

Streets for all?

An analysis of the statutory Equality Objectives of Scottish local councils.

Introduction

Since April 2013, Scottish Councils have had a number of statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duties associated with the 2010 Equality Act. Amongst these obligations are specific duty requiring local authorities to publish equality outcomes and report progress, to report on mainstreaming the equality duty and to assess and review policies and practices.

This report presents an analysis of the published equality outcomes of all Scottish Councils, in order to find out which have included statements aimed at making their streets and public spaces more accessible to disabled people and others with mobility difficulties. Cities, towns and villages need to be places where everyone can visit, participate in and enjoy.

Accessible and inclusive public spaces benefit not only disabled people, but everyone, including children, older people and anyone with luggage or shopping. Encouraging people to walk safely and securely in public spaces is not only a matter of promoting pedestrian interests; it has wider economic, health and community safety benefits too, and as such contributes to many of the 'cross-cutting' outcomes which councils and their partner organisations aspire to. Living Streets would hope that councils would take the opportunity of the statutory requirement to mainstream equalities to commit to making their community environments inclusive.

Methodology

The published equality outcome statements of all 32 Scottish councils were accessed in January 2014. A link to the published report is provided for each council below.

In this document, all formal 'outcomes' referring to making streets accessible are quoted, along with target dates and the department with the lead responsibility where stated. In addition relevant statements that are not part of an actual 'outcome', for example as part of a 'context' section, are included where they are particularly relevant.

Most councils have committed to some general outcomes aspiring to equal access to services, but unless they make a specific reference to the pedestrian or public environment, they are not recorded in this analysis.

Findings

Only ten councils made positive statements about aiming to make their pavements, streets and spaces more accessible:

- City of Aberdeen
- Clackmannanshire
- City of Dundee
- East Dumbartonshire
- City of Edinburgh
- Inverclyde
- Moray
- North Ayrshire
- South Ayrshire
- South Lanarkshire

Typically, these statements focus on footway maintenance, for example “the condition of roads and pavements do not prevent older people and those with mobility impairment from accessing shops, services and transport” (Inverclyde).

Some councils focus on the need to minimise obstructions to pedestrians; for example “take action to ensure advertising boards and other street furniture does not restrict access to town centres” (East Dumbartonshire).

Edinburgh Council appears to be alone in linking ‘walkability’ to reducing traffic speeds, in addition to the design, maintenance and policing of footways: “Create ‘walkable’ and ‘cyclable’ neighbourhoods through construction of a minimum of four 20mph zones”.

Conclusions

From this evidence, it is clear that most Scottish Councils have not made any link between their new equality duties and their policy with respect to public spaces. There are however some examples of imaginative use of the Public Sector Equality Duties, where Councils state in their statutory Equality Outcomes a commitment to making streets that are accessible and inclusive for disabled people.

There is an opportunity for these examples of good practice to be more widely adopted by councils throughout Scotland. All Councils are required to review and revise their statutory outcome statements, develop their approach to mainstreaming equalities into routine services and report on their progress. Councils which have not yet made the link between their equality outcomes and the provision of accessible public spaces and pavements have an opportunity to ‘mainstream’ such activity into their policies and programmes for planning, street maintenance and so on.

City of Aberdeen

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=49878&sID=22975>

Outcome11: Pavements and footpaths that are safer and easier to use for pedestrians.

Lead service: Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure.

Fewer pavement obstructions and improved provision of dropped kerbs (number and sites).

Aberdeenshire

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Equalities/MainstreamingReportanEqualityOutcomes.pdf>

No pedestrian-related outcomes; however, the following statement is included in the document:

13.3.3 Infrastructure/13.3.4 Disability Access Compliance

The Equality Act compliance works is part of the "Footways" works within the maintenance programme. There is a rolling programme which was agreed with certain disability groups and is concentrating on town centre improvements such as dropped kerbs and tactile pavements. Property service employees are trained to carry out access audits which enables a list of remedial works to be compiled. Funding has been allocated to a programme of remedial works in the capital plan, which is now 90% complete. The remaining 10% will be completed as the office accommodation realisation programme is rolled out.

Angus

<http://www.angus.gov.uk/ac/documents/equalityoutcomes/equalityoutcomesreport.pdf>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

Argyll and Bute

http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/equalities_mainstreaming_report_and_equality_outcomes_for_council_25th_april.pdf

No pedestrian-related outcomes

Clackmannanshire

<http://www.clacksweb.org.uk/document/4089.pdf>

Equality Outcome 10

People with disabilities have better access to Council buildings, public space, streets and public transport.

Action 10.2

Establish a prioritised audit of all streets based on the "Roads for All" and "Designing for Streets" guidelines.

Indicator: % of roads and streets audited % of roads and streets complying with relevant guideline.

Action 10.3

Implement prioritised street improvements based on the results of the street audit.

indicator: Number of streets improved to compliant status.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Outer Hebrides)

<http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/equalityanddiversity/documents/EOMR.pdf>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

Dumfries and Galloway

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=12337&p=0>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

City of Dundee

<https://www.dundee.gov.uk/equanddiv>

<http://www.crer.org.uk/attachments/DundeePSED.pdf>

Equality Outcome: Dundee's communities' will have physical environments which are accessible to those with physical disabilities

Departmental Service Action Plan: Delivering Capital Plan programme e.g. school estate, community centres, leisure centres, integrated community health projects, environmental improvements, open space strategy, coastal protection etc.

East Ayrshire

<http://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/E/EqualityOutcomes.pdf>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

East Dumbartonshire

<http://www.scrutiny.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/pdf/CROD-CPP%20Equality%20Outcomes%20and%20Mainstreaming%20Report%202013-2017.pdf>

Equality outcome 9: Town centres are accessible to all and free from unnecessary obstructions.

Action 1: Engage with East Dunbartonshire Access Panel to identify issues in relation to accessibility of Town centres. Target date: May 2013 and ongoing. Indicator: Percentage increase in council buildings accessible to people with disabilities

Action 3: Take action to ensure advertising boards and other street furniture does not restrict access to town centres. Target date: May 2013 and ongoing. Indicator: Percentage reduction in complaints about accessibility of town centres and A-frame advertising boards

East Lothian

<http://www.crer.org.uk/attachments/EastLothianPSED2.pdf>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

East Renfrewshire

<http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=9084&p=0>

Equality Outcome 1: Disabled people are protected from physical and communication barriers.

Intermediate Outcome 1.3: Wheelchair Users find it easy to access pavements in East Renfrewshire.

Lead: Environment/Roads

City of Edinburgh

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/751/equality_diversity_and_human_rights/707/equality_and_rights

Equality Outcome ER22: There are accessible and inclusive transport systems ensuring people feel safe using the City's public transport, road, footway and cycle networks

Mainstreaming Actions:

- Create 'walkable' and 'cyclable' neighbourhoods through construction of a minimum of 4 20mph zones; design and implement an area wide 20mph zone in South Edinburgh; promotional campaign to improve compliance and Speed limit review to be undertaken for A and B roads.
- Complete the introduction of 20mph speed limits outside all primary and secondary schools

Falkirk

http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/corporate_neighbourhood/human_resources/PDFs/2013/eom_report_13.pdf

No pedestrian-related outcomes, but "Improved physical access to services, housing and the public realm" noted as an 'existing priority'.

Fife

<http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=publication.pop&pubid=5A16D70D-CEB9-0C1D-E7EA77A5B3B62C4C>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

City of Glasgow

<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=15516&p=0>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

Highland

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/B10BF1AC-EFA5-4F52-885B-97E7A3CBA80F/0/Outcomesreport.pdf>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

Inverclyde

<http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-and-diversity/equality-diversity>

Equality Outcome: The condition of roads and pavements do not prevent older people and those with mobility impairment from accessing shops, services and transport.

Performance Indicator: % of the road network that should be considered for maintenance investment

Midlothian

http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/news/article/917/equality_outcome_and_mainstreaming_report_2013_2017

No pedestrian-related outcomes

Moray

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file85427.pdf>

Theme 3: Access to streets. The outcomes for this section are (responsible authorities in brackets):

1. Work with community groups to carry out street audits to gain insight into the physical and psychological barriers that prevent pedestrians or wheelchair users from using the pavements in Moray (The Moray Council).
2. Improve access to streets for all users in Moray (The Moray Council).
3. People feel safe using the streets in Moray (The Moray Council and the Moray Licensing Board).
4. Provide easily accessible information about safety and accessibility of the streets in Moray (The Moray Council).

Feedback from Moray Disability Forum: The Forum has given many examples of physical features in Moray which make it difficult or impossible to effectively use a great number of footpaths in Moray. These features range from temporary features (such as cars parked on kerbs, wheelie bins, a-frame signs, or other temporary obstacles blocking the pavement) to more permanent obstacles (such as dropped kerbs that are too high, narrow pavements, pavements made too narrow by drainpipes, lampposts, steep gradients, unsecure embankments, insufficient or non-compliant disabled parking spaces, cobbled streets). These features affect wheelchair users, people who are visually impaired, elderly

and parents with young children. In some extreme cases, these obstacles are impossible to negotiate without a significant detour, e.g. the platforms at Elgin railway station.

North Ayrshire

<http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/equality-policy-and-performance.aspx>

Outcome 4: Older people are more active and independent in their communities

Action: 4.6 Review the Outdoor Access Strategy and the Core Paths Plan in partnership with North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum (NAOAF)

Success Criteria/Desired Outcome: To take into consideration the requirements of people of all ages and abilities in the design and implementation of access projects.

Timescale/Lead service: April 2013 – Mar 2014. Economic Development

North Lanarkshire

<http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=26438>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

Orkney

[http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Council/Council-Policies/Orkney Islands Council Equality Outcomes 2013 2017.pdf](http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Council/Council-Policies/Orkney%20Islands%20Council%20Equality%20Outcomes%202013%202017.pdf)

No pedestrian-related outcomes

Perth and Kinross

<http://www.pkc.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=19460&p=0>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

Renfrewshire

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/81c835cc-e95e-4799-824d-b1917fd8c591/ce-Progressonmainstreamingequalitydutyandequalityoutcomes.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

Scottish Borders

http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/5881/appendix_4-equality_outcomes_and_indicators

No pedestrian-related outcomes

Shetland

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/communityplanning/documents/ShetlandsEqualitiesMainstreamingReportandEqualityOutcomes2013to2017FinalVersion6.pdf>

No pedestrian-related outcomes

South Ayrshire

<http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/equalities/publications/equality%20and%20diversity%20strategy-sac-25%20april%202013%20final.pdf>

Medium Term (3-4 years) Equality Outcome: Improved accessibility to Council buildings and public spaces.

South Lanarkshire

[Download Now - South Lanarkshire Council](#)

Outcome 3: Improve the road network and influence improvements in public transport

To help us achieve this change, we will... “take account of disabled requirements when street-scaping through South Lanarkshire’s shopping centres” (3.4)

Stirling

http://www.stirling.gov.uk/_documents/temporary-uploads/chief-executives-office/sc20130502item10equalitystrategyapp1-1.pdf

No pedestrian-related outcomes

West Dumbartonshire

http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/2502909/wdc_equality_mainstreaming_report_2013_2017.pdf

No pedestrian-related outcomes

West Lothian

<http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/downloaddoc/1799563/1846123/2398118>

No pedestrian-related outcomes; however, “accessibility of the built environment” is noted as an issue in the context of enhancing independence for disabled people (equality outcome 5)

25.1.14

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