

Golcar, Milnsbridge, Longwood and Cowlersley

16th to 29th July 2018

What we did

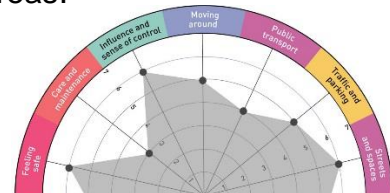
We tested out a tool called the “Place Standard” in the Golcar ward. This is a way of helping to get conversations going about any place (it could be your street, neighbourhood or town), by using some simple questions. The Place Standard is already widely used in Scotland, to help citizens and organisations talk about places.

Who participated?

Members of staff from Kirklees Council and KNH talked to groups, individuals, businesses and young people. The discussions took place in community buildings, on the streets, in school playgrounds and in shopping areas.

240 citizens took part in the conversations

140 Place Standard assessments were completed



Ages of participants:

Under 16	4.3%
17 to 24	5.7%
25 to 34	15%
35 to 44	8.6%
45 to 54	13.6%
55 to 64	12.9%
65 to 74	29.2%
75+	10.7%

Female participants	69%
Male participants	31%

Number of assessments per area:

Golcar	61
Milnsbridge	40
Longwood	22
Cowlersley	2
Not specified	15

What participants said

Moving around

Overall score: 4.8

Key issues: Lack of cycling lanes. High volumes of traffic. Speeding traffic, including to the M62, is a problem. Poor maintenance of roads and pavements. Safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists caused by inappropriately parked cars.

"Dire need of infrastructure change to improve road safety."

Suggestions: Encouraging parents not to use cars for short trips. Dropped pavements in Milnsbridge. A crossing with lights at Morley Lane. Maintenance of footpaths for walkers and designated cycle groups.

Public transport

Overall score: 5.3

Key issues: Bus services. Participants said the local bus service is very good, especially in Golcar, and meets people's everyday needs. However, in Milnsbridge and Longwood it is hit and miss and does not meet needs in the evening and at weekends, or for shift workers. There's no direct bus to the hospital or GP surgery and drunk passengers cause problems on the late night service to Golcar.

Traffic and parking

Overall score: 3.2

Key issues: Lack of parking facilities, which results in irresponsible parking and has a negative impact on local businesses. Speeding. Congestion in rush hour (which participants called "a nightmare"). The volume of school traffic is a particular problem for residents, making access and parking difficult. Community events (which are welcomed) attract visitors and this has a big impact on parking availability.

Suggestions: Community groups should share information about events and activities that will attract large numbers of visitors that will have an impact on parking and congestion, in order to make local people aware and avoid frustration. The layby in the middle of Golcar village should be a 15 mins maximum stop.

Streets and spaces

Overall score: 4.7

Key issues: Buildings are unattractive. Pavements are full of weeds and not maintained. Rubbish and flytipping. Lack of public spaces, especially for young people, and "some shops looking scruffy". Participants value the work of Golcar Lily and conservation groups, volunteers and community organisations, such as planting up flower beds to make the area look better.

"Conservation groups and volunteers do a great job looking after the area."

Suggestions: Some spaces could be used for parking or done up for public use. There is a plot of unused land above St John's Church that would make a great recreation ground. More volunteers are needed to help take care of greenspaces. Encourage local businesses to have planters and to clean up space outside JJs café.

Natural space

Overall score: 4.9

Key issues: A good variety of natural spaces are available. Lack of maintenance means poor access for people who have limited mobility. Poor and infrequent grass cutting. Dog walkers can be irresponsible. Housing development on open spaces.

"Beautiful views and good places to walk."

"God's village."

Suggestions: Involve volunteers in community clean ups. Education campaign to stop littering. Bins along the canal tow path. Could privately owned allotments in Longwood (behind the Mechanics Hall) be opened up for community use?

Play and recreation

Overall score: 4.4

Key issues: Lack of consultation about the removal of one play area was compounded by another play area being badly vandalised. General lack of provision for young people, including disabled children. Closure of youth clubs has impacted on teenagers. School fields are an alternative for sports, but boggy fields, dog fouling and access issues stop people using them. Good football pitches and different age related open spaces in Golcar village. Milnsbridge Village Hall is good for children.

Facilities and amenities

Overall score: 4.6

Key issues: "Good range of easily accessible shops" in Golcar and Milnsbridge. In Longwood village there is only one shop, a problem for those without cars. Good schools. Lot of takeaways but "no decent eateries to meet friends and socialise" (other than the pubs). Lack of bottle banks, dentist and a bank. Many people are unhappy about the closure of one of the GP practices.

"There has been a drop in trade due to the bank closing."

Suggestions: Diverse range of amenities: GP surgery, cafes, bistros, village hall.

Work and local economy

Overall score: 3.8

Key issues: Loss of the textile industry and conversion of mills to flats. Employers recruit locally, but jobs are low paid and low skill. Good access to the M62 has opened up opportunities, though not everyone is happy about Golcar being a "commuter village". Variety of local tradesmen available, however they can be expensive. Lack of job seeking support and volunteering opportunities since the local job club closed. Access to better quality jobs should be a priority.

"It's the norm to travel to work if you want a decent job."

Housing and community

Overall score: 4.5

Key issues: The amount of new housing development in the ward is putting pressure on infrastructure and amenities. Too much expensive housing - a good mix of social and private housing, family homes and affordable homes for young people are needed. Participants are happy about housing repairs being done promptly and to good standard, but unhappy with the state of some housing "which makes the estate look tired and messy". Lack of bungalows or smaller properties for people to move into means that larger houses can't be freed up for families.

Social contact

Overall score: 5

Key issues: Social interaction is good in Golcar and Longwood. Lots of voluntary activity, churches, community buildings, sports clubs and library. Especially good for older people, not as much going on for younger people. In Milnsbridge people feel it's more isolated, although the village hall is good.

"Everyone knows everybody and gets on."

Suggestions: An online space to promote and publicise what's on. Community events to bring people together. Support for people who have mental health issues.

Identity and belonging

Overall score: 5.3

Key issues: Citizens of the area have a strong identity and a feeling of belonging. People value their heritage (weavers, heritage trail, Colne Valley Museum and Golcar Lily) and have "a strong sense of pride". In Milnsbridge some feel boundaries can affect belonging. In Longwood some feel the sense of belonging is weakening.

Feeling safe

Overall score: 5

Key issues: People in Golcar think it is a relatively safe place to live "despite its reputation". Some issues with anti-social behaviour, but these can be resolved by "talking with parents nicely". Decreased police presence in the area and "police not being proactive in getting witness statements". Visible presence of gangs in the area and also visible drug use and drug dealing.

"Gang marks in the ginnels."

Care and maintenance

Overall score: 4.4

Key issues: Well-maintained parks and public spaces. Volunteer clean-ups have a big impact. Particular areas are "scarred with litter and detritus due to anti-social behaviour", or have issues with dog fouling. Lack of bins, blocked drains and potholes. Derelict buildings, dust from development work and large lorries shedding their loads. Some residents don't take responsibility for keeping the area tidy.

Influence and sense of control

Overall score: 3.8

Key issues: Many citizens feel that councillors are very visible, accessible, supportive and easy to talk to. People feel they can get things done through local groups and can find things out online. The business community feel that councillors are not visible, and they "don't know where to start to raise concerns." The council and other public organisations don't always explain what's happening or "consult but don't take our thoughts into account". Citizens feel that often decisions have already been made, so getting involved and sharing your views is pointless. Participants asked for the council to "communicate at a level that people understand". Citizens also asked for more face to face conversations with council staff – and more "talking and listening to real people".

"We need... a council and councillors that listen."