

Background to Placecheck

Placecheck is an award winning community engagement method being used by Perth & Kinross Council. Placecheck was developed in the late 1990's by the Urban Design Alliance (UDAL). This successful scheme has been implemented in many places across the UK from neighbourhoods wanting to improve their local streets and open spaces to whole settlements getting involved.

Placecheck is a simple way of getting communities to identify what they like and don't like about where they live. Communities identify and work with different partners and also take action themselves, to improve their environment.

Perth & Kinross Council have adopted Placecheck as an effective method of community engagement. This method fits very well into our Placemaking Guide which encourages distinctive, attractive, welcoming places with active citizens and civic pride, where people come first and cars second. The method also embraces our Community Engagement Policy where we follow the Government's 10 National Standards For Community Engagement focusing on inclusion, encourage participation, listen and give feedback.

Recently the Placecheck method has been trialled in Errol and Dunning and has been successful in effectively engaging communities on public space issues. In view of the heavy demand on resources, it was decided to give one community per year the opportunity to participate in the Council run Placecheck process. Communities had to have around 2000 residents.

Areas that submitted a bid to host a Placecheck event were Aberfeldy, Alyth, Bridge of Earn, Comrie, Coupar Angus, Invergowrie and Kingoodie, Milnathort, Oakbank and Stanley.

Milnathort has been chosen to host Placecheck in 2009/10. Bridge of Earn will host Placecheck in 2010/11 and Aberfeldy in 2011/12.

Community Process

It is important for communities who want to be involved in Placecheck to be fully committed to the Placecheck process. It is also important that there are community members available to assist with the running of the events. The process although very rewarding and beneficial to the community is also time consuming and the community needs to be committed to taking forward issues that are identified.

The process usually takes place as follows:

- The initial Placecheck event usually takes place in a venue and at a day and time that is suitable for involving the majority of community members
- Participants include local community members and representatives from organisations who work in the community.
- The process starts with groups doing a walkabout, with cameras and questionnaires to record their views about the quality of the environment and areas for improvement.

- After the walkabout, group discussions take place to agree short, medium and long term priorities for the area.
- After the initial Placecheck event, further meetings and workshops are held to work through the priorities and consult further on projects identified.
- Funding is identified and improvement works carried out in the area.