



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

Vacant & Derelict Land – Community Impact Tool

What is it

This tool is made up of a survey with a scoring system that has been designed to help understand and collect evidence of how a vacant or derelict site makes communities *feel*. It is intended to help gauge and measure how sites impact community wellbeing and neighbourhoods.

It is **qualitative**, capturing the real lived experience of people living near neglected land or buildings.

The findings from using the survey and its results can help to provide the evidence to inform decisions and, most importantly, demonstrate the harm that these sites cause to communities.

There are also some additional ideas for gathering data about sites. These are suggested below and can help to further demonstrate the impact of the site on the local community.

This survey tool can be used with other tools such as the [Place Standard](#) or the [Town Centre toolkit](#).

This tool can support local authorities and local organisations in collecting evidence to inform:

- feasibility studies
- funding applications
- planning and place-making
- investments and interventions.

Additional ideas



How to use it

Working on a single site?

The survey can help capture the level of impact on a community.

You can ask a community group to fill it in together, or individuals can complete their own and compare – or combine – their answers.

Working with a list of sites?

The survey can be used to help identify and narrow down a list of sites to tackle as a priority in the interest of the community.

The scoring and colour coding in the results can be used to prioritise sites by the level of harm as felt by the community.

A suggested site selection process is described by Scottish Land Commission research on the [Consequences of Vacant and Derelict Land on Communities](#) (SLC, Peter Brett Associates 2019).

Tips for facilitators and users



This survey can:

- Help gather views about a site. It may be that you wish to break down the scores and look at areas that the site affects the most. A group of people can complete it together, or individuals can complete it on their own. You can either compare individual scores, or add them together to get a total score. This can be useful if you are completing the survey for several sites in order to rank them.
- Be tailored to gain more relevant feedback to a site. For example, if the site was not near housing and is in a more rural setting, the questions can be adapted.
- Be completed on-site with discussion around the questions to gain wider understanding of the 'whys' behind responses.



Fill in the survey on the following pages and find out your score. Compare your score to the table at the end of the survey to see how big an impact a particular site is having on your community.

The survey

Q1 Physical Health

Which statement do you agree with most:

The site stops me from walking, cycling or doing exercise in my neighbourhood	3
The site makes me less likely to walk, cycle or do exercise in my neighbourhood	2
The site has no impact on me walking, cycling or doing exercise in my neighbourhood	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:

Q2 Wellbeing

Which statement do you agree with most:

The site often makes me feel anxious, stressed or angry	3
The site sometimes makes me feel anxious, stressed or angry	2
The site never or rarely makes me feel anxious, stressed or angry	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:

Q3 Crime

Which statement do you agree with most:

Anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, vandalism or fires often takes place on the site	3
Anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, vandalism or fires sometimes take place on the site	2
Anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, vandalism or fire raising rarely takes place on the site	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:

Q4 Economy (housing)

Which statement do you agree with most:

I feel strongly that the the site has an impact on people buying or renting houses here	3
I feel that the site might have an impact on people buying or renting housing here	2
The site is not putting people off buying or renting housing here	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:

The survey – continued

Q5 Economy (local business)

Which statement do you agree with most:

I feel that the site has a strong impact on businesses and visitors coming to the area	3
I feel that the site has some impact on business and visitors coming to the area	2
I feel that the site doesn't impact businesses and visitors coming to the area	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:

Q6 Pride/Identity

Which statement do you agree with most:

I feel strongly that this site matters to my community	3
I feel that the site matters to some degree to my community	2
I don't feel that this site matters that much to my community	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:

Q7 Personal safety

Which statement do you agree with most:

I always feel unsafe and avoid going near the site	3
I sometimes feel unsafe and often avoid going near the site	2
I never feel unsafe and don't avoid the site	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:

Q8 Community use

Which statement do you agree with most:

This site has no benefits for the local community	3
The site has limited benefits for the local community	2
The site is used informally by the community (e.g. for dog walking or community growing) and it is providing benefits to the community	1
I don't have a view	0

SCORE:

The results

Now add up the scores for each question to get an understanding of the impact of the site on the community.

TOTAL SCORE		
0-8	9-16	17-24
LOW OR NO IMPACT	MODERATE – STRONG IMPACT	HIGH – VERY HIGH IMPACT
The site has some or no impact on place and community perception or feelings.	The site has negative impacts on some but not in all areas.	This site has multiple negative impacts on the community. The condition of the site significantly affects access, health, wellbeing and how people feel or behave.

i How to find more information

Physical health

- **Number of complaints to landowner/ local authority.** This could help give you an indication of how problematic a site is.
- **Speak to the local authority.** Local authorities have teams dealing with contaminated land* who can give you more information about whether a site potentially contains some contaminants which may be a barrier.
- **Active travel or access officers** dealing with active travel or open space may have undertaken previous consultation exercises.
- **Desk Study via Library of Scotland maps section.** What can a site history tell you about previous uses of a site? This might give you an indication of the former uses and related potential contaminants.

Crime/Safety

- Local police and fire records
- Local authority complaints
- Local authority environmental health team

Local economy

- [Town Centre toolkit](#)
- Local authority statistics on vacancy rates
- Social housing lists – Housing providers, registered social landlords or local authority

Community use

- Take a wider neighbourhood survey
- [Place Standard tool](#) or [Town Centre toolkit](#)

*Contaminated land is legally defined and must be listed on contaminated land register held locally.

www.landcommission.gov.scot/notsoprettyvacant

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