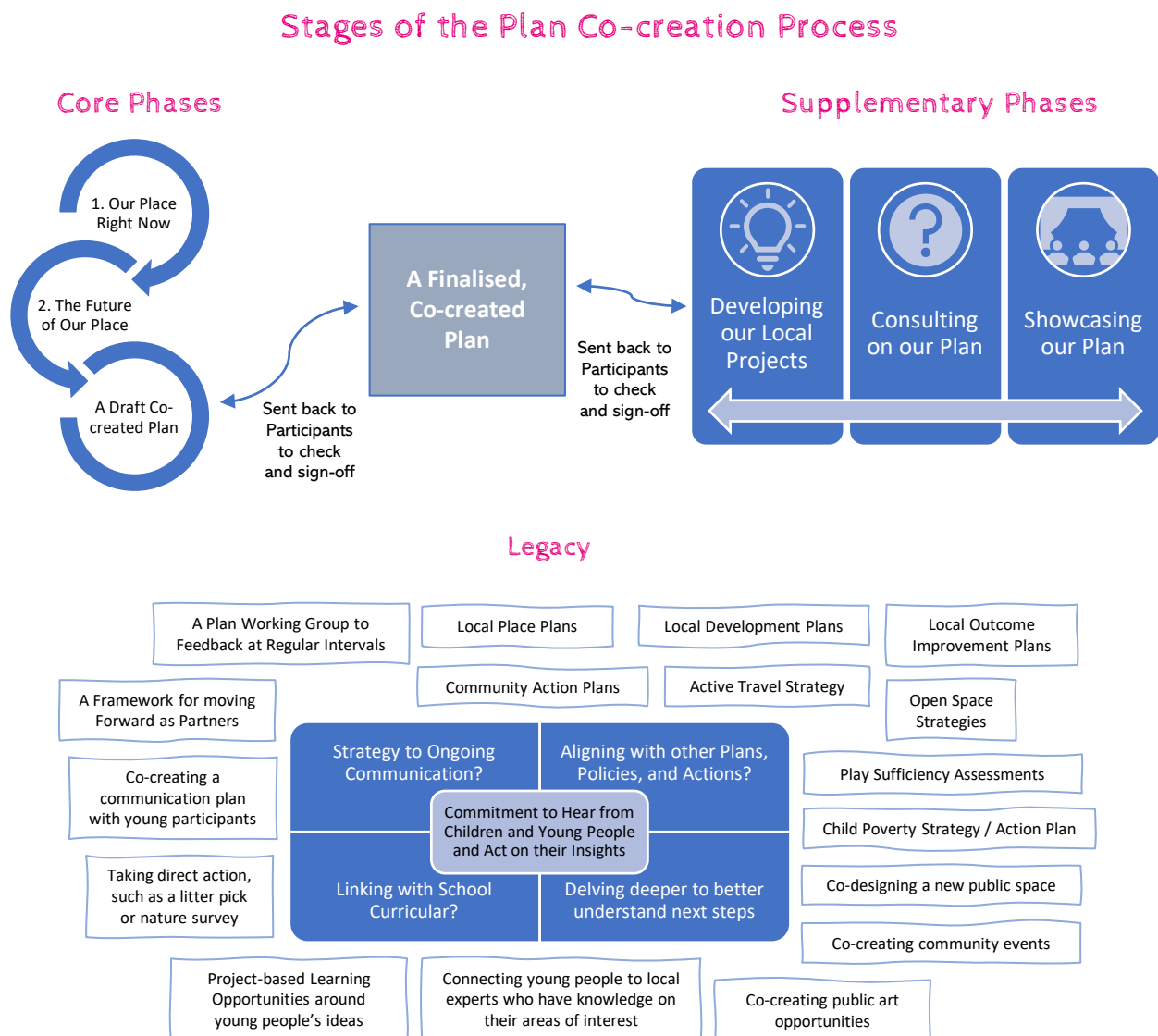
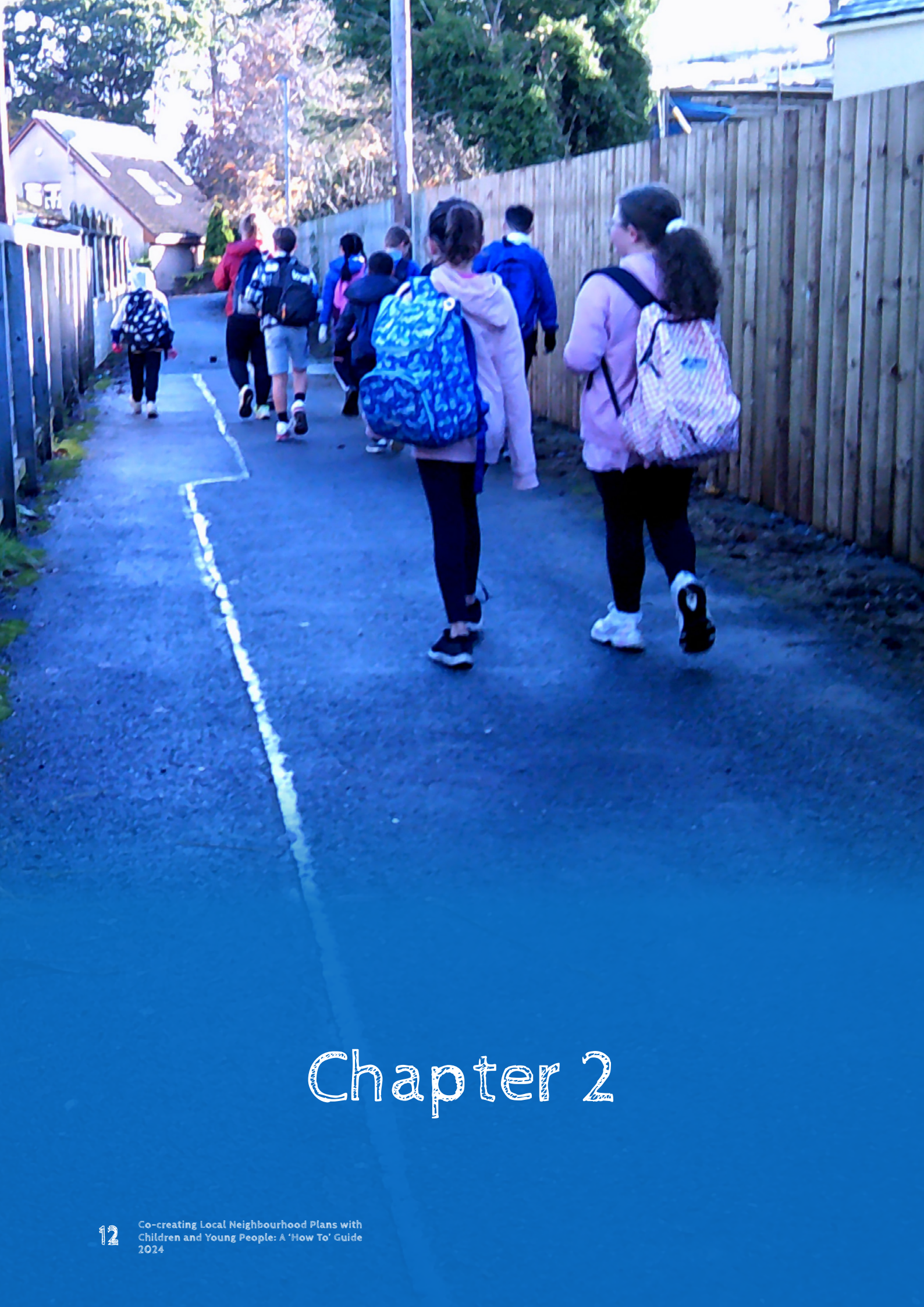


Figure 3 Stages of the Plan Co-creation Process.

The 'How To' Guide Structure

The next sections of this guide goes through each of these steps in more detail. You may also find it helpful to look at the case studies for each activity in chapter 6, to illustrate how these steps can work in practise.



Chapter 2

Our Place Right Now: Experiential Mapping

Part One: Planning The Local Tour

This activity is the core of the engagement and sets the scene for all other tasks. There is a fair bit of prior preparation you'll need to do before you get started on the below process, and the Key Considerations after this section give you some tips on what to do for the walking tour. It's also important to reflect on your own attitude and biases towards any place you might be visiting, and any group you might be working with before showing up on the day.

For example, it can be hard to do, but it's important to set your own views and ideas aside so that you can soak up the views of the children and young people you work with. **A good rule of thumb is to think of yourself as a Curious Fool**, that has no idea what to think without the young participants helping you. This puts them in control of the narrative, with your role simply to hear, record, and reflect back their thoughts on their place. For more support on this, see the 'Tips for Meaningful Engagement with Children and Young People' section in Chapter 7.

Summary of Approach:

1. Introduce the project
2. Design the walking route
3. Get out on the tour and get to know their place
4. Reflect on the tour.
5. Develop draft Priorities for Action together

The How

Introduce the Project (10-15 mins)

In the first part of the session, start by introducing participants to yourselves and the project intention in as a brief a way as possible. This enables everyone to hit the ground running and supports their understanding of your intention to deepen across the time you spend together. **Giving too much context at the start can be confusing and off-putting**, as it will likely feel quite abstract to children and young people. They will likely have questions across the course of the day, and you can build their understanding through lived experience of the plan-making process.

At this stage, it's also helpful to ask pupils if they know about children's rights and invite them to tell you what they know already. If they don't bring it up themselves, then **letting them know about their right to play, rest, and leisure, and their right to take part in decisions that affect them is helpful for setting the scene**. Use this to ask the children or young people to always correct you if you reflect something back about their experience that isn't true to what they're trying to say. It also shows that you're interested in understanding how they have fun in their place, as they may expect that you're interested more in their education (because you're at a school!).

Design the Walking Route (15-30 mins)

Invite the children or young people to help you design and take you on a tour of their local area, showing the places that are good/important and any areas where improvements are needed. **Ask them to imagine that you are a new pupil about to join them**, who needs to know where they should go to have fun and get what they need.

To do this, bring up a large A0 map of the local area, and some flipchart paper to list and collectively mark on the map, the places that are important to them. With teenagers, you can instead give everyone some small post-it notes and ask them to write these places down and stick them up on the map.

When everyone feels that all the most important places are on the map, it's helpful to bring up a couple of volunteers to help you design a route to go on. A teacher may also be able to support in this, especially with younger children, and help determine how far it might be possible to go in the time you have. Depending on need of the children and the school, you may be able to select a park or playground to visit at break time rather than return to the school.

Those that helped design the route can also be given a small map of the place with the route on and tasked to keep everyone on track during the walk. You may also want to task them with finding the quickest route back to the school if the weather makes it impossible to stay out as long as hoped. **Make sure you also have a copy of the route**, in case you need to support in directing the tour! Figure 4 shows an example of a route map in development at Banff Academy.



Figure 4 A walking tour created collaboratively with the pupils of Banff Academy.

If you have them, at this stage, you can show participants any cameras you have with you and how they work. You can then support them to get into groups to share camera responsibility on the tour. It's ideal if the participants can take photos of the important places themselves, while facilitators take notes of conversations about the important places. However, it's also fine if you don't have cameras available to take photos on a phone and ask participants to help you understand what to photograph.

Get out on the tour and get to know their place (60-120mins)

When you get out on the tour, start speaking with participants 1:1 or in groups as you go. It helps to **get to know them a bit**, and asking about where they stay and what it's like is a good first step if there isn't an important place to immediately ask them about. In general, guiding questions are:

- What is already good here?
- What could be better here?
- If you could wave a magic wand and have one wish, what would you improve about this/your place overall?

It may also be helpful for you to specialise between facilitators in seeking certain types of information or experiences. For example, one facilitator may focus on what the experience of a specific gender is. If you have a specific remit or expertise on a project team, you may also want to focus on that. For example, one facilitator could be looking at the bigger picture of the place because they are a planner, while another may want to focus on the aesthetics and design improvements because they are part of the landscape architecture team.

As you go, **take as many mental or written notes as possible, so that you can reflect on the route when you return to the classroom.** This isn't always easy (especially in rain!), so just do your best. You can also be sure that the young participants will help you out and let you know if you've missed something later.

Key Considerations when organising the walking tour

- **Be aware of the weather** – the tours can be conducted in all but the worst of weathers, however if the tours are being conducted in winter, prepare for having to conduct a virtual tour as an alternative (See Port Elphinstone Case study in Chapter 6).
- **Research the neighbourhood to understand the terrain likely to be encountered and prepare accordingly** with appropriate footwear/coats/jackets.
- **Communicate with teachers and classroom assistants on the proposed plan for the walking tour** and have a clear understanding of responsibilities for the day including:
 - whether/which teachers or assistants will be accompanying the tour;
 - ensuring the participating children and teenagers are adequately prepared for the day (wearing the right shoes/coats etc for a tour);
 - understand who is a first aider; and
 - any necessary risk assessments to be completed.
- **Take good notes when out on the tour** – this really helps you remember what you saw together, and the young participant's views and any ideas they shared. To the extent you can, try to remember who said what and remember names, but use your judgement as to whether to say who said what out loud to the group later. It may be that someone told you something sensitive that they might not want attributed to them!

Part Two: Co-creating the Experiential Map

Reflect on the Tour (40 – 80 mins)

Once you've returned to the classroom, **you may need to take a few minutes of rest time**. A short activity to do while everyone gathers their thoughts and settles is often a good idea. Therefore, **hand everyone a post-it note and ask them to write or draw the most important thing they saw on the route that they either did, or would have, taken a photo of**. When they've done that, you can ask them to stick it up on the map so that you know the photos you need to include in the final write-up. At this point in time, it may be lunchtime, in which case there's no point in starting something new. If there is time, however, you can begin reflecting on the tour. **It's helpful for one facilitator to take the lead on this**, but with any others in the room supporting when there is additional information they gathered on the participant's perceptions along the route.

Talk through the tour in order of the places you saw and the information you gathered. **At each stage, check back in with participants around whether there's anything you missed or misunderstood**. The supporting facilitator can take notes on post-its of everything said and put these up on the map as a live recollection of what you discussed. This makes it much easier to write-up afterwards! Once you've been through all the places you saw, you may want to ask the participants if there are other important places you didn't see that are important to discuss. If there are, talk about these until you've built up a picture of how and why its important and any improvements they would like to see. At the end of this discussion, the draft of the map is complete.

At this stage, you might wish to open a discussion about other nearby places that are important. These could be used to look at the place in its wider context and will enable young participants from outwith the core place you're focusing on to share their experiences of their neighbourhood.

Develop draft Priorities for Action together (10-30 mins)

By the time you've all talked through the tour, **there will be some clear areas for improvement identified by participants**. These will form the basis of initial priorities for action. If you have time over a lunchtime or break, you can write up a draft of what these might be for primary age pupils. Then, read these back out to them one at a time and check if they think they are:

- A) A priority for action
- B) If anything is misunderstood or missing in what you've written.

You may also seek to do this with secondary age participants if time is tight, but if there is sufficient space in the schedule, it's great to ask them to work in groups of their choosing to propose their own priorities for action. This takes around 10-15 minutes, and then one facilitator can organise feedback from each group to one another, while the other writes up the full list of draft priorities for action.

At this stage, you have completed the core part of the work. **If you need to end here, then you will have a solid plan for what is top of mind for local children and young people to improve**. Everything from here on out is about refining and improving the plan to make it as thorough as possible.

Key Considerations when Reflecting on the Tour

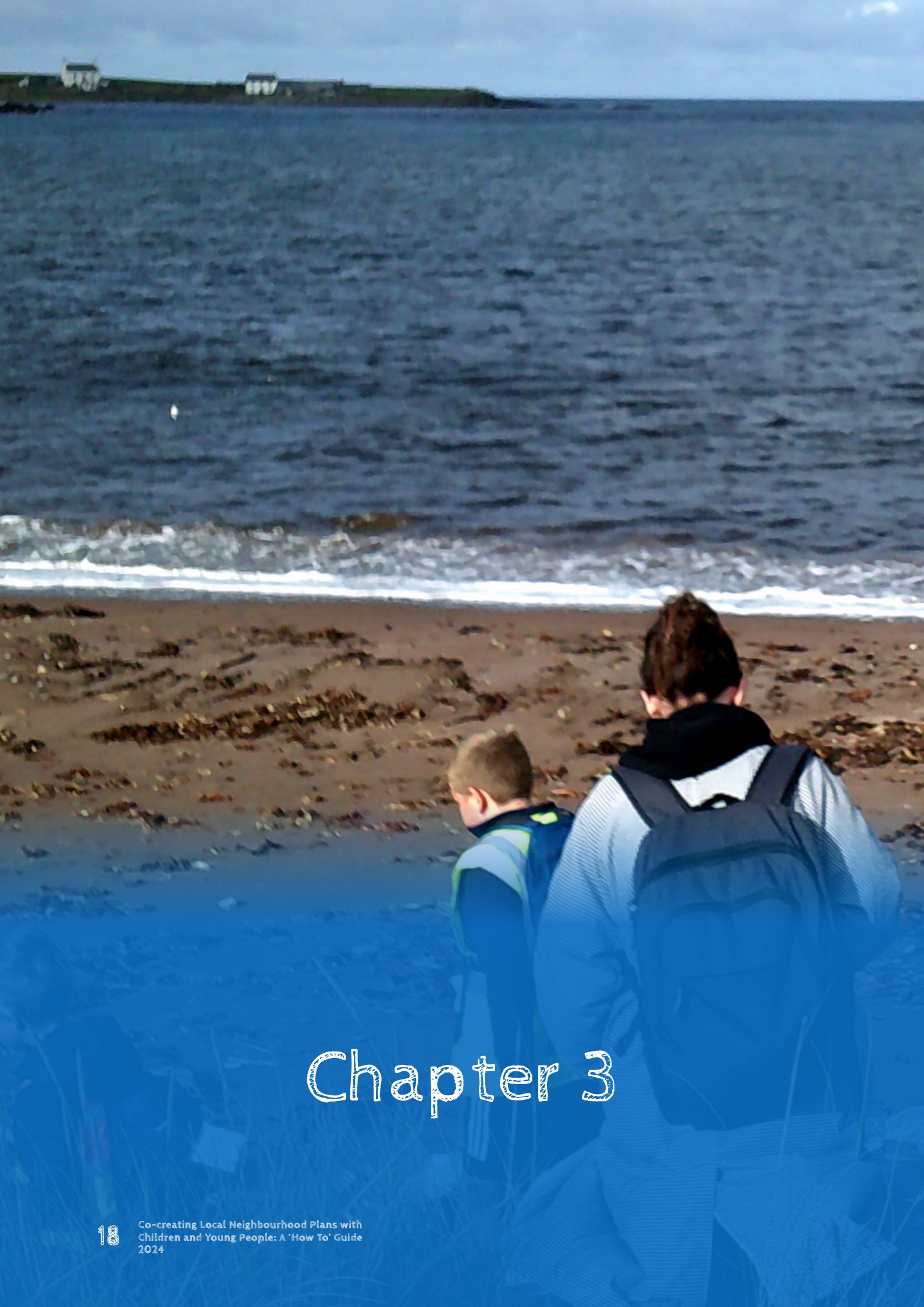
- **Make sure to take good notes of your tour reflection** – it's very helpful for your write-up to have a second facilitator taking notes of what you and participants say on the tour reflection. You can also do this on post-its and stick them on the map. This really shows how you're pulling the map together collectively as you go.
- **Don't think about it too much before you start** – this can be the most intense part of the process, because there's a lot to hold in mind at once. However, it's best to just trust you can do it and start. Know that if you forget anything, the children or young people will help you if you ask them too. It will also reinforce that they are the experts in their place!
- **Always check-in on whether your interpretation is correct** – when you make a point, ask the group if you got it right. Once you think you've finished talking through an aspect, also ask if there's anything they think you've missed.
- **Involve classroom assistants or teachers if it might help** – other people with you on the walk may have insights to share that they gathered in separate conversations. You might want to ask them to chip-in if they think you miss anything too but remember that this should be in relation to the children's experiences and not their own opinions or to ask leading questions.

Why are these steps important?

These activities are a **critical step in creating a high-quality discussion and trustful dialogue between participants and stakeholders**. It both shows the children and teenagers that you've really been listening and enables the collective building of a shared and nuanced view of their place from their perspective.

Through walking side by side, many of the social barriers which come from typical consultation and engagement are broken down, you can build trust that you're there to listen and hold space for the participant's views.

Most groups really enjoy going back through the tour, and often it's at this stage that a lot more background and detail comes to the fore. It's a very helpful pre-cursor to creating shared Priorities for Action, which you can draft together as one full group or in smaller groups before sharing and reflecting further.



Chapter 3

The Future of Our Place: The Island Task and Finalising a Plan

Part One: The Island Task

This task helps participants to broaden their ideas by considering what we would need if the area they lived in was suddenly cut off from all its surroundings; creating an island. The geographic extent of the island will be determined by the remit of your project. For instance, it could be one neighbourhood, or a whole town or city. It helps participants to focus on the future and play with the idea of improved self-sufficiency and resilience.

Summary of Approach:

1. Introduce the Island Task
2. Creating our Island
3. Sharing our Islands
4. Finalising our Plan
5. Celebrating our achievements!

The How

Introduce the Island Task (10 minutes)

Ask participants if they're quite good at using their imaginations, and they will usually say yes! Use this as a prompt to **bring in a thought experiment, whereby you tell them their local place is now suddenly an island surrounded by water**. If there is a river or sea nearby, you might use this to help explain the situation and add a storyline for added fun. **Because of this, we now need to design our island to make sure everyone on it can both survive and thrive**. They have the option to do this by themselves or in groups, and to write bullet points, draw, or do a combination of both. Some groups, especially in primary school, like to draw this as an actual map and think about the different locations for buildings and activities.

Creating our Island (20 – 40 minutes)

Typically, older groups will do this quickly and younger groups will want to spend more time putting thought and detail into their new island plan. Encourage them to think about what you've already talked about their place as having, and therefore what might need to be added to make it the best possible island.

Sharing our Islands (10 – 20 minutes)

Once participants either feel content that they've finished and ready to share, or you've reached the maximum time you can spend on this, **one facilitator can organise feedback from each group to the class, while the other writes down on flipchart paper the key themes emerging from the children's island plans**. Writing this in themes rather than a full list will significantly aid the next part of the task.

For example, you might write SHOPS, and CAFES/RESTAURANTS, and then in smaller writing list the types they mention. Otherwise, you could accidentally spend a long time in the next section debating the merits of individual shop chains or fast-food restaurants (rather than the principle of the land use or activity they would like to see).

Part Two: Drawing The Plan Together

Finalising our Plan (20 - 90 minutes)

Firstly, make it clear to the participants that **we are no longer on their island and have returned to their place as it is**. However, some of our ideas from the island might be helpful things to add to our plan and make it complete.

Taking the list of places and things the participants' island needs, **it's now time to debate whether any of their ideas should be included in their priorities for action, and how**. For each theme on the list, in turn, invite pupils to put their hand up if they think there is a priority for action to add based on this idea. If there are hands up, ask everyone to lower them and then put their hand up if they would object to including a priority on the list based on that theme. If there are people that both want and do not want a priority added on the theme, then facilitate discussions based on this by **asking participants that want it to be included to explain why and how**. There may be a clear synthesis to propose a new priority based on this. You can also ask objectors why they would object. This may either help form a priority everyone can agree with including, or show up a reason that makes it clear it wouldn't be a good idea.

Complete this process with every theme, including those that may be more fun than substantive as sometimes they are surprising in what they bring up (while in other cases they add a bit of play to the activity). For example, discussion of a building a zoo in a village may lead to discussions around improving local biodiversity when the children lay out why it's important to them. If participants start to tire, you may be able to do several at once if you can see an underlying theme from them or prioritise discussing those you feel most likely to lead to key insights.

Once this debate and discussion is complete, you have a very thorough and complete list of Priorities for Action. **It's helpful at this point to remind and thank participants for the incredible amount of work they've done in such a short time. They will also be quite tired, and deserve a round of applause, praise, and celebration**. End by letting everyone know you will go away and write this up, and make sure they get to see the draft and have final signoff on the outputs.

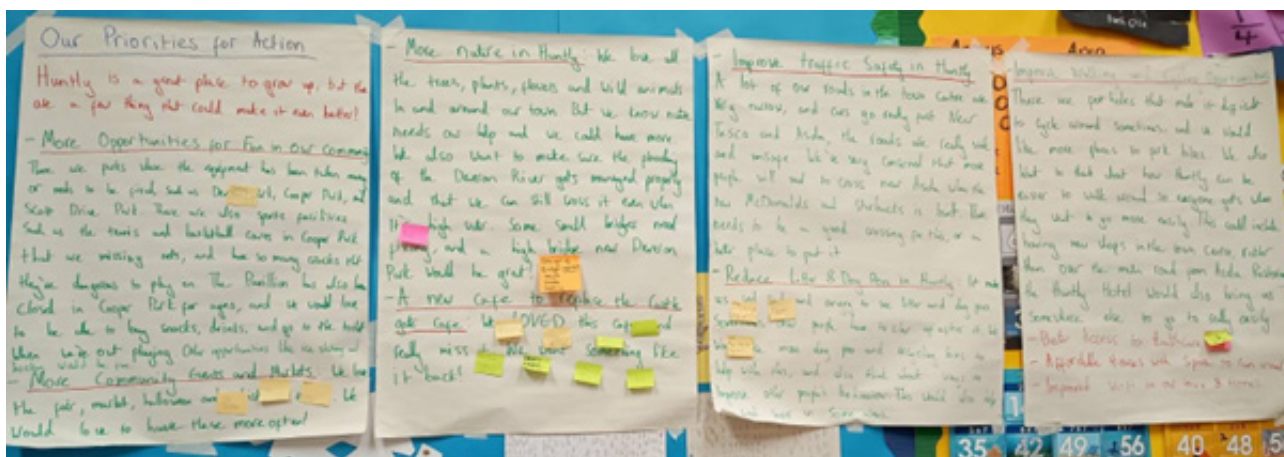


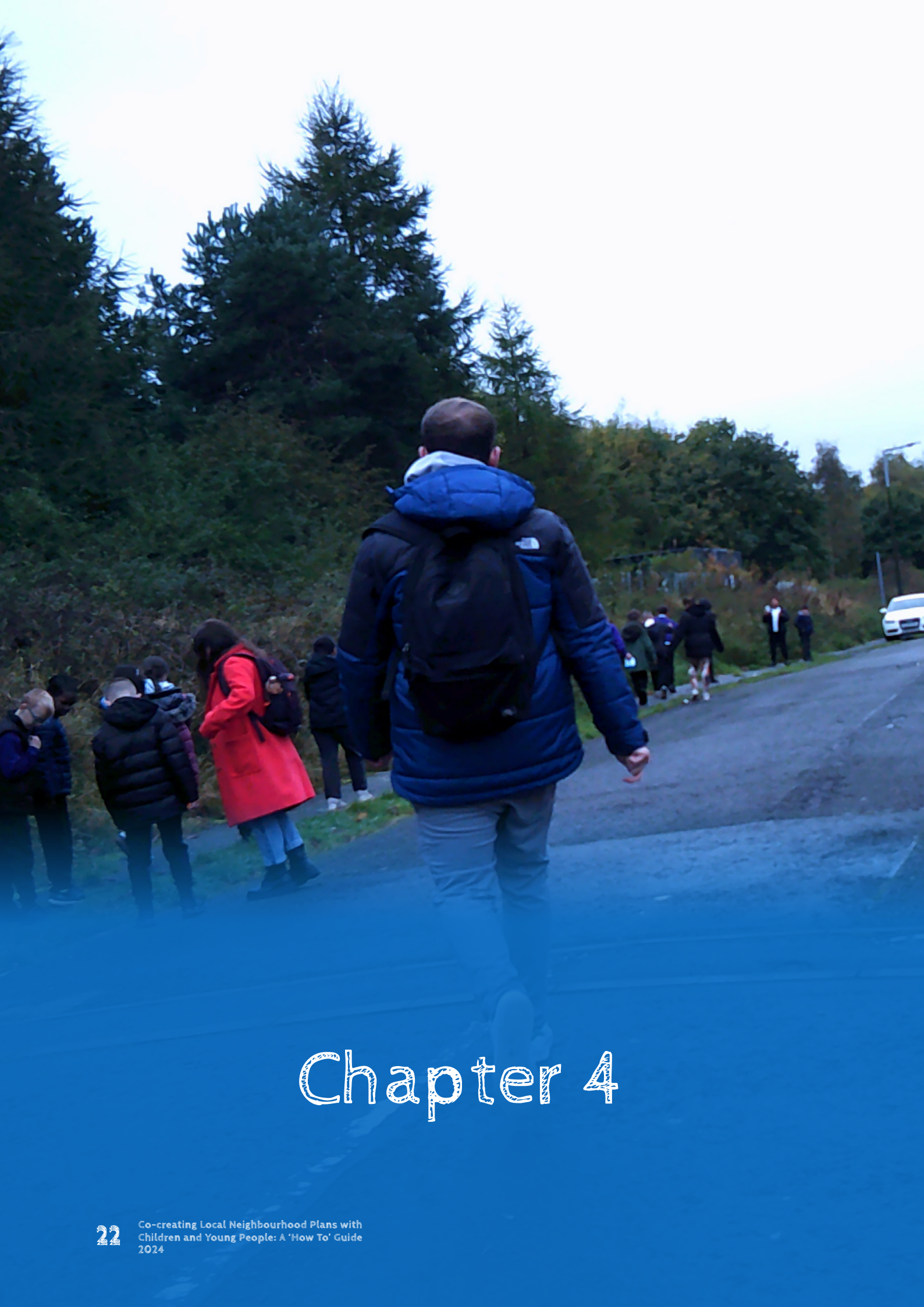
Figure 5 Priorities for Action Emerging for Gordon Primary School after the Experiential Mapping and Island Task

Key Considerations on the Island Map and Drawing the Plan Together

- **Keep the themes you debate broad at first** – this really helps understand level of agreement in principle. If you have time, you can then get into the detail of what the participants would like to see happen.
- **Be very clear when asking questions** – for example, when asking for a raise of hands on a topic, be clear when you're asking for hands up for or against the issue.
- **Allow children to go off on tangents** – the stories they have to tell are often where the true insights lie. Children, especially, also really enjoy telling their stories. Depending on time, you may not be able to hear every story they would like to tell but try to steer young participants gently towards the point rather than shutting them down.
- **Ask from a range of people** – some children and young people will always want to say something but try not to let a small number dominate the debate. If there are people who haven't previously had their hands up on other points, but do now, go to them first before returning to others who have already spoken.
- **Include all views you've heard** – not all children and young people will feel confident to put their hands up and make a point, but you may have heard something earlier from someone that you think is relevant to raise in the debate. Bring this up if you can to support the debate, and you may find that the person who said it now feels confident to say something as they see value in their point. And if they don't, you've still taken steps to make them feel seen, and get their views included.

Why is this important?

This activity is a critical step in creating a high-quality discussion and trustful dialogue between participants and stakeholders. **This is often when the bigger picture themes surface** such as renewable energy, housing quality and affordability, and local food access and production. It enables you to bring more sustainable living into the fore without leading participants down a specific initial path. While it doesn't work for everyone, many children and young people really enjoy the creative intent of this task and thrive on collective deliberation.



Chapter 4

Writing up a Draft Plan

The draft plan from the process above will consist of two outputs:

1. The Experiential Map
2. A set of Priorities for Action.

Online whiteboard platforms, such as Mural, are most helpful in creating the Experiential Map. However, an application such as PowerPoint could also be used by arranging the map and different coloured text boxes. **Figure 5, overleaf, is an example of an Experiential Map created on Mural. Making these large format and high resolution means you can show lots of detail and get A0 copies of the map printed to share with participants.** This is also useful for further showcase or dissemination opportunities in the community.

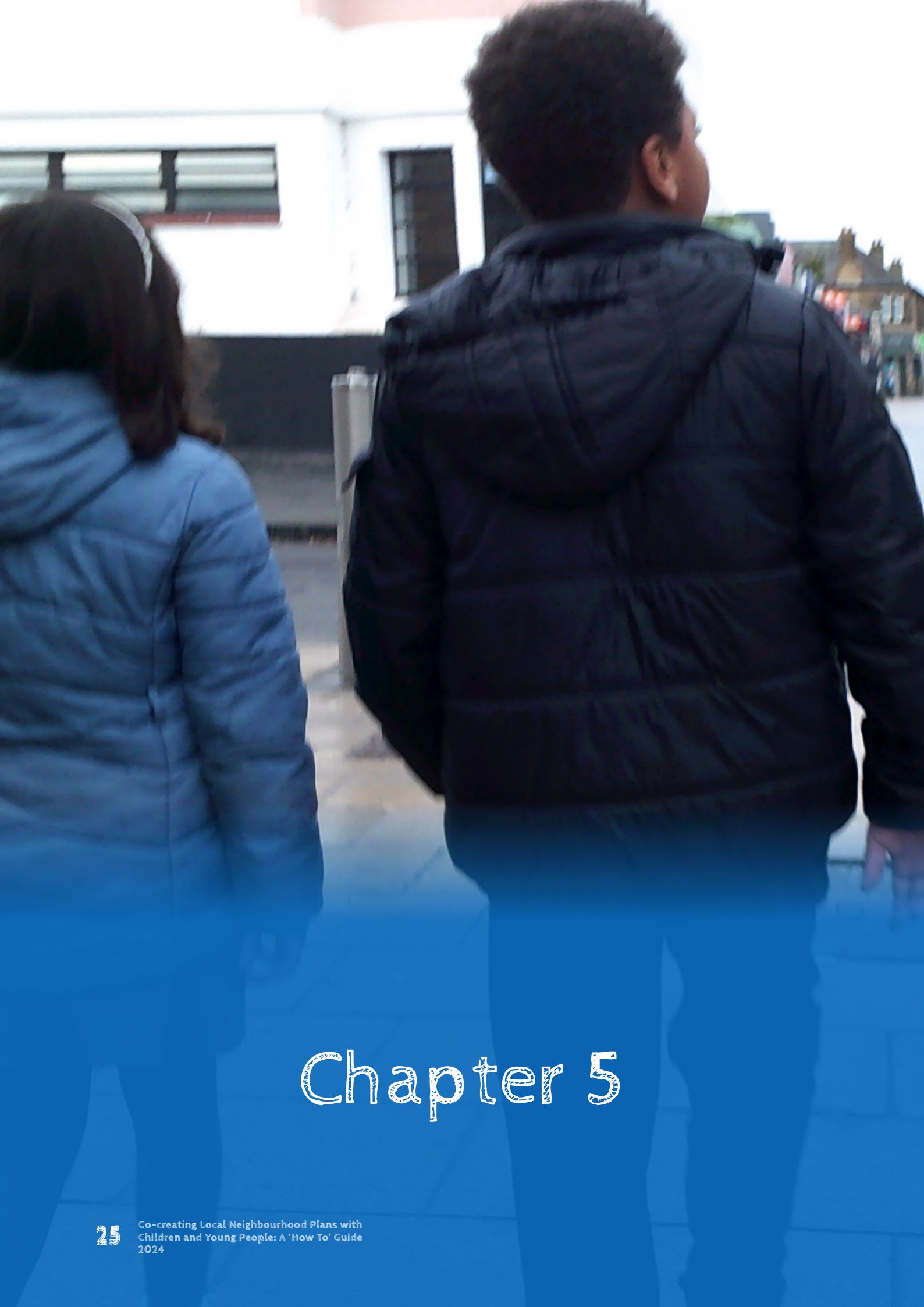
The priorities for action can also be written up on the same application, or simply in a Microsoft Word Document. Before finalising these, **it's best practice to check back with young participants that there's nothing missed or misunderstood.** This could be facilitated through a further visit, or by asking the class teacher if they will show and check the output with the participating groups.

If you engage in supplementary phases, such as Developing our Local Projects, you can similarly write-up the findings in a poster format. For an examples, see Huntly in Chapter 6.

Sandness Primary School's Local Living Plan: What we think of the local area



Figure 6 An Experiential Map Example, from Sandness Primary in Shetland.



Chapter 5

Supplementary Phases

Consulting on our Plan

In this supplementary activity, pupils ask other local children and young people what they think of the plan they've created.

Summary of Approach

Depending on what is feasible within the school or community context, participants can share their ideas through either:

- a simple survey that seeks to understand level of, and build consensus, for the plan; or
- by sharing the plan through assemblies or individual class discussions, to see if other pupils object to anything in the plan or would like to add to it.

The How

Below we outline two examples of how children and young people consulted on their plans in a primary and a secondary school setting. These were from both the Children and Teenager's Neighbourhood Project, and an Aberdeenshire extension supported by Aberdeen for a Fairer World to create a Just Transition Plan.

Craigmillar, Edinburgh - Niddrie Mill Primary School

- We worked with a P4 class at Niddrie Mill Primary, in September 2023.
- The children co-created a fantastic and very thoughtful plan for their local place and were keen to make Craigmillar a better place for everyone.
- The children therefore presented their draft plan to the whole school at an assembly. After this, two of the pupils went round every class to gather their further thoughts on the plan. Overall, there was very strong agreement that the class had made a really thorough plan.
- As a result of the consultation, P4 then put their draft Priorities for Action into an order that reflected the level of importance across the whole school. This means that while only one class led the project, around 250 pupils had the chance to contribute.
- This work was supported within the school by enthusiastic staff, who then communicated the process and findings back to us at APiC.

Inverurie & Port Elphinstone - Inverurie Academy

- We worked with a composite group from S1-6 in November 2023. With support of the headteacher, the group had been put together by the Senior House Captains.
- The group pulled together a very thorough plan, alongside a set of Local Projects (see further supplementary stages). At APiC, we then pulled this together in a very simple [survey](#) with one question under each the experiential map and priorities, and their project poster. The question was:

Is there anything you strongly don't agree with us including, or something very important that we've missed? If so, please tell us what it is and why it is important to take it out or to add it.

- No, I agree with what's included and have nothing to add.

- Yes, there is something I feel strongly needs to be removed from our plan

- Yes, there is something I feel strongly needs to be added in

If there's anything you wanted to add or remove, please let us know what it is below:

- The steering group of participants then coordinated to go to every year group assembly and present their plan. They then gave the QR code for the survey so that everyone that wanted could give their thoughts using their phone. Overall, the survey received 453 responses, with a very high level of consensus on what was already in the plan.
- In addition, members of the steering group went to visit and have 1:1 conversations with older pupils and teachers at their neighbouring special needs school (St Andrews). This had a significant impact on their understanding of their place from the perspective of young people who need more support to undertake activities independently.
- The group were very well prepared and confident to then speak on behalf of their full peer group at the Showcase Event (see later Supplementary Phases).

Key Considerations for Consulting on our Plan

- **Be aware of school pressures** – this step may not be possible due to resource constraints, and so it's good to keep it as easy as possible for staff and pupils to coordinate.
- **Seek to build consensus** – the design of the question to other young people is important. It helps to focus on consensus building, rather than seeking views and agreement on every single point. The question used on the Inverurie Academy survey is an example of how this can be done in a youth-friendly format. It invites expression of strong feelings that will add to a plan, rather than statement of general preferences which are hard to interpret.
- **Primary and Secondary schools may need different approaches** – the two examples above show that surveys can work better in a secondary school context, while sharing in assembly and then gathering views in class can often work better in primary school. It's good to ask the teachers and pupils about what they think might work best in their context.

Why is this important?

This activity both establishes the strength and quality of the plan produced and supports children and young people to understand the consultation process. It means that more children and young people are heard as part of activities and have a sense of what is happening in their community, as well as communicate any further interest they may have to take part further. Children and young people who may go on later to a Showcase event or other sharing opportunity also gain perspective and confidence to speak on behalf of their peers.

Developing our Local Projects

Drawing on the participants' Priorities for Action, children or young people select their area of greatest interest and then spend some time working in groups or by themselves to design a project proposal. This helps establish what the highest priorities for consideration are for them and gives them an opportunity to express their desires and ideas creatively to share this with wider stakeholders.

Summary of approach

- Display and remind pupils of their Priorities for Action
- Organise project groups and cocreate plans
- Share and finalised project ideas

The How

Display and remind pupils of their Priorities for Action (10 -20 minutes)

It's likely that this activity will take place on a different day to the first parts of the work, and so it's useful to begin the day with a reminder of the work you've already all completed together. **Show the already developed Priorities for Action and remind them of all the fantastic ideas they had for improving their community.**

From here, invite them all to think about which of these motivates them most and hand out 1-3 post-it notes to each person. Ask them to write their name on the post-it note, and then when they've made a decision they can **come up and place their name on the one they would like to think about further** in this session. Some participants may struggle to choose and so will vote for more than one at first.

Organise project groups and cocreate plans (30-50 minutes)

Once all votes have been cast, use this to **sort participants into groups around shared interest**. It's completely fine for pupils to work by themselves, or for there to be more than one group that looks at the same project. Once in groups, hand them some large paper and ask them to answer the following questions:

- What would you like to happen?
- Where/How could it happen?
- Why is it important to you?

They can do this by writing, drawing, or a combination of the two. Primary age pupils might like to think of this as making posters.

Share and finalise project ideas (10-20 minutes)

Once participants have either completed this to their own satisfaction, or you've run out of time, facilitate sharing between them of their project ideas. At the end of this, **it is likely you'll have 3-5 ideas worked up that give further insight on key priorities and next steps**. Thank your project participants, celebrate their achievements, and let them know about how you will use this information and share it back with them.

Key Considerations for Developing our Local Projects

- **Be flexible** – some young participants will thrive in groups, whilst others really want to work up ideas by themselves. The group sharing element means that everyone can still contribute to everyone else's ideas.
- **Steer young participants to be as specific as possible** – having a map handy can be helpful so that they can show you and others exactly where they think a project could happen.
- **Steer young participants towards realistic projects, but don't shut down creativity** – the more feasible a project is, the more likely it is to happen, and you can tell children and young people that. However, the creative process is also where some of the best ideas come from, so let ideas arise and see if you can support them to think them through to realistic steps.

Why is this important?

This activity surfaces the most important things to the children and young people and supports them to propose something that might be taken forward alongside other stakeholders. It shows how good children and young people often are at thinking through solutions and means there is something tangible to show what next steps might make the biggest difference to their feelings of community belonging.

Showcasing Our Plan

Sharing the plan with any **other groups of children and young people** from the same area who have taken part in the process, and **with members of the community, council, or other stakeholders** who may be able to support proposed plan actions to take place. At APiC, we tend to work with a secondary school, and then 1-2 primary schools in the same area. All can then be invited to a Showcase Event at the same place.

Summary of Approach

- Set your Timings
- Book a suitable venue
- Invite representatives from each school

- Invite relevant adult stakeholders to hear from the children
- Support Children and young people to share their ideas with each other
- Support children and young people to share their ideas with adult stakeholders
- Reflect on the process and outcomes
- Determine next steps for the plans!

The How

Part one: Planning

Set your Timings

Below are suggested timings for each a morning and an afternoon setup:

Morning Workshop:

- 9:45- 10am – Pupil arrival
- 10-10:45 – Pupil preparation and sharing
- 10:45-11am – Pupil break, with adults arriving and looking at posters and priorities.
- 11am – Pupils back at their ‘Young Consultant’ posts, ready to share their ideas, adult stakeholders briefed formally on proceedings.
- 11am – 12pm – World Café Event, with 15 minutes at each table (including the reflection table).
- 12pm – 12:15 – Shared Reflections, Thanks, and Close
- 12:15 onwards, opportunity for continued networking and reflections, as well as packing up.
-

Afternoon Workshop

- 12:45 – 1pm – Pupil arrival
- 1-1:45pm – Pupil preparation and sharing
- 1:45-2pm – Pupil break, with adults arriving and looking at posters and priorities.
- 2pm– Pupils back at their ‘Young Consultant’ posts, ready to share their ideas, adult stakeholders briefed formally on proceedings.
- 2 – 2:45pm – World Café Event, with 15 minutes at each table (including the reflection table).
- 2:45 – 3pm Shared Reflections, Thanks, and Close
- 3pm onwards, opportunity for continued networking, reflections, and packing up.

Book a Suitable Venue

Find a venue that’s convenient for the schools you’ve worked with to get to, and make sure it has plenty of space for the number of overall participants you expect on the day. **It’s important to remember that many primary age children struggle to speak loudly, and so there is a chance that their voices will be drowned out in a small room with lots of people.** You may

even want to have an additional smaller room or two so that discussions can be heard more easily.

To the extent feasible, **it's great to pick a place that came up on one of the child or youth led tours as a place the young participants enjoy visiting.** In some situations, one of the schools you've worked with may also be able to host, though many schools really struggle with freeing up space so it's best to assume this isn't possible until you've asked.

Invite Representatives from each school

During your sessions, **it probably became apparent which children or young people were especially enjoying the activity.** It may also have become clear that some were very good at **thinking about the needs of everyone in and beyond the group,** though they may not be the participants that were loudest in class discussions. Participants fitting into these two categories are ideal to invite along to represent their class. Any school staff involved in the project will have noticed this too, and you can discuss with them **around 5 participants that would be ideal.** For secondary age groups, it's possible to have slightly more participants, but never more than 8.

It may be helpful to offer transport support to schools, depending on distance they may need to travel and staff availability.

Invite Relevant Adult Stakeholders

As a rule of thumb, you want **as diverse an array of adult participants possible that have the ability, interest, and influence to take forward priority actions that participants have outlined.** At the same time, **you don't want adults to outnumber the children and young people** as this will be intimidating for young participants (who will likely already be nervous). For this reason, when targeting council stakeholders, it's helpful to aim for directors and managers of services. This enables direct conversations between children and adults with strategic influence and keeps numbers manageable.

There will also likely be multiple community and third sector groups with important input to give, and this diversity will work well for ensuring the wide range of participants interests, concerns, and ideas can be heard and (ideally) actioned.

At the end of this guide, there is an example email that could be adapted to organise invitations.

Part Two: The Event

Support Children and young people to share their ideas with each other (45 mins)

Initially, support pupils to share their plans with each other without adults present. This is both **a warmup for when the adults arrive that enables everyone to get settled, and a way for them to see what they have in common** and potentially link their actions and ideas together. This is often a very fruitful conversation that **builds confidence and a sense of shared pride.** Particularly helpful is the input of secondary age pupils on the plans of primary aged pupils, who often respond very well to positive feedback from older young people. It can be helpful to remind older pupils of this, and they tend also to respond very well to the prompt. Figure 7 overleaf shows a photo from the Banff & Macduff Showcase event, during the warming up part of the morning.

Give the young people a break at this point, while you setup for adults arriving.



Figure 7 Warm up session with primary children from Banff and Macduff.

Support children and young people to share their ideas with adult stakeholders (45 -60 minutes)

Once the adults arrive, **introduce the session format to everyone, and then get adult participants to take part in a world café event**, visiting each table in turn along with an 'overall reflections' table. It's immensely **helpful for each table to be facilitated by someone that has already worked with the pupils** and can support them to feel heard.

It works well to let adults know that the event is about the children sharing their views, and all discussions will be started by them about what they most want to share. **At each table, a facilitator can get the young participants to introduce themselves first, followed by the adults at the table.** It's helpful to prompt adults to try and introduce what they do day-to-day, rather than state their job title. This helps the children get a more lived sense of what the adults can support.

Following introductions, young people can then share what they want to about their plans and ideas. **They may want to speak through the whole process and what they found, or dive straight into the issues most top of mind.** Adults can be invited to ask questions and let the young participants know things that may already be or could happen around them. There may be actions that could be taken in the short, medium or long term, and facilitators can write down what is coming up that might be later drawn into a more concrete action.

If you have a reflection table as part of the world café, this is a space whereby facilitators can share the story of the process embarked on, as well as hear from adult participants any broader context or insights they have around the children's thoughts and ideas.

Reflect on the process and outcomes (10 - 20 minutes)

After the sharing process has taken place for all adults, it's great to **bring everyone together into one space**. A circle can work well if possible. A facilitator can then **invite reflections from the whole group of adults on things they've heard and feedback they have for the children and young people**. After some adults' reflections, it works well to **open the floor to young participants to reflect themselves**, but making sure they don't feel any pressure to do so if they don't want to. After this, draw some final conclusions and note any next steps as a facilitator and ensure the children and young people's efforts are collectively celebrated.

Determine next steps for the plans!

The way this next step happens will be determined by your overall goal for the work. However, **it can be helpful to convene a follow-up online session with the adults (and potentially some of the young people) in the following weeks to reflect more concretely on potential next steps**. This might be to draw up formal actions and assign tasks, or it might be to continue the conversation around what has emerged and how discussions could be deepened towards future actions, or further communication of the plans thus far.

Key Venue Considerations for Showcase Events

- Pick a location that is as convenient for the schools as possible. Where transport may be required, it's helpful to offer financial support.
- Ensure there is space to put up maps and posters on walls or display boards for all groups.
- Ensure the space is big enough for all tables with decent space between them so that everyone can be heard during the World Café. You may find it better to have more than one room to support everyone being heard.
- Check any accessibility requirements can be met for project participants prior to booking.
- Allow at least 30 minutes for setup, and 30 minutes for takedown.

Key Process Considerations for Showcase Events

- **Manage group size** – while it's tempting to invite lots of people to hear from the children and young people, it's important to be strategic. It could easily be overwhelming to children and young people for the adults to outnumber them, and four rounds of discussions is the maximum number primary age pupils can manage without it getting very draining.
- **Facilitate each group** – it's helpful to have someone on the team at each table, to make sure all feel comfortable, and all have their say.
- **Be strict on timings** – schools can usually only release children for short periods of time, so you may have to move adults on very swiftly to hear from further groups to keep to time.
- **Remind the children and young people that this is all about them having their say** – the children and young people will be nervous, so it's helpful to remind that that the event is all about what they want to say. There's no way for them to get it wrong, and if they need support, they can ask a facilitator to help them at any point.
- **Communicate with teachers and classroom assistants on the proposed plan for the Showcase as early as possible** and have a clear understanding of responsibilities for the day

including:

- whether/which teachers or assistants will be accompanying pupils;
 - any permissions required for photos or videos you might like to take;
 - understand who is a first aider; and
 - any necessary risk assessments to be completed.
- **Plan the legacy of the work as part of the process** – use the opportunity to understand and communicate how the children and young people’s plans could be taken forward. A follow-up meeting/s may support this further once everyone has had some additional reflection time.

Why is this important?

The Showcase Event really helps to **get the children and young people’s ideas out to a broader audience** who might be able to support them to make change happen. It’s also an opportunity to **create a child-friendly environment that adults are then invited in to**, which switches up the usual power dynamic.

The young participants can gain huge confidence from this approach and start to understand more and more about how change can happen. They also appreciate understanding where and why it can’t happen, as **often this knowledge is concealed from children and young people which can leave them feeling confused or annoyed**.

It also supports the creation of a project legacy, whereby solid actions and considerations are taken forward and what has and has not happened can be communicated back to young participants.



Chapter 6



Case Studies

Case Studies: Walking Tours

Below we outline two examples of tours which were undertaken as part of the Children and Teenager's Neighbourhood Project.

Bainsford and Langlees - Falkirk High School

- We undertook a tour of the neighbourhood with a composite class of high school students aged between 13 and 17, in June 2023.
- The tour was very successful due to the good weather and timing of the activity (post exam season) which meant we could take our time and spent two hours outdoors.
- We took lots of time for breaks and discussion throughout the walk, which allowed for longer reflection time and conversations about place experience.
- Breaks at key destinations on the tour helped with fostering a positive atmosphere and supported trustful dialogue with participants. On this tour we took breaks at a large park that the teenagers had used as children, and it offered a chance to reflect on what they need from the park at this age.
- Additionally given the older age of the participants, they were able to reflect on place change from their childhood to adolescence. This was helpful to contextualise how decision-making relating to place had affected the users on the ground over time.

Overleaf is a small version of Falkirk High's Experiential Map

Falkirk High School 20 Minute Neighbourhood Plan: What we think of the local area



Figure 8 Falkirk High's Experiential Map of Bainsford and Langlees.

Inverurie & Port Elphinstone - Port Elphinstone Primary

- We undertook a tour of the neighbourhood with P6 and P7 in November 2023.
- The weather was particularly rainy and cold, with the town experiencing the tail end of a storm from the days previous.
- Despite the rain, we agreed to undertake the tour for as long as possible with the children.
- Everyone had suitable rain clothes and boots on; however the ground was saturated and very muddy.
- We managed to be out for 45 minutes, but the rain was getting heavier, and the best option was to end the tour early and return to school.
- Once we were back in the classroom, we looked at all the important places we intended to visit on the tour on Google Maps on the class screen and spoke about them in a similar way to how we might on the tour.
- Although it was disappointing to have to cut the walk short, getting out for at least some time was positive for building trust, relationships, and an overarching understanding of the place. Google Maps and Streetview were harder to use in the full class format, however, between the children being experts in their place and a supportive teacher, we gained excellent results, nonetheless.
- In a follow-up session, we were able to ask the children any photos we still needed to add to their map so that we as facilitators could fill in the gaps under their direction.

Overleaf is a small version of Port Elphinstone Primary's Experiential Map

Port Elphinstone Children: What we think of the local area



Figure 9 Port Elphinstone Primary School's Experiential Map.

Case Studies: The Tour Reflection Process and Priorities for Action

Below we outline two examples of tour walkthroughs which were undertaken as part of the Children and Teenager's Neighbourhood Project.

Inverurie & Port Elphinstone: Inverurie Academy

- We worked with a composite group from S1-6 who all lived within the boundaries of the town in November 2023. With support of the headteacher, the group had been put together by the Senior House Captains.
- Pupils planned an extensive tour, and we spent the full school morning out and about in the town.
- Upon returning to the school, we talked through the tour in detail with all participants highly engaged in discussing and reflecting on each place at length. The reflection therefore lasted almost all the afternoon session.
- Due to the pupils being so engaged and collectively discussing a vision for the future of the town through the reflection exercise, we determined that the Island follow-up task we planned was unnecessary.
- The strong youth-leadership approach, supported by the school at all stages of the engagement, meant that the young people were very clear and comfortable in sharing their views.
- The composite group also gave rise to a wide range of opinions, with the seniors modelling excellent skills in openness and listening. Therefore, younger pupils clearly felt safe voicing differing views, in knowledge that they would be respected.

Overleaf is a small version Inverurie Academy's Experiential Map.

Inverurie Teenagers: What we think of the local area

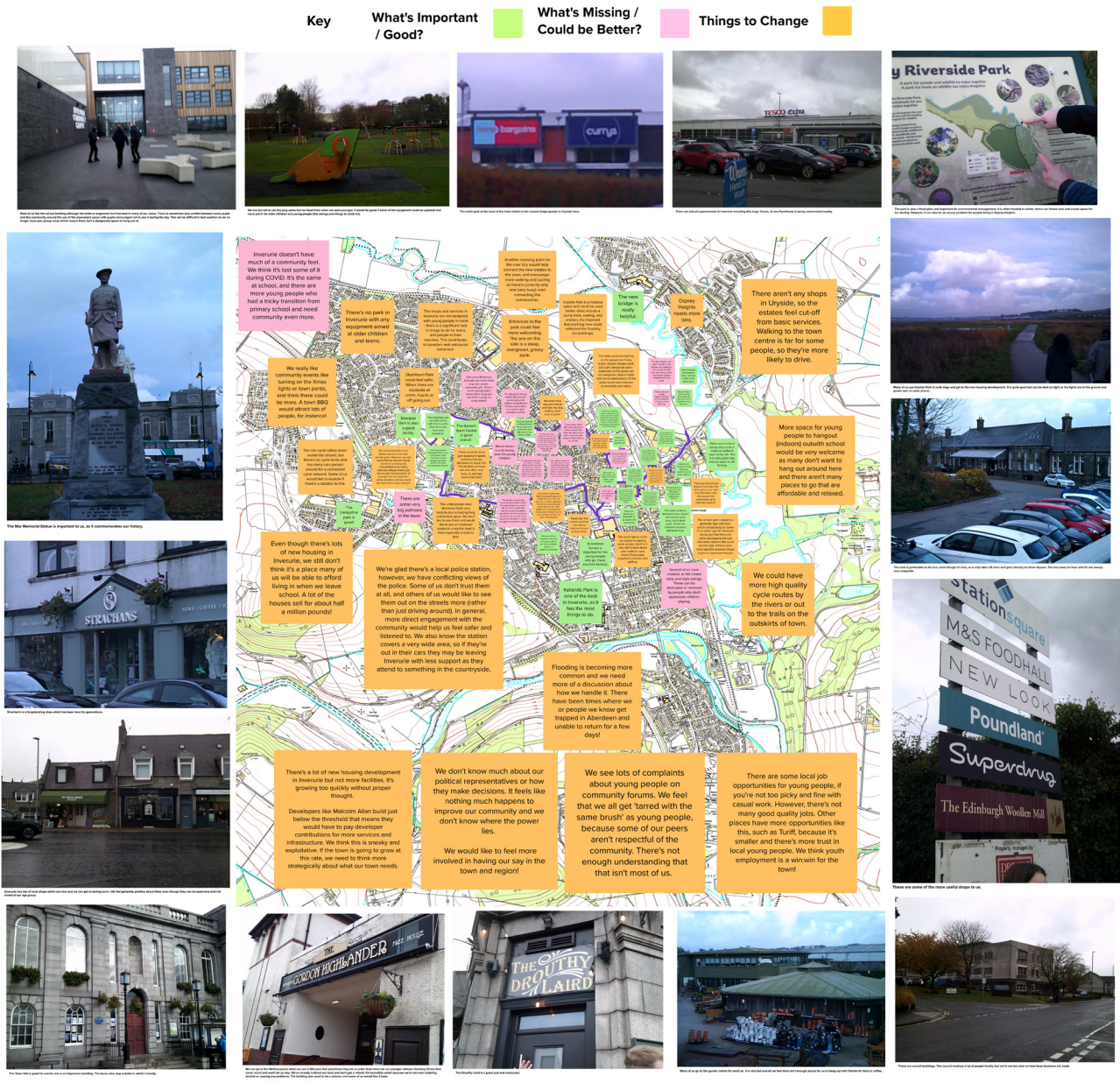


Figure 10 Inverurie Academy's Experiential Map.

Shetland Westside Mainland - Aith Junior High School

- We undertook a tour of the settlement with P6/7 in September 2023.
- From the tour, it was clear that the children were very happy about almost all aspects of their place. They spoke articulately and positively and took time to show us many things and play along the way.
- Upon return to the school, we talked through the walk and reflected, but as they were so happy there was little additional to reflect upon. We therefore moved quite swiftly on to their Priorities for Action and finished the session early.
- In this case, it was clear that there were only a few Priorities for Action for them, and after checking a few times, they really couldn't think of anything else they wanted to say.
- This example shows that each place is different, and sometimes more or less emphasis needs to be placed on different elements of the process. Indeed, some places need to be improved for children and teenagers more than others.

Below is a small version of Aith Junior High's Experiential Map

Aith JHS P6/P7's Local Living Plan: What we think of the local area



Figure 11 Aith Junior High's Experiential Map.

Case Studies: The Island Task and Finalising Our Plan

Below we outline two examples of the Island Task and how we finalised Priorities for Action, as part of the Children and Teenager's Neighbourhood Project.

Jedburgh - The Children of Jedburgh Grammar School

- We worked with a composite group from P4-7, who were the primary school's eco group and safety officers, in September 2023.
- The children had taken us through an extensive tour and reflection, and really thrived on the Island Task. They noted full map-based redesigns for the town, incorporating creative elements and bringing up new issues such as rail transport.
- After they had shared their Island Plans, we had a long list of additional things to debate and discuss.
- The children really enjoyed debating new priorities, and we spent almost 90 minutes of the afternoon doing so. Some of these debates were very specific, such as the benefits or potential hazards of local beehives for making honey. We also discussed the likelihood that a local drinking water fountain could become poisoned by vandals!
- This debate showed the children took the future of their place very seriously and were keen to see things from all angles. They were highly creative, and worked together well to think through the implications of anything they might put on their priority list.
- A learning for us, as facilitators, was that it was helpful to keep the list of themes from the Island task broad, rather than too focused down. We felt that the debate was excellent, but that by drawing out specific ideas such as bee hives for discussion, we got drawn down into debating very fine details that were hard to discuss in the abstract (and without more knowledge to answer very specific concerns). Instead, we could have kept the theme as 'more local food and farming', which would enable us to understand level of agreement in principle for such an endeavour, enabling the detail to come later.

Below is an example of Two Jedburgh Island Maps and the list we then debated. The circled items made it into their final Priorities for Action.

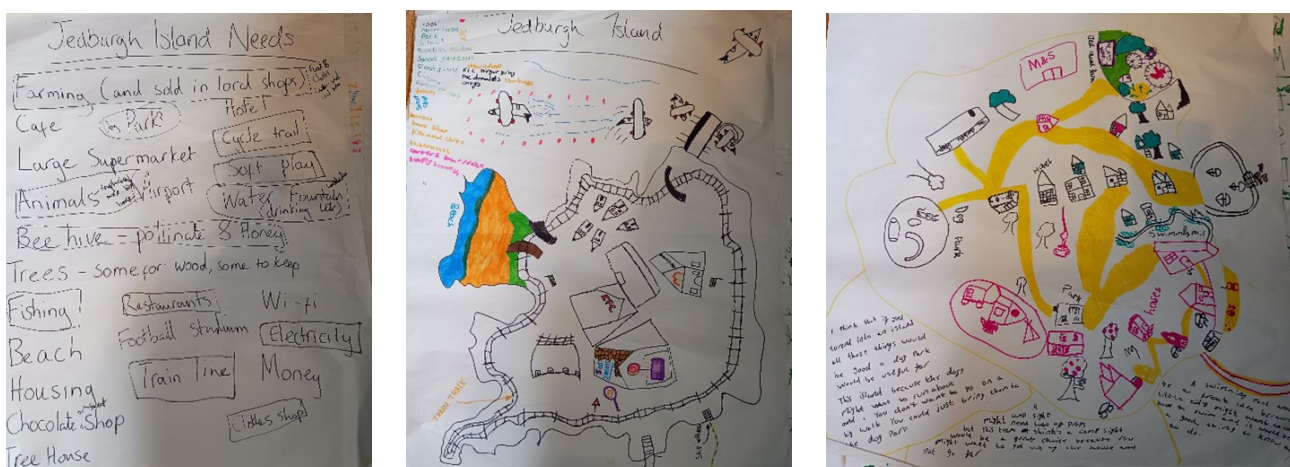


Figure 12 Jedburgh Island Maps.

Case Studies: Developing our Local Projects

Below we outline one example of Local Project cocreation as part of the Children and Teenager's Neighbourhood Project, and one from a Just Transition Plan supported by Aberdeen for a Fairer World.

Craigmillar, Edinburgh - Castlebrae Community High School

- We worked with a small group of S1-3 who formed the school's Eco-committee, in September 2023.
- The young people co-created a fantastic and very thoughtful plan for their local place, and there was an opportunity to discuss it further with a larger group.
- We therefore spent two additional school periods with a larger group forming the whole eco-committee. After exploring the plan so far, each young person voted on a priority to focus more on.
- They then developed further ideas around community art and murals, cleaning up the neighbourhood, developing a teenage hangout spot near school, and increasing walking and cycling opportunities.
- This phase enabled us to gather even more creative ideas and information to bring to the Showcase (see further supplementary phases) and gave the original group confidence in their priorities. It also became clear what important next phases could be for the project after completion of the plan.

Below are some of the initial designs young people came up with for community murals and a youth space:

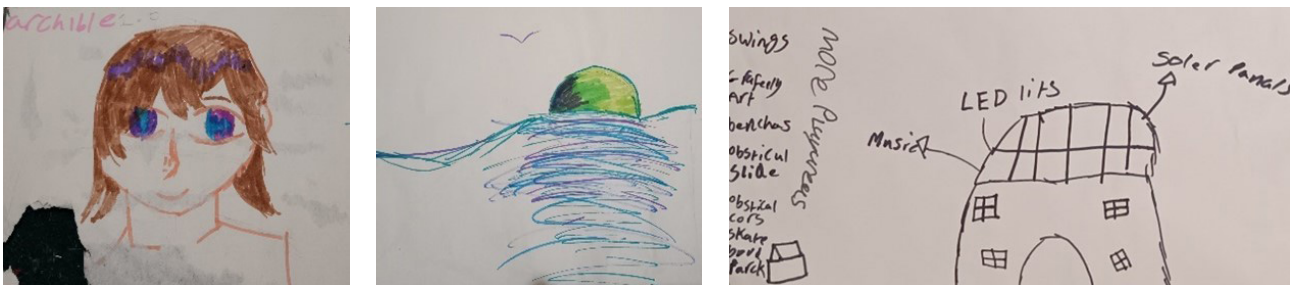


Figure 14 Project Ideas from Castlebrae Community High School.

Huntly - Gordon Primary School

- We worked with a full P5 class in January 2024, who put together a very thorough and thoughtful plan for the future of Huntly.
- After voting on the priorities they'd most like to turn into projects, there was one that was clearly most popular – a new café to replace one they'd really loved that had closed down a few years ago.
- While most pupils wanted to work on the café project, there were three other projects whereby one person wanted to work alone – more fun in Huntly; increasing local nature; and improving healthcare. Another group also looked at reducing and cleaning up litter, and community events.
- The children produced a fantastic set of projects, and really enjoyed themselves. Many were also keen to work on their projects more than the time would allow. The flexible approach of supporting children to work by themselves when they wished meant that a wide range of projects were proposed for later discussions at their Showcase event.

Overleaf is a small version of the final Projects Poster for Gordon Primary. This was written up using the online whiteboard application, Mural.

Huntly Children: Our Proposed Just Transition Projects


More Fun in Huntly

What we want to achieve:

- More fun places to spend time, near beautiful places like the River Deveron.

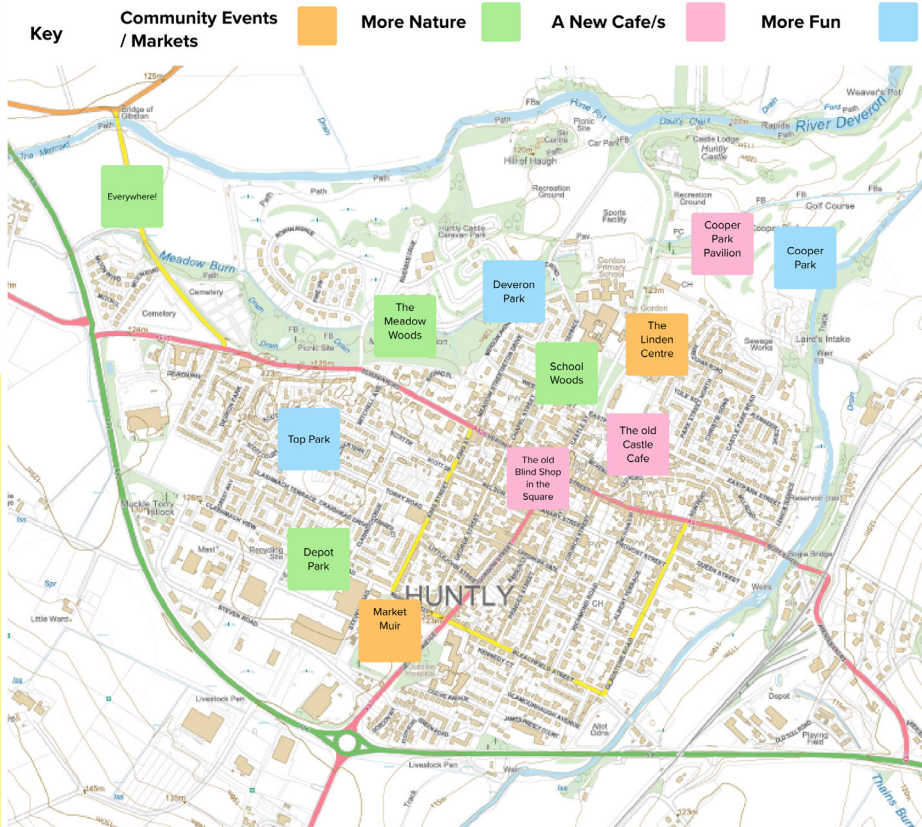
How We Might Achieve it:

- Put more adventurous equipment in our parks, like climbing frames and zip lines.
- Fix the broken equipment.



Why this is important:

- We want to have more fun where we live, and enjoy playing in nice places.



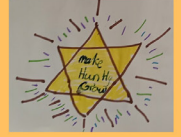
More Community Events and Markets

What we want to achieve and where:

- A longer and cheaper Fun Fair in the Summer
- A free Easter event at the Square for children of all ages, and an Easter egg hunt at the Linden Centre
- A free Halloween crafts dance and more at the Linden Centre.
- A Bonfire night glow stick party at the Linden Centre.
- Tractor Lights.
- Spring Hairst
- Cooking classes at the Linden Centre.
- 3 Farmer's Markets a month in the square.
- 1 car boot sale a month at Market Muir.
- Charity events
- Comicon.

Why this is important:

- We love the community events we already have in Huntly, because they bring everyone together and are really fun.
- If we had more events, there would be more things for young people to do and feel involved.
- Everyone loves fun events.



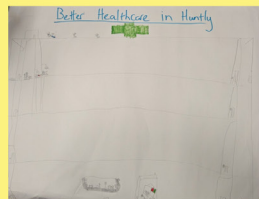
Better Healthcare in Huntly

What we want to achieve:

- Better access to services like GPs, dentists and opticians.
- Quicker ambulances to hospitals in Elgin and Aberdeen.
- Making sure everyone can get to the hospital easily.

How We Might Achieve it:

- Have more doctors surgeries and services in Huntly
- More buses to the bigger hospital.



Why this is important:

- People have to travel quite far to get a lot of healthcare, which is really hard if you're in pain or don't have a car.
- We have lots of stories of people, including us, not getting the healthcare we need.
- Some people in Huntly have had to wait a really long time for ambulances, and we worry that this can lead to people who need help urgently getting worse.

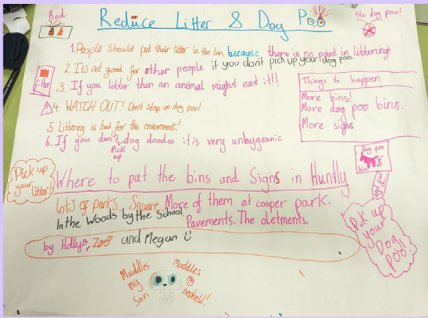
Reduce Litter and Dog Poo in Huntly

What we want to achieve:

- People putting their litter in the bin.

How We Might Achieve it:

- More regular bins, and more dog poo bins in the parks, square, woods by the school, and near the allotments.
- More signs, including ones that are fun.



Why this is important:

- There is no point littering. It's not good for other people if you don't pick up your dog poo.
- If you litter, then an animal might eat it!
- If you don't pick up dog poo, it's very unhygienic.

A New Café to Replace Castle Cafe

What we want to achieve:

- A place to buy delicious, affordable food and spend time with friends and family.
- a place in the town centre and/or at Cooper Park Pavilion, so we don't need to leave the area so much to have fun.
- A place to relax and for children to play indoors.

How We Might Achieve it:

- Refurbish the Castle Café building, Blind shop on the square, and/or Cooper Park Pavilion. We think more than one café could even be good.
- Ask local children and families what they would like to see.
- Incorporate food people enjoy and fun and silly activities. You can see some of our ideas to the side

Why this is important:

- We REALLY miss Castle Café, and also wish we could get drinks, snacks, and go to the toilet when we play in Cooper Park.
- The new Starbucks and McDonalds will be over a very busy road, and we think it's best to have a café in the town centre.
- There are several disused buildings that could be brought back into use.
- We think a new café would be a popular use.

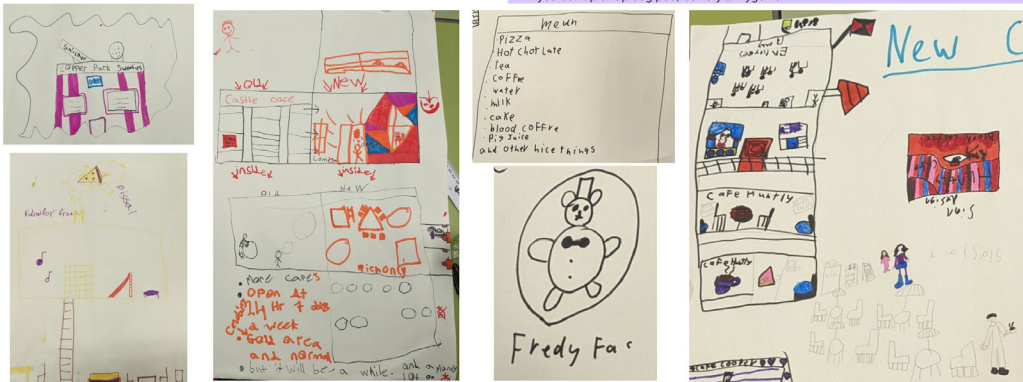


Figure 15 Gordon Primary School's Just Transition Projects Poster.

Case Studies: Showcasing Our Plan

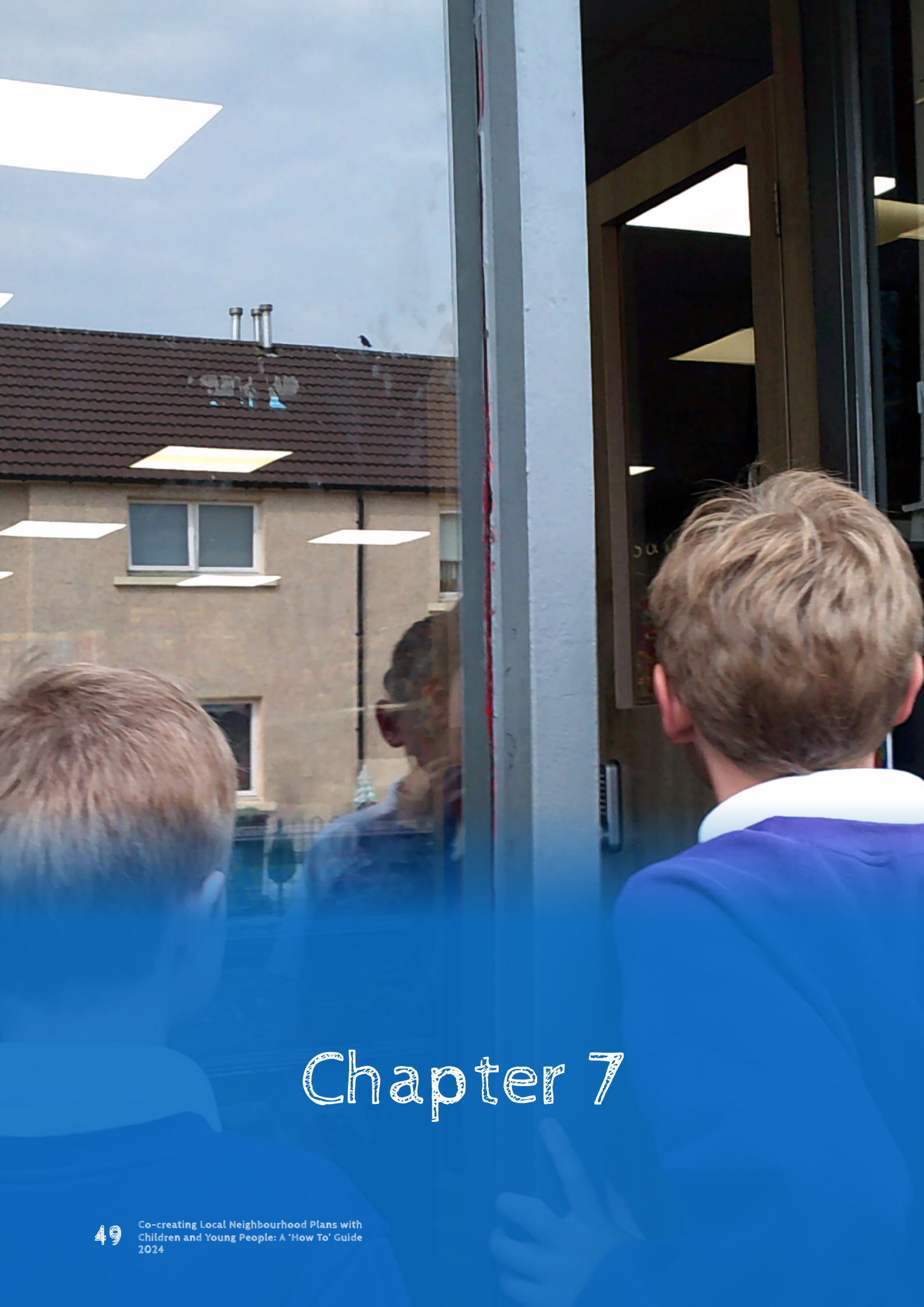
Below we outline two examples of Showcase Events that took place as part of the Children and Teenager's Neighbourhood Plans Project.

Craigmillar, Edinburgh Showcase

- The event took place at a local church in January 2024, and involved 15 children and young people representing the three participating schools.
- The initial warm up and sharing between the schools was very successful, with all participants agreeing with one another's plans and priorities. They were also each able to share places from their walks that others in the room may not know about, and discuss their experiences of visiting other places in the city. The high school pupils were very sensitive to ensuring that the youngest pupils felt seen and heard and reinforced their good ideas; to help them feel confident for the next phase.
- 25 adult stakeholders then attended from across the council, police, and third sector organisations. Due to the high numbers, we needed to be very careful not to overwhelm the children with too many adults at once. We therefore had four tables in the world café – one for each school group and one to discuss and reflect upon the process and insights overall.
- The children and young people did a fantastic job of sharing their insights, and the adult stakeholders were very impressed. It was clearly tiring for the youngest participants, but they stuck with it and were excited by having their say and being heard by a wide audience.
- Child-friendly snacks and drinks supported participants to feel at ease, and make the environment feel like it was for them with adults invited in (rather than vice versa).
- We invited the stakeholders that had taken part in the in-person showcase to a further online workshop several weeks later, to support in finalising how the children and teenagers' plan could be taken forward.

Westside, Shetland Mainland Showcase

- The event took place at Happyhansel Primary School Hall in September 2024, and involved 15 children and young people representing the three participating schools.
- The initial warm up and sharing between the schools was successful, particularly with all being familiar with the biggest settlement of Aith.
- Nine adult stakeholders then attended from across the council, and third sector organisations. A reporter for BBC Radio Shetland also attended, and after some warmup chat, recorded some of the children speaking about their views and ideas.
- The children and young people did a fantastic job of sharing their insights, and the adult stakeholders were very impressed. The children were delighted to be interviewed for the radio and appeared on the news roundup that evening. They were very clear and articulate in their views and have sparked huge interest across the area to see how their ideas can be taken forward.
- There is appetite from all parties to keep working on the children's priorities and see if the plan can be worked up into a document that includes an even wider range of child and teenager voices across the Westside.



Chapter 7

Supporting Information

Linking with Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence

Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence is a holistic approach to education, focusing more on project-based learning and skills development than previous iterations of the school curriculum. It has a holistic vision for bringing about the Four Capacities that the Scottish Government seeks to develop in children and young people. Participatory projects such as this link with all these outcomes and connect with children's human rights. For example:

- **Successful Learners:** Through engaging in activities grounded in their local communities, pupils are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to learn and have opportunities to develop skills that are useful in later life.
- **Confident Individuals:** Social Determination Theory demonstrates that our confidence grows through tasks which support our autonomy, enable personally meaningful activity, and help us feel connected to others. Engagement in local change gives key opportunities for teamwork, and to develop confidence in our understanding, priorities, and place within a community.
- **Responsible Citizens:** Working alongside others on ideas and proposals for local change encourages perspective-taking, empathy, and understanding of social/cultural rules. It helps us understand our own and other people's responsibilities.
- **Effective Contributors:** Through meaningful engagement, children learn to collaborate and cooperate with one another. It works best when participation involves pupils with adults and wider communities as part of the process.

In addition, engaging children and young people in local change-making projects is consistent with the Scottish Government's 'Learning for Sustainability (LfS)' agenda. The vision statement for LfS sets aspirations for:

"Learners (who are) educated through their landscape and understand their environment, culture and heritage; and develop a sense of place and belonging to their local (national and global) community, with a deep connection to the natural world; (and) will understand the significance of their choices, now and in the future. (One Planet Schools Working Group 2012, p5)"

Local place projects are an ideal framework for schoolchildren to gather lived experience of Learning for Sustainability. Indeed, building partnerships beyond the school can galvanise further opportunities and pathways for further youth integration into wider community projects and objectives.

Materials Checklist for School Sessions

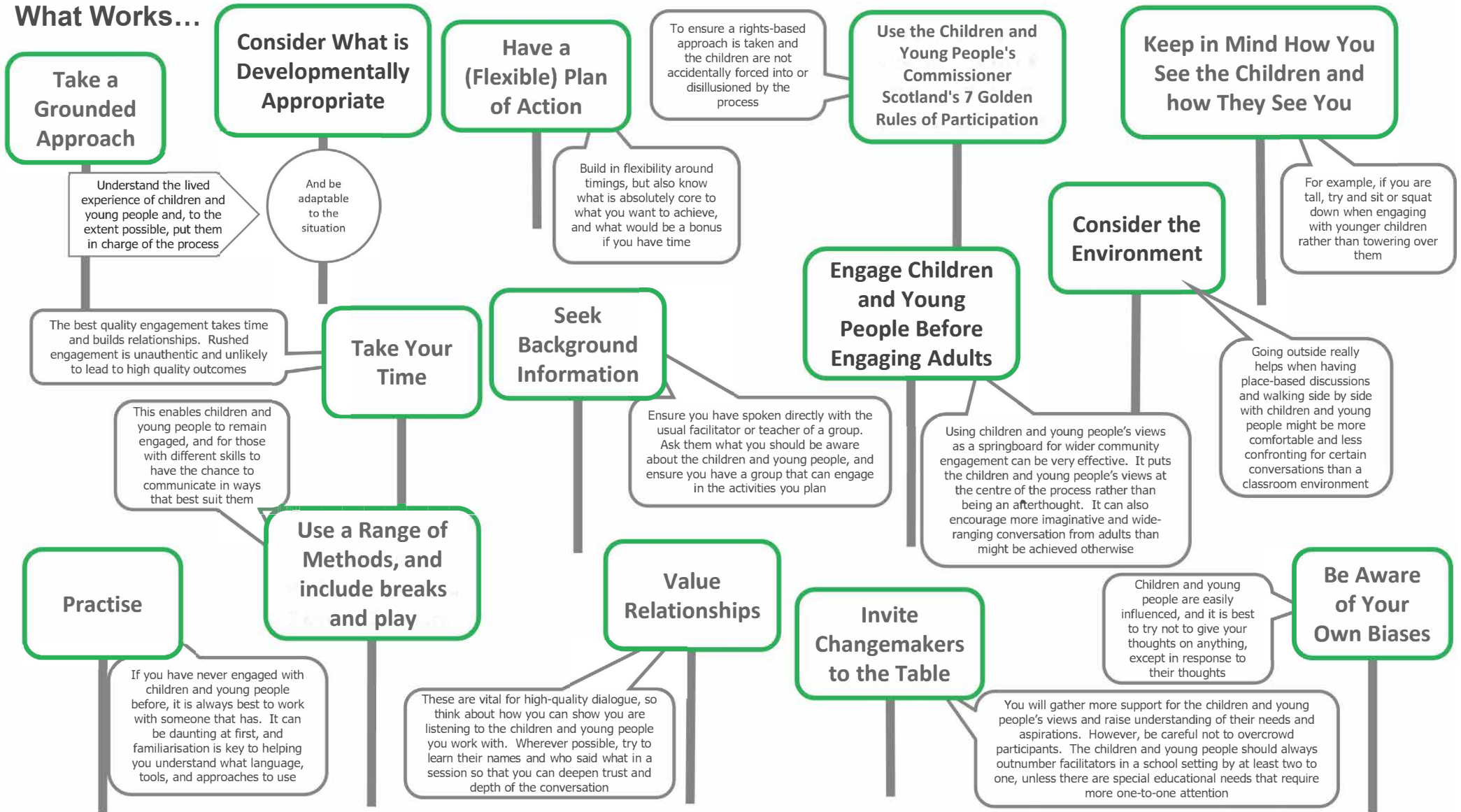
- One large format (ideally A0) map of the local area for each setting you're working in
- An A4 print of the local area map for each facilitator. This can be taken out on the walk.
- A clipboard and paper or large notepad for each facilitator. This can be taken out on the walk.
- (Optional) large format (ideally A0) map of the wider area or region (e.g. whole town, city, or local authority area)
- Flipchart Paper
- Name labels
- Pens and pencils
- Post-it notes of different colours
- A camera or phone for each facilitator
- (Optional) Cameras for participants to share
- First Aid Kit (may be provided by school)
- Appropriate outdoor clothing for local weather conditions
- (Optional) further craft materials for Island Tasks or Projects.

Materials Checklist for Showcase Events

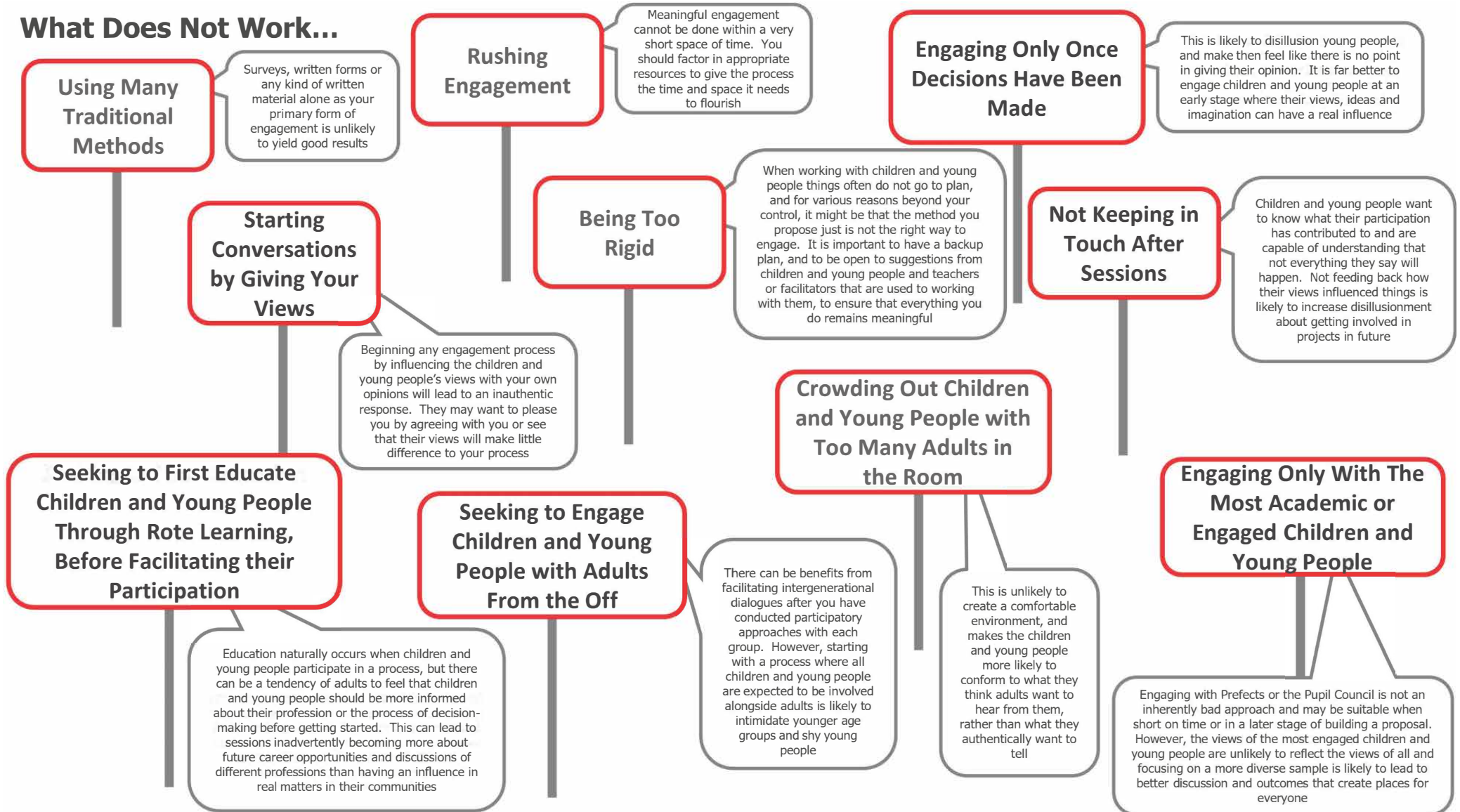
- Large format (ideally A0) Experiential Maps and any Local Project Posters for each group
- Large or medium format printing of each set of Priorities for Action for each group
- An invitees list, with pre-arranged groups wherever possible
- Teas and coffees for adults and older young people
- Juice and snacks for children and young people (such as apple juice cartons and flapjacks)
- Information sheets about the project for adult participants
- Paper and pens for facilitator and participant note taking

Tips for Meaningful Engagement with Children and Young People

What Works...



What Does Not Work...



Example Emails

To invite schools to be involved:

Dear [insert name]

I am getting in contact to ask whether you might consider myself and colleagues working with some of your pupils on a local neighbourhood project. The aim would be to co-create a plan with them, that will support us and the community to understand the specific needs of their age group.

Below is a little more information about who we are and what we want to achieve. We'd be very grateful if you might be open to a discussion on how this could work within your context, to bring most benefit also to the pupils and school community.

About Us

[Insert information about who you are and what you're trying to do]

What we Propose to Do with Pupils

The purpose of the engagement is:

- To develop an informed understanding of what children and teenagers like and dislike about their neighbourhoods;
- Understand how children and teenagers utilise and move through their neighbourhood;
- Identify any barriers to movement; and
- Identify opportunities to improve the neighbourhood.

We're looking to set some work up for ***[insert timings], initially with a 1-day (or equivalent) engagement*** and are absolutely committed to make it work for all involved.

We're happy to talk through any ways that we can ease resource burdens you may be experiencing and provide a fruitful and enjoyable experience to your pupils. It may be, for instance, that it can fit with your work around ***Geography, Active Citizenship, Play Pedagogy and Learning for Sustainability.***

Let me know what you think, and if you would be open to discuss this in the next couple of weeks.

Kind regards,

[Insert your name]

To invite stakeholders to a Showcase Event

Dear Colleagues

Showcase Event Invitation: [insert details of project and place]

I am writing to invite you to an important showcase event to be held [insert date, time and location]. The workshop will involve the participation of children and young people from [insert name of schools], and we have identified that your expertise would add significant value to this work.

For background, [insert details of who you are, if the recipient is unlikely to know]. The purpose of creating the plan is to understand the needs of children and teenagers from their local neighbourhood and identify anything that is missing or could be provided which would improve their experience of living in [name of place] and reduce the need to travel by private vehicle. Approximately [insert number] children and young people have now created their plans to share and discuss.

The second stage of this project is this Showcase Event. This involves representatives from each of the groups that took part in creating the plan presenting it to key stakeholders who have the influence to support some of the priorities and improvements in the plan to happen. We will support the pupils who wish to present their plan to stakeholders and facilitate discussions between both the pupils and adults to explore potential opportunities. The aim of this stage is to support everyone in understanding what priorities children and teenagers have for their neighbourhood and see if there is “low hanging fruit” or other priorities which align with long term ambitions for the area.

Your attendance at this workshop would be fantastic and ensure the Council's/ Community's commitment to both this project and the involvement of children and young people's voices are demonstrated across your area of expertise/interest.

[insert details of how to confirm attendance]

If you have any questions, you can contact Project Lead, [Insert name and contact details]

Kind regards,

[Insert name]

Report Design by: Daniela Miler

Photography courtesy of the children and teenagers who took part in the project, alongside Aberdeen for a Fairer World.