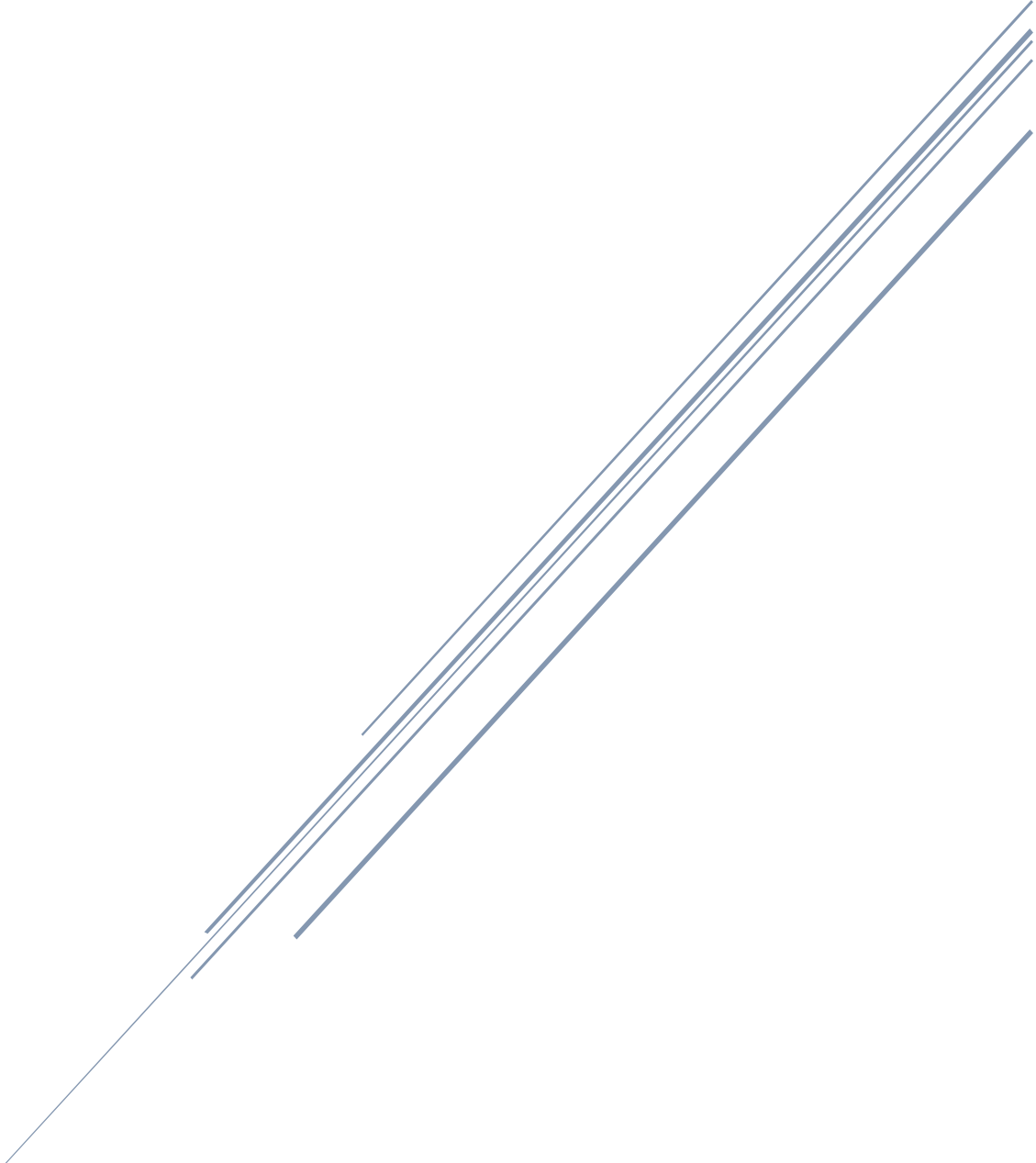


Place-Based Working Matrix Practitioner Document



Community Of Practice: Working in Partnership to Design
Place-Based Approaches
Place-Base Matrix 2025

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Executive Summary

Place-based working is recognised as central to the delivery of several key policy objectives in Scotland. However, the need to identify, understand, develop and monitor the evolution of core dimensions of key stakeholders and local systems across the lifecycle of any place-based initiative is often overlooked. This diminishes the likelihood of success.

In response, the Community of Practice¹ has developed the Place-Based Working Matrix as a practical and adaptable tool to help place-focused leaders and practitioners address this need. It does this by providing a framework to explore **five stakeholder categories where change would be expected to take place**—Individual, Community, Partners, Wider Population, and System Change— **against three attributes**: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills, as follows:

	Individual	Community	Partners	Wider Population	System Change
Knowledge					
Attitudes					
Skills					

The content of this framework will not be fixed, rather, it will require continuous review and adaptation across the lifecycle of the project/initiative, responding to impacts and changes in the local and wider context. In this sense, by mapping outcomes, gaps and opportunities for improvement onto the framework, the Matrix can become the driver of change itself and/or a means of monitoring and recording change. This makes it a versatile tool that can be used at multiple stages, for example:

- **Planning**: to align ambitions and anticipate outcomes.
- **Mid-point reflection**: to assess progress and recalibrate.
- **Evaluation and reporting**: to capture change not always visible through conventional metrics.
- **Case study analysis**: to extract lessons and share learning.

This makes the Matrix a valuable management tool to support planning and evaluation of place-based initiatives. However, its deeper strength is as a conversation starter, a tool to prompt reflection, and surface different perspectives. This will enable richer and more informed dialogue across stakeholders and aid stronger collaboration, all contributing to a greater chance of our policy objectives being realised.

In this document we set out:

- **Guidance on how to use the Matrix**, including definitions and prompt questions.
- **Worked examples** from both established and emerging projects that demonstrate the Matrix's value.
- **A scoping review** which sets out the landscape this tool sits within and highlights its distinctive approach, connecting community-level insights with system-level change.

¹ Working in Partnership to Design Place-based Approaches, part of the Scottish Government's collaboration with the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit at Glasgow Caledonian University.

Leaders and practitioners are encouraged to use the Matrix and accompanying guidance to reflect on/plan their own work. We hope this will support fruitful discussions, highlight hard-to-measure progress and support case study development to aid further adoption of the Matrix.

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1. Guidance for Use

How is it used?

Read this guidance, consider the prompt questions, update the Matrix with reflections from your initiative and discuss the findings with partners involved in your initiative. You may also wish to complete the Matrix live in a workshop-style session with partners. The aim when completing the Matrix is for each cell to hold relevant information relating to the two elements at the head of the column and start of the row. When there is nothing to note in a cell, it may indicate a gap that you might wish to work on further.

Who can use it?

Leaders, practitioners and policymakers across sectors and community groups.

When can it be used?

At any point in the life cycle of the initiative/project, including for the planning stage, mid-project reflection, evaluation or case study analysis.

Definitions:

Column Heading

Individual	The people accessing or targeted by a project, most often this will be either individuals or households/family members. There will potentially be a demographic link between the individuals beyond the geographic proximity to the project.
Community	The community within which the place-based project is based. This may be as small as a street or as large as a recognised neighbourhood, data zone, electoral ward or whole local authority.
Partners	The groups and organisations involved (or that could be involved) with the project, whether they are from the public, third or private sectors. They can be directly involved as part of the project or taken as a wider net, including referral partners, operational managers, frontline staff and strategic decision/policy makers (local, regional and national).
Wider Population	The population surrounding where the project is based and beyond. For a street-based project this could be a recognised neighbourhood or electoral ward. For larger (e.g. Ward-based) projects this might be a whole town, city or local authority. For the biggest projects this could be Scotland-wide.
Systems Change	A process that a project seeks to change through its activity or develops out of a project to make it function better. Systems change can be as small as a change to a referral mechanism or something much larger like how a pot of funding is allocated. In general, systems change will reinforce the success of a project and/or enable the benefits of a project to be deployed in another place.

Row Heading

Knowledge	Depending on the purpose the Matrix is being used for, knowledge refers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing knowledge.• Desired changes in knowledge relating to the project and/or its subject matter/purpose.• Observed changes in knowledge.• Measured changes in knowledge over time.• Knowledge about what does / doesn't work and/or what needs to change.
Attitude	Attitude has various interpretations depending on the purpose the Matrix is being used for. It is a measure of the subjective views of people—including, their thoughts on the project, its aims, the people accessing it, the impact it is having. This might be desired/observed/measured changes in attitude and what attitudes need to change and why.
Skills	What people bring to, gain or develop because of a project. These can be a resource to aid the project aims, developed as a result of the project aims, or incidental / by-product of involvement with the project.

A quick note on Leadership:

Leadership sits across the Matrix. Leaders and their skills, attitudes and knowledge are important in bringing the voice and experiences of individuals to the front of evaluations, measurement and impact. Leaders will act to bridge the layers and may operate in multiple layers.

The diagram illustrates a progression from Individual to Systems Change. At the top, a large blue arrow points from left to right, encompassing the five stages: INDIVIDUAL → COMMUNITY → PARTNERS → WIDER POPULATION → SYSTEMS CHANGE. Below this, a table provides detailed questions for each stage across three categories: KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, and SKILLS.

Place-Based Matrix	INDIVIDUAL →	COMMUNITY →	PARTNERS →	WIDER POPULATION →	SYSTEMS CHANGE →
KNOWLEDGE	Do individuals know that support is available? Do they have knowledge of local systems? Are individuals aware of the issues in their area the area?	Is there a shared vision? Is there a knowledge of rights, local systems and structures? What does the community know about itself?	Do partners have a knowledge of client groups assets? Is there a common agenda/vision, understanding of the problem (history) and positive relationships between partners?	Does the wider population understand the benefit of place-based working? Do they have a sense of what works in context?	Is learning/knowledge being shared beyond partners to influence scale up/out? Is there a strategic understanding of how to make this way of working systemic?
ATTITUDES	Do individuals feel confident accessing services, knowing they will be listened to without stigma? Do they feel trust towards the project?	Are there inclusive community attitudes? Where there is a need, is it being met? Are communities looking out for each other? Is the community empowered to communicate needs to statutory services?	Are partners open, reflective and able to build trust? Are partners open to true collaboration? Are partners taking a person-centred approach which operates closer to those who need it?	Is there general acceptance that "one size does not fit all"? Do they accept the benefit of place-based approaches even if not taking place in their locations?	Is there open-mindedness among leaders to have a long-term vision and commitment to embed change broadly? Is there acceptance that change requires long-term commitment? Is there acceptance that place-based approach is beneficial?
SKILLS	Do individuals have capability, problem-solving, decision-making, communication and life skills as a result of the project? Do individuals have increased confidence and self-awareness?	Does the community have political savviness, culture of support and hope? Are there community skills (e.g. collaboration with each other and organisations and partners at all levels)? Does the community have skills for mediation, conflict resolution, facilitation and engagement?	Are partners able to build trust and a culture of support with local people (able to reach the unengaged)? Do partners have the skills necessary to flexibly deliver the services the community needs? Do partners employ trauma-informed and healing approaches?	Is the wider population able to adapt to what is taking place elsewhere and consider how it can benefit their area?	Is there adaptive leadership in place? Is there clear communication of strategy to influence work more widely? Is there capacity to capture and share learning? Are there negotiation and skills, ability to form consensus with leaders? Are back bone organisations being used to implement change?

			Do partners have political savviness to drive forward work?		
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1.1 The Matrix (with prompt questions to consider)

The following examples show how the Matrix can be applied in both planning and reflection. These worked examples illustrate how different projects can be mapped across the Matrix, and what kinds of insights emerge.

2. Case Study Tests

The Matrix was tested with three contrasting case studies representing different stages of the planning cycle. First, the Dundee Local Fairness Initiative, and then from the SPIRU Directory: Dundee Bairns, a long-established initiative, and Threehills Community Supermarket, an emerging project. This allowed exploration of the Matrix's value both in reflecting on mature projects and in shaping new developments.

2.1 Dundee Local Fairness Initiative (Planning the Project)

The Local Fairness Initiative example shows how the Matrix can be applied at the planning stage of a new project. It demonstrates how partners can map anticipated outcomes across different levels of change, ensuring both immediate needs and longer-term system shifts are considered. It supports clarity about who is expected to benefit, how partners will work together and what wider change is being pursued. Practitioners noted that it encourages both ambition and realism in planning (see page 9).

2.2 Threehills Community Supermarket (Emerging Project)

For Threehills, the Matrix prompted reflection on issues such as community awareness, perceptions of stigma and the supermarket's potential for leadership and sustainability. It also raised important questions about scalability, responsiveness to local needs and opportunities for skill-building beyond food access. This demonstrated how the Matrix can surface gaps and uncertainties at an early stage, supporting proactive planning (see page 10).

2.3 Dundee Bairns (Established Project)

For Dundee Bairns, the Matrix helped draw out how the project has normalised food provision in ways that reduce stigma and build community trust. It also captured the role of partners in sustaining flexible delivery and the potential for replication elsewhere. The exercise showed how the Matrix can extract lessons and highlight system-level changes that may not be immediately visible (see page 11).

2.4 Place-Based Working Matrix

2.4.1 Local Fairness Initiative– Planning the Project

	Individual	Community	Partners	Wider Population	System Change
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals and Households will have better knowledge around the benefits available to them Improved knowledge of the services available locally Improved knowledge of activities that take place locally Improved knowledge of the local labour market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See the work of the Local Fairness Initiative (LFI) taking place, including who is involved and the difference they are making See local reductions in crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of what the community needs, informed by community engagement Awareness of what each other do in the area and beyond Awareness and implementation of the Cash First Approach where relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See the change in the LFI area over time Potentially see reduced crime levels, e.g. anti-social behaviour in the LFI area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving local residents will increase the impact of the LFI Taking a whole family approach will increase the overall benefit Cash First Approach fully implemented No Wrong Door approach fully implemented Better data sharing and improved data sets
Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased hope for the future More willingness (and ability) to get involved in local activities and access services Improved mental health and wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More accepting of those with particular issues, e.g. substance misuse, who are working to improve their lives Better mutual support between neighbours Better sense of community belonging and cohesiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Wrong Door approach is instilled across Partners Engage freely and openly with community members and each other Supportive of each other as ‘enabling organisations’ Willing to positively engage with private sector landlords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will see that community engagement does make a difference More accepting of those with particular issues, e.g. substance misuse, who are working to improve their lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term support for families will be an accepted part of the LFI Increased flexibility of working practice Willingness to commit more resources to the LFI without more resources actually being available— redistribution to where resources are most needed
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved employability, digital, communication and negotiation skills Improved ability to make ends meet through employment, managing finances better, dealing with problem debt and/or better budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better able to advocate for change on their own behalf Better able to undertake activities led by themselves, for themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better at referring to others and sharing information Work well at collectively finding out what residents need Capacity of local services increases as a result of better networking Enhance collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn lessons from those living in the LFI area who have picked up new skills through community engagement and empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LFI will be capable of being replicated in other areas based on the learning from this LFI Better referral pathways Training is made more available in the targeted area

2.4.2 Threehills Community Supermarket—An Emerging Project

	Individual	Community	Partners	Wider Population	Systems Change / Leadership
Knowledge	Need to promote the Supermarket so that local people are aware of it. People experiencing food poverty are able to help determine what is stocked in the Supermarket	Is the community aware of the needs and common issues of its members? Is this for a particular community? How big an area does it seek to cover?	What involvement was there from partners in developing this project?	Is the project seen as a success? Or necessary? Are they aware of the project at all? To what extent do they need to be?	With the numbers accessing service; what benefits are fed back from 'shoppers'? Has there been any call for non-food items (e.g. clothes that are unaffordable)?
Attitude	Supermarket approach should reduce stigma—not a handout, but a different way/place to shop that is more affordable. Reduced food costs may lead to some spare cash and potential wider social activity/involvement.	Once set up, will word of mouth help promote the supermarket? How could this be facilitated? (e.g. by providing a much-needed service) Does access occur in a non-stigmatising way? (what are the wider community views—e.g. of those not using the service). Are people put off using the supermarket for any reason? Do the café/community facility aspects bring people together?	Do they see this as a useful venue for activities, alongside the Supermarket offering? Have any partners signed up to offer activities via the community facilities?	Locally, do people not using the Supermarket see it as a positive development? Could this lead to an expansion/increased demand? More widely, would other localities look to implement something similar?	How feasible would expansion/roll out elsewhere be? (six other Glasgow sites already in place). How responsive is the Supermarket to stocking different items? What limitations are there? Is there any impact on the cost of shopping at other retail outlets?
Skills	Whether or not to access the service is left up to the individuals. Can help with budgeting and healthier eating.	Does the community resource facility improve skills for the community? Any particular demographics (e.g. older people, single parents). Are volunteers needed to help deliver this project?	Is this an opportunity to develop both budgeting and cooking skills? Are facilities available for the latter? If not, could they be?	Are volunteers needed to help deliver this project?	Is there a possibility of community leadership for this project in the future? Can it be self-supporting to an extent? Will it always need some external funding?

2.4.3 Dundee Bairns—An Existing, Established Project in Dundee

	Individual	Community	Partners	Wider Population	Systems Change / Leadership
Knowledge	Dundee Bairns and their partners are good at promoting themselves, their activities and associated food for holiday periods. People know of them and what they do.	Many will be aware of the project due to it having been around several years.	Partners understand that people can experience food insecurity, especially children during holiday periods when free school meals are not available.	See that the holiday programmes are well attended and making a difference.	Food provision has developed from simple activity sessions to community fun days, playschemes and day trips, for example.
Attitude	Children are able to access activities and food without any stigma attached—the food aspect is part and parcel of the overall provision. Feedback is gathered on activities and meals and leads to change over time	Food provision is de-stigmatised as it is part of other activities that are taking place/being accessed.	Cooperative—by working together on different aspects, projects work better and better support the target children/families	Will vary. While many agree with the ethos of the project, there will be some that see provision of food to children as the parent's responsibility.	Provision of food alongside activities is being normalised. This reduces pressure on parents who might struggle to provide a decent packed lunch and reduces stigma that might arise because of this.
Skills	Gained through participation in activities, which would possibly be missed out on without the support of Dundee Bairns' food provision.	Community members provide a number of volunteers to support the project and also get involved in partners' projects to some extent.	Delivers appropriate food when and where it is needed during holiday periods. Good promotion of the work is carried out both as a food-provision agency and as a partner in overall holiday activity provision. An established and trusted 'brand' locally and is flexible in its delivery methods to meet needs.	Further consideration needed here (e.g. consult with partners working with the wider community).	Where new avenues for support are identified, Dundee Bairns give this consideration. Communications on what has been achieved are delivered frequently so people know about the project and the difference it is making.

Together, these insights confirm that while many tools exist, the Matrix offers a distinctive contribution. It bridges community-level reflection with partnership strategy and system change in a format that is practical and adaptable.

3. Scoping Review: Situating the Place-Based Matrix

3.1 Purpose and Framing

A scoping review was completed to situate the Place-Based Matrix within the broader landscape of frameworks, tools and approaches that are currently shaping place-based work in Scotland, across the UK and internationally.

The Matrix emerged from the Working in Partnership Community of Practice (CoP), which brought together practitioners, researchers and policymakers over several months to co-design a practical tool for planning, reflection and learning. It was developed in direct response to the need for a shared, accessible structure that could bridge perspectives across community, third sector and government levels.

From its earliest testing, participants identified the Matrix's unique versatility. Rather than being a tool for a single stage or purpose, they saw its value across the whole project's lifecycle, from early planning to reflective supervision, mid-point reviews and end-stage reporting. In particular, the Matrix was appreciated as a:

- Reflective tool for supervision and shared learning.
- Planning and coordination aid that helps teams align ambitions and identify gaps.
- Evaluation and reporting framework that captures change not always visible in conventional monitoring.
- Learning resource to draw lessons from case studies and share across networks.

The CoP was clear that this review should not be a systematic evidence synthesis but a mapping exercise. It aims to show where the Matrix sits in relation to existing frameworks, highlight overlaps and gaps and identify its distinct contribution. Importantly, the review also highlights opportunities to strengthen the tool before its wider roll-out, ensuring that it complements rather than duplicates existing approaches.

Participants articulated several hopes for the Matrix. They wanted it to:

- Act as a practical, adaptable tool that could be picked up at different stages of project work.
- Support the development of a shared language between practitioners, communities, and policymakers.
- Provide a credible structure for reflection and reporting that could stand alongside well-established frameworks like the Place Standard Tool or the UN SDGs.

3.2 Origins and Development of the Matrix

The Place-Based Matrix was not designed in isolation but grew organically from the CoP's collaborative work.

Early discussions highlighted a gap: while Scotland had a number of strong frameworks (such as the Place Standard Tool), these tended to focus on perceptions of place or policy principles rather than the relational and developmental processes of partnership working. Members of the CoP wanted something that could help them see change over time, especially in areas that are often difficult to capture, such as system shifts, emerging leadership or changes in community voice.

The group began developing the Matrix by identifying four cross-cutting themes they felt were central to place-based working:

- **Leadership**
- **System Change**
- **Community Voice**
- **Individual Development**

Rather than producing a checklist, they framed the Matrix as a conversation starter, a tool to prompt reflection, surface different perspectives, and enable richer dialogue.

The matrix was tested in practice using case studies from the SPIRU Directory, including:

- **Dundee Bairns Project:** a mature initiative where the Matrix helped explore progress, partnership alignment and less visible changes like confidence building.
- **Three Hills Community Supermarket:** an early-stage project where the Matrix supported planning and identification of future opportunities.

A third case study was carried out on the planning stages of the **Local Fairness Initiative**. Feedback confirmed the tool was intuitive and adaptable, though participants emphasised the importance of clear definitions, guidance and real-life examples to ensure consistent use.

3.3 Approach and Methodology

The scoping review takes a broad-brush approach to situating the Matrix. It aims for coverage rather than depth, mapping the most relevant frameworks and tools in three layers:

1. **Scotland** – where place-based policy and practice are most immediately relevant.
2. **Wider UK** – to compare and contrast approaches across different policy contexts.
3. **International** – to learn from frameworks that have global influence or conceptual strength.

Inclusion criteria:

- Practical tools, frameworks or matrices used for planning, reflection, evaluation or shared learning.
- Frameworks that support cross-audience understanding (practitioners, communities, policymakers).
- Tools that help build shared language or enable structured reflection.

Exclusions:

- Academic theory without an applied tool.
- Tools that are too narrow in scope (unless foundational).
- Resources that lack accessible guidance.

3.4 Mapping Comparable Frameworks

The review has mapped key tools and frameworks across Scotland, the UK and internationally. These include both practice-based tools (such as the Place Standard Tool) and broader conceptual or evaluative frameworks (such as the Collective Impact Framework or UN SDGs).

3.4.1 Frameworks Table.

Level	Tool / Framework	Source & Link	Relevance to Matrix	Notes / Use Cases
Scotland	Place Standard Tool (PST)	ourplace.scot	Strong participatory alignment; more focused on perceptions of place than project processes.	Shows power of structured conversations; widely adopted.
Scotland	PST with Climate Lens	https://adaptation.scot/	Illustrates adaptability of tools to emerging concerns.	Lesson for how the Matrix could evolve (e.g. add 'lenses' for themes like equity).
Scotland	Place Standard Evidence Base	https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/evidence-behind-place-standard-tool-and-place-and-wellbeing-outcomes/evidence-behind-place-standard-tool-and-place-and-wellbeing-outcomes/	Adds credibility by linking tool design to research.	Suggests the Matrix should build an evidence base of its own.
Scotland	Christie Commission Principles	Scottish Government, 2011	Values alignment: prevention, partnership and community empowerment.	Matrix operationalises these principles into practice.
UK-wide	NHS England Place-Based Tool Guide	https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/place-based-tool-guide/	Practical example of structured 'place' definition and resource allocation.	Helps the Matrix position itself as complementary rather than duplicative.
UK-wide	What Works Wellbeing Framework	What Works Wellbeing	Strong evidence base for measuring outcomes.	Could underpin success indicators within the Matrix.
UK-wide	Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)	Local Trust	Focuses on strengths, not deficits.	Supports CoP emphasis on asset-based language and reflection.

International	Place-Based Conservation (2013)	Springer link	Adds conceptual depth to the meaning of 'place'.	Enriches design of the Matrix.
International	Collective Impact Framework	https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact	Popular collaboration model with five conditions.	Resonates with the Matrix's emphasis on shared leadership.
International	Collective Impact Toolkit	Tamarack	Provides practical guides for implementation.	Useful model for supporting uptake of the Matrix.
International	OECD Wellbeing Framework	OECD Better Life Index	Offers indicators for policy-level wellbeing.	Positions the Matrix in relation to international standards.
International	UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	United Nations	Links local activity to global goals.	Helps demonstrate how local reflection supports global change.

3.5 Key Insights from the Review

Several insights stand out from this mapping exercise:

- **Versatility as strength:** Like the Place Standard Tool, the Matrix works across different purposes. Clear guidance will be needed to help users understand these varied applications.
- **Credibility and evidence:** Tools gain traction when underpinned by evidence (as seen with PST and What Works Wellbeing). Building an evidence base for the Matrix will be important.
- **Alignment with Scottish values:** The Matrix embodies Christie Commission principles, offering a practical way to live out prevention, partnership and empowerment.
- **Bridging local to global:** Tools like the SDGs and OECD Wellbeing Framework show how local reflections can be connected to wider policy and international goals. The Matrix could act as a bridge, making local experience relevant at national and global levels.
- **Collaborative orientation:** Collective Impact shows that structured collaboration models resonate strongly with the CoP. The Matrix offers similar potential but in a more adaptable form.

4. Reflection:

This review demonstrates that, while numerous tools exist (e.g., Place Standard Tool, Collective Impact Framework), the Matrix offers a distinctive feature: it connects project-level reflection with system change in a format that practitioners can use directly.

5. Next Steps and Development

The CoP will continue to work together and welcome practitioners and interested parties are invited to test the tool and share feedback.