

20-Minute Neighbourhoods and Local Living



Credit: [Andrew Hendo](#) at [English Wikipedia](#)

Context

To support implementation of the Local Living and 20-Minute Neighbourhood Approach, we have created a mapping tool which allows for a detailed spatial understanding of local communities throughout the area. The aim of the tool is to support the alignment of policy, investment and service delivery around the principle of local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, so that all our priorities including reducing inequality, tackling climate change, effective healthcare provision and quality education are fully embedded in the decision-making process.

What Happened

The first step in creating the tool involved identifying features of local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, focusing on those most relevant to East Dunbartonshire. A number of resources were used to support this, including Policy 15 of NPF4 (Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods), the 20-Minute Neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context report published by ClimateXChange, and the Our Place online resource.



A total of 24 individual features or 'daily needs' were identified. These features were then grouped into six different themes, allowing for easier and more effective presentation of the mapping and data. Working alongside GIS colleagues, the Land Planning Policy team undertook mapping of these features using existing data and creating new mapping data where this had not already been mapped.

Arc GIS mapping has allowed for the creation of an area wide 'dashboard', in which every registered property in the area is assigned a score, based on the number of features under each theme that are considered walkable and within the parameters of the 20-minute neighbourhood principle.

When looking at the whole of East Dunbartonshire, the dashboard identifies the areas that are currently underperforming in terms of each theme, and which may need future intervention to improve the availability of relevant 'daily needs.' The data for all six themes can be combined to provide an overall picture of current performance against 20-minute neighbourhood features.

Areas of Collaboration

The project was jointly led and undertaken by the Land Planning Policy and GIS teams. This included the collating and mapping of relevant data. Additional input was provided by other Council services such as Place and Community Planning, Assets and Facilities, Roads and Environment, Housing and Education, mainly in relation to data sharing and general feedback. There was also collaboration with the Health and Social Care Partnership in relation to existing assets and locational data. To aid this collaboration a cross-service 20-Minute Neighbourhoods Working Group was established, with the aim of establishing and agreeing an 'East Dunbartonshire approach' and developing the tool jointly.

Overall Result

From a planning policy perspective, the mapping tool allows for effective implementation of NPF4 Policy 15, supporting the local living and 20-minute neighbourhood approach. It will allow for an accurate and evidenced analysis of 'local circumstances' to support the Place Principle, in line with the Policy Intent and Policy Outcomes of NPF4 Policy 15. This will be beneficial when assessing proposed development sites as part of the Local Development Plan 3 site assessment exercise which forms part of the Proposed Plan preparation.

The tool will also be of value as part of the Development Applications process, when assessing the merits of relevant proposals and weighing up compliance with the local living and 20-minute neighbourhood principle. The tool may also help to inform the approach to developer contributions for certain proposals, by helping to identify priority needs and requirements within each local community.

Finally, the tool may also have a key role in aiding the preparation of Local Place Plans by local community groups or organisations. As part of the promotion of Local Place Plans and



through early discussions with interested groups, the Council has made it clear that it will be made available for use by any interested party. For example, it could be used to help groups understand the needs and opportunities within their local area and this in turn could help to inform the overall vision for their Local Place Plan.

Overall, the mapping tool will help to significantly enhance the understanding of 'daily needs' for communities across the local authority, and it will also help to strengthen the links with organisations, groups and stakeholders through the Local Place Plan mechanism. However, it must be stated that the scores and outputs of the tool are a guide and must be considered against other factors.

Lessons Learned

Successes

The project has provided an ideal mechanism for the Council's Land Planning Policy team to collaborate with a wide range of other services on land use matters. It has been an opportunity to explain the importance of local living and accessibility to various stakeholders. The development of the tool has provided an opportunity to change perceptions of 20-minute neighbourhoods by outlining the background and aims of the policy approach. The project has strengthened the evidence base in relation to a wide range of land use issues and provided a platform for the spatial representation of data.

Challenges

Given the nature of the data being collected, it will require regular updating to ensure it remains accurate and robust. Given the large number of daily need features (across six separate themes), this is a significant task and could require a large amount of staff resources. The mapping of data can be quite technical and dependent on specialist GIS skills. Successful and efficient processing of the data therefore requires careful project management and prioritisation of tasks. Data is not always available in an accessible format, and it can be challenging converting this into a format that is easily understood and compatible with ArcGIS.

Lessons Learned

Data is much more meaningful and accessible when mapped in a way that is familiar and relatable to people. Based on presentation of the maps at various information sessions, people are drawn towards simple maps, however the evidence that sits behind the maps must be robust and stand up to scrutiny.

It is important that the methodology of the tool is explained in a way that people understand. Failure to do this will result in a lack of confidence in using the tool and in some cases a lack of acceptance in recognising its value. On reflection, it would have been useful to have prepared a written guide on how the tool was developed, including a simple explanation of the mapping format and what it is showing.

