

Local Authority Urban Design Forum

MEETING 6: CHAIRED BY LESLEY McVEIGH (NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL), MATTHEW SPURWAY (RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL)

3 December 2015 | Lighthouse, Glasgow



INTRODUCTION

The LAUDF is a network for local authority practitioners with an involvement in urban design to share ideas on current issues, learn from each other's experience and build up resources that everyone can benefit from.

This newsletter covers the sixth meeting of the Forum, which was an informal session held to reflect on the first three years of the forum and plan for 2016 and beyond. The meeting was attended by 16 professionals from 14 local authorities or public bodies.

An opening discussion reflected on the purpose and objectives of the forum. This was followed by 'open mic' slots for forum members to present on impacts or activities related to forum involvement. Workshops to consider future directions for the forum followed. In three rotating groups, participants considered the impacts and benefits of forum involvement, discussed content for a proposed May meeting on street design and debated future meeting topics for 2016 and beyond. Discussion points are summarised in the accompanying Workshop Summary.



SAY HELLO TO ARCHITECTURE

Danny McKendry, introduced A&DS' 'Say hello to Architecture' programme for 2016. Contributions are invited from forum members to A&DS's contribution to the 2016 Year of Innovation, Architecture, and Design and the Festival of Architecture.

Kicking off first, the Local Events Programme will see A&DS provide expertise and resources to support community groups and organisations to develop and run events and activities on the theme of Say Hello to Architecture. Events could range from simple walking tours to exhibitions – activities that celebrate Scottish architecture. A&DS are looking to support events ranging from local trails through to pop up exhibitions and events. Examples include:

- events and activities that celebrate Scottish architecture;

demonstrating why buildings are designed the way they are

- pop up cinemas/hubs/shops, creating 'architecture' in an underused place or space designed for some other use
- local stories and memories of local neighbourhoods and architectural tours (walks, runs, cycles) to den building;

In short A&DS want to help communities to think about their place, respond to it in an enjoyable way and sow the seeds for future activity! So if you are part of, or know of, a community or organisation that would like to take part – get in touch with A&DS on 2016@ads.org.uk. Further details of A&DS' full programme for the 2016 year of Innovation, Architecture & design can be found here...

<http://www.ads.org.uk/say-hello-to-architecture/>



Place Challenge 2015, Hospitalfield House, Arbroath

KIRSTY MACARI

Kirsty Macari of Angus Council presented on impacts of forum involvement, outlining her journey from regular symposium attendee, to forum and steering group member, to recent experiences as the host authority of the Place Challenge event.

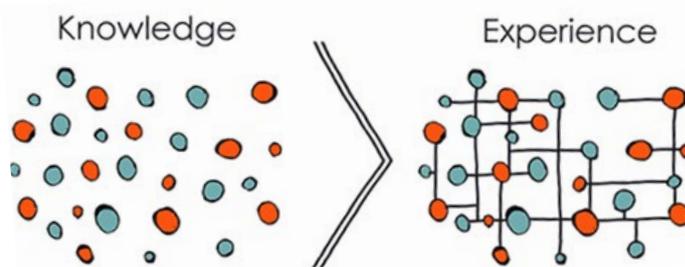
The Place Challenge has evolved from the Design Skills Symposium series where demand for LAUDF was first identified by participants including Kirsty. In October 2015, Angus Council hosted Place Challenge 2015 in Arbroath, considering possibilities for Town Centre Living. Kirsty outlined the hard work undertaken in Arbroath by participants over a busy two day programme...

Opening morning highlights included Chief Architect Ian Gilzean on the policy context, a presentation from Kristen Hubert of Shelter (noting the startling figures of 27000 empty Scottish homes, worth an approximate 4.3billion), an introduction to Angus from Alan McKeown, Director of Communities, and an inspiring keynote from David Rudlin of URBED on the role of towns and on the conditions to encourage town centre living. Kirsty explained the process she had led a small group through as a subgroup facilitator to define a problem, explore benefits and barriers to town centre living, brainstorm in groups, select a theme to consider, question ideas and consider different perspectives, develop persona's to give a real feel for peoples perspectives, mapping of networks and connections through to definition of an initial brief for action.

The second day opened with a Project Exchange, to share learning from a dozen live projects offering potential ways of addressing town centre living issues. This was followed by collaborative work in subgroups to develop and present a business model for a potential solution.

Kirsty emphasised that the event was not about looking for answers to solve Arbroath's issues, but about learning methods and tools to look at common problems in a different way. A huge amount was achieved in just two days! Outputs from the event will follow early in 2016. A short video summarising the event is available here...

<https://vimeo.com/148641171>



CRAIG McINTYRE

Craig McIntyre of North Lanarkshire Council presented on his experiences of forum involvement as a founding member and steering group participant. The forum, which was born of frustration following Design Skills Symposium 2012, is still needed now. It's a place to meet with like-minded professionals, to share and capture knowledge and to feel that you're not alone in pursuing a placemaking agenda.

The best benefits of involvement had come from active participation in the forum. Key to success is the self-generating nature of the agendas - based on feedback from forum participants - and the open door policy on forum and steering group membership. It was important that the forum continue to keep growing participation to all those involved in placemaking.

Craig had presented on behalf of LAUDF to a group considering establishing a similar network for public sector procurement professionals (Public Sector Client Forum). Advocating the value of LAUDF, Craig explained how the initial energy had been important to building membership, and sustaining that through relevant thematic meetings, with a show and tell element.

The forum works as a confederacy of likeminded people, learning from each other. With all organisations facing time pressures and trying to do more with less, the ability to put faces to names of colleagues in other authorities is hugely valuable. Knowledge exchange extends beyond meetings – an example was Falkirk / Edinburgh sharing learning on street design following a forum meeting.

Craig concluded that the forum has given him new connections and added value to his professional knowledge and experience. It still feels relevant and if it were lost it would be missed.

AND FINALLY...

The next full meeting of LAUDF is proposed for May 2016, on the topic of Street Design.

The steering group would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in contributing. The group meets on a quarterly basis. Please contact kate.givan@ads.org.uk for more information.

Forum members are encouraged to register with the online LAUDF [knowledgehub](#) site. It's your site - use it to contact forum members, start discussions or post information about items of interest to members in between meetings.

The LAUDF is intended for all local authority or public agency staff working on issues relating to urban design. Please do encourage colleagues to attend future events.