

Architecture &  
Design Scotland

Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

# Annual Review 2023: reflections and projections





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# Introduction

We believe in the power of design to improve people's lives. That's because design is all about creative approaches to solving problems.

When we use design skills, we create places and buildings that best meet the needs of the people who use them. Doing so effectively means bringing all parts of a community together and working collaboratively on a vision for their place. This review showcases examples of some of the amazing work we were involved in last year.

As a public body, our work needs to address the big issues. This means designing buildings and places which help tackle the climate emergency, address inequality, empower communities and improve health and well-being. Doing so collaboratively means we can also reduce the pressure on precious public resources, ensuring all investments work as hard as possible while creating the best outcomes for communities. In this way, our work is aligned with the wider priorities of the Scottish Government and framed by the needs of the different communities we work with.

So, whatever the place, whether it's a single classroom or a whole town, we use design-based approaches to enable those who will use the place to explore different options and agree – together – what's best for the future.

This document is structured around our approach and how we deliver our ten-year strategy:

- we connect people and organisations to create thriving places
- we share insight from our work to grow capacity across Scotland
- we champion good design and collaboration
- we provide advice on projects bringing a range of skills



▲ A Key Agencies Group workshop held at the Engine Shed in Stirling.

# Connect people and organisations to create thriving places

Bringing people together to collaborate is at the heart of what we do. We can all learn from each other. We are here to help share the experiences of those who have done, with those who will do.

In this section, you can read about our new series of Place Forum events aimed at building capacity in the sector. You can also find out about the latest from our community climate action approach in the Climate Action Towns project and how two local authorities exchanged ideas around greenspace in urban settings.

CONNECT PEOPLE

## Place Forum: a platform to share and learn

Douglas West Wind Farm site from the Douglas Valley for the Hagshaw Energy Cluster shared during Place Forum: Thinking big, thinking beyond.





In 2023 we introduced the Place Forum event series. It explored three key topics and brought together professionals from across the country.

Place Forum promotes the importance of design as a process to add value when creating good places. It highlights the role of Architecture and Design Scotland in bringing different organisations together to share creative and innovative responses to create good places.

Place Forum brings together practitioners and decision-makers from all sectors and all parts of the country. It provides professionals, community groups and local authorities with a platform to share experience and learning.

In 2023 we delivered three Place Forums with 20 speakers and 430 participants.

### The power of place in child poverty and cost of living crisis

Our first Place Forum, (March 2023), explored the theme of child poverty and the cost of living crisis. It showcased a range of case studies to address the Scottish context. The theme is one of the core priorities in the 2022-23 Programme for Government. Our event explored how key institutions that help shape our places can work together to make place-based strategies relevant to tackling these themes.

### Towards zero carbon places – making it happen

Our second Place Forum (June 2023), focused on exploring the different ways we can adapt places to tackle the climate emergency. The built environment currently accounts for around a fifth of Scotland’s greenhouse gas emissions. From improving energy efficiency in our buildings to replacing fossil fuel and gas heating systems, the built environment plays a critical part in moving to zero carbon places.

### Thinking big, thinking beyond

The third Place Forum (November 2023) looked at whole place design and collaborative approaches to challenging issues. In a changing climate, challenges to our infrastructure and pressure on finances, how can we support a big vision for our infrastructure and landscapes to embrace a scale of vision required for change.

### Future Place Forums

Our ambition is that more people will know about, and understand, the multiple benefits of a collaborative design approach and will benefit from the impact of this in their own place.

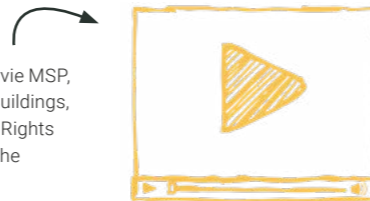
Place Forum offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate the positive impact of early design approach and the difference this can make to places at many different scales.

Our future Place Forums will continue to share learning from those who have done with those who will do to create a movement for change towards vibrant and sustainable places in Scotland.

### Additional resources

You can explore resources from our [Place Forums on our website here](#).

**Watch me:** Mr. Patrick Harvie MSP, Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights delivering the keynote for the second Place Forum.



# Planting the seeds of change in Stewarton

Completed work of urban street trees along Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow City Centre.





We have been working with East Ayrshire Council to support one of their [placemaking projects](#), which involves planting trees in Stewarton's town centre to improve the health and well-being of its residents and strengthen the resilience of its communities.

In October 2023, we brought together representatives from the Key Agencies Group, East Ayrshire Council, and Glasgow City Council for a peer-to-peer learning day focused on the benefits, opportunities, and challenges of redesigning streets by planting trees along pavements in urban areas.

The day was attended by representatives from a variety of East Ayrshire Council services including East Ayrshire Woodlands, Greener Communities, Facilities and Property Management and Ayrshire Road Alliance. National agencies such as NatureScot, and Scottish Water also attended.

The day included a presentation by a representative from Glasgow City Council about their experience with the Glasgow Avenues Project and a walking tour to see the new street trees on Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow city centre.

### Connecting local authorities and collaborating across sectors

Following the workshop, Karen Purves, Strategic Manager for Development Planning and Regeneration at East Ayrshire Council, commented:

"I feel that East Ayrshire Council has a much better understanding of how to implement street trees, the different barriers and challenges involved, and

how to overcome them. Learning from another local authority will really help us to take the next steps and get the project on the ground in Stewarton."

Key recommendations from the workshop include, addressing funding challenges through cross-departmental collaboration, and engaging the right stakeholders from the outset such as contractors, key agencies, designers, and community groups.

### Our future work in Stewarton

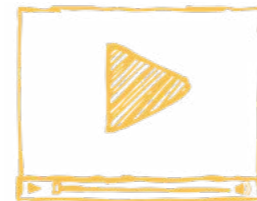
In 2024, we will collaborate with the council and the Key Agencies Group to develop a design brief for a housing site in Stewarton. The design brief will consider 20-minute neighbourhood principles, placemaking, and the housing needs of the community as outlined in the Local Development Framework.

We will also investigate how to further apply the 20-minute neighbourhood principles to future investment decisions related to the town's education and health estates.

**"Architecture and Design Scotland's support has provided us with additional capacity to work harder and achieve better results in the areas they are assisting us with."**

Karen Purves, Strategic Manager for Development Planning and Regeneration, East Ayrshire Council

**Watch me:** A short video about the walking tour.



# Climate Action Towns

Climate Action Towns is a Scottish Government funded project. The aim of the project is to work with a network of small towns to identify relevant climate issues and support local communities to take place-based climate action.

As we moved into the final year of the Climate Action Towns project, we continued our work with each of the nine towns. The towns are Annan, Alness, Benarty, Blackburn, Campbeltown, Dronagan, Rankinston and Stair, Holytown, Invergordon and Stevenston.

### Increasing community capacity

Our work has included working locally to support existing and potential community groups. In 2023 we supported the delivery of community capacity workshops jointly with Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) with the aim of empowering communities and local groups to take action.

For example, these workshops help nurture cohesion and confidence to apply for funding and take community action. We saw this happen in Holytown, where a historically under-represented community, with our support, applied for funding to create a community garden.

A key lesson we continue to learn about taking a place-based approach to climate action is that each town has specific needs, and a one size approach does not fit all. Being respectful of the place and responsive to local needs, generates more impactful outcomes.

### Enabling collaboration

In some towns, we have been able to gather a range of different previously disconnected community groups. We support the towns to join up and connect, which can lead to more cohesive working.

An example of this is in Campbeltown, where the community has formed the CampbeltownCAN forum. This brings together the town's groups monthly in the South Kintyre Development Trust Town Hall to discuss ways to work collaboratively at a town scale, including climate adaptation projects we identified together.



Community partners working on prioritising climate actions in Campbeltown.



Our team attends the Hannahston Woodlands Nature Day in Drongan promoting the Climate Action Towns project.



## Town specific actions

We have been tailoring our support depending on the individual situation and needs of each place. We ran workshops on town specific climate actions, helping to identify adaptation measures.

In September 2023 we delivered a climate adaptation workshop event in Blackburn, hosted by Community Action Blackburn. 46 people attended and the outcome has helped the community identify adaptation measures relevant to the town. We supported the Blackburn Future Group to identify climate focussed actions, now incorporated into the Blackburn Future Plan.

## Challenges and successes

There have been some challenges working on Climate Action Towns during the past year. Most notably, the cost-of-living crisis has become a significant focus for many communities, and community capacity for other issues becomes diluted.

We are seeing many successes too. In a number of towns, we have asked people to identify how changes to the climate are affecting their lives. The issues they are facing are being fed into local place plans and

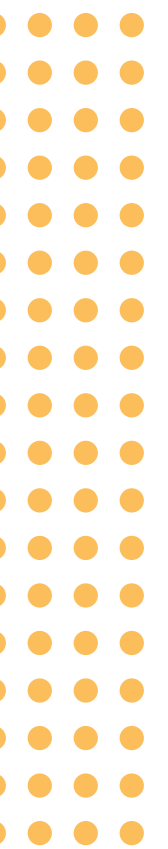
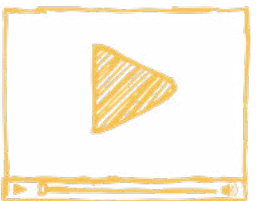
community action plans to embed climate actions at a community level. These will formalise actions in each area, led by the local communities.

In Benarty, our work has put in place measures for future research on co-benefits of adapting to climate change, and whether these also reduce the impacts of child poverty. The Community Council is currently developing its first Local Place Plan. This embeds the community's desire for a strong local economy and better-quality housing, as well as looking at ways of adapting to the climate emergency through localised food growing, active travel networks, community wealth buildings, and using nature in their flooding strategy.

## Looking ahead

As we come to the end of our three-year project, we will be working closely with the towns to support them in taking their ideas and actions forward. We will also be capturing the learning from our work, to be shared in a range of outputs in 2024, to inspire other communities across Scotland to take climate action.

Watch me: Climate Action Town's film.





# Snapshots

## Learning Places Scotland Conference

In November we supported the Scottish Government's delivery of the annual [Learning Places Scotland Conference](#). This year's conference had a strong outdoor education, design and provision strand running through it. This strategically aligned with our focus across the outdoor learning estate throughout this year and allowed for two of our key projects to be presented across the theme of The Sustainable Estate.

Matt Robinson from Learning Through Landscapes showcased the Climate Ready School Grounds project and resources, and Patrick Boxall from Queen Margaret University gave a presentation entitled 'Perspectives on Placemaking' which featured our ongoing collaborative Outdoor Learning Hub project.

We held campfire sessions under a canopy of trees at our shared exhibition stand with Scottish Government and Scottish Futures Trust. These smaller discussion forums allowed for debate, shared wins and challenges. They also provided an opportunity to focus on the issues and aspirations of local authorities to help us develop future support and shared learning topics for 2024.



The campfire sessions

## Urban Pirate visit with Cam Perkins

In August, we hosted a knowledge sharing session with Cam Perkins, Director of Urban Pirates, New Zealand, to exchange ideas on how we can prioritise community voices in shaping our places.

A reflection from this visit by our Director of Design, Heather Claridge can be [viewed in the October issue of the Scottish Planner](#).

Obligatory matching pirate outfits



## Place conversations

For Scotland's Climate Week 2023, we hosted a short live broadcast on LinkedIn Live that explored household heating and the opportunities and challenges of adapting existing neighbourhoods. Guest speakers included Lucy Gillie, Manager of South Seeds and Chris Morgan, Architect and Director of John Gilbert Architects.

The event brought over 100 attendees ranging from the architecture and planning to public sector. [A recording from the event can heard here](#).

Group photo in front of mural



## A visit from the City of Stavanger in Norway

In May, [a delegation of Norwegian planners visited Alloa](#) in Clackmannanshire, to find out about multi-agency actions growing from working with the Place Standard tool in 2018/19. The visit built on recent successful application of the Place Standard Tool in Kvernevik, a community just outside of the City of Stavanger.

## Climate Action Towns: Gathering events

The Climate Action Towns project team hosted two Gathering events in 2023. The events aimed to bring together the voices from the nine Climate Action Towns to share learning and experiences on community-led climate action.

The in-person event in May at the Engine Shed, Stirling, also provided an opportunity for us to premiere the Climate Action Town's film, that shared stories from all the towns.

Watch our [video from the first in-person Gathering event here](#).

Learning session at the Gathering event





## Share insight from our work to grow capacity

As we work on projects across Scotland, we hear what works, and sometimes what doesn't. We are here to gather this insight and help identify the barriers to creating thriving places in Scotland. To do so we must communicate those insights clearly through a range of channels.

In this section, you can read about how we have shared resources aimed at providing new skills for professionals working in our places, and how we built our press office capacity.

SHARRET  
INSIGHT

## Communicating our role to key audiences

Interviewing Grant Baxter, Planning & Building Standards Team Leader Clackmannanshire Council at Primrose Steet Alloa Development.





Our role is to share the value of design and the benefits of collaboration when it comes to creating our places.

We deliver a lot of work directly in communities, but we also need to reach a nationwide audience. We do this to inspire change and to support those who create our places.

### How we communicate to our audiences

Our main way to reach wider audiences is through our digital channels. In 2023, we produced two new videos for our website. One video introduced the Place Principle and the other gave a broader overview of Architecture and Design Scotland and our work.

In 2023, our top three most viewed website resources included:

- [Place skills for plan-making](#)
- [Place Forum: Child poverty and cost of living crisis resource](#)
- [Climate Ready School Grounds](#)

### Press and media

This year we further developed our press office and made it easier for journalists to contact us for expert commentary. We were invited to discuss town centres on BBC news, contributed thought-leadership

pieces across sector news websites, and we led the successful promotional campaign for the Scotland + Venice commissioned exhibition *A Fragile Correspondence*.

### Sharing best practice

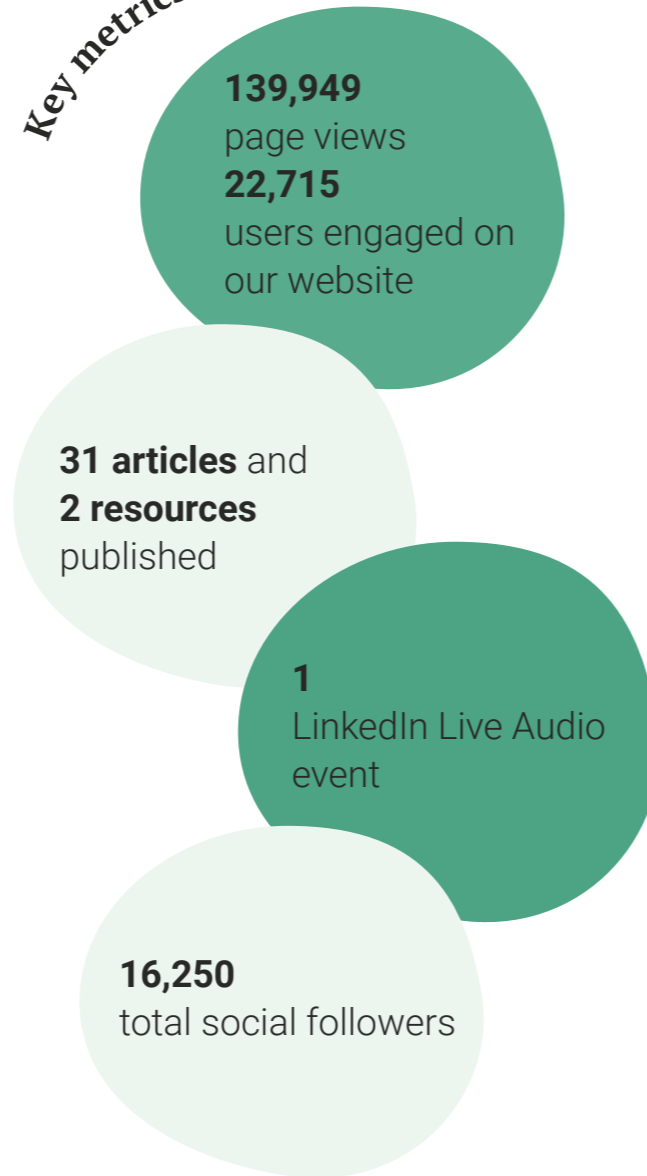
Collaboration is at the heart of what we do. As we work together with our stakeholders, we also work with our colleagues to make sure that we share learning, best practices and advice on how to deliver content in an accessible way for our audiences.

This year we continued to support all staff around the use of video in sharing their work. To help this we ran two training sessions on how to plan, film and edit videos – the results inspired our approach to this review.

Watch me: A snapshot of our communications work in 2023.



Key metrics:



## Supporting planning authorities with Local Development Plan preparations

In 2023, The Key Agencies Group confirmed that six local authorities from across Scotland would receive support to take a place-based collaborative approach to preparing Local Development Plans.

In 2023, the Key Agencies Group launched the Collaborative Local Development Plan Preparation offer in recognition of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for all involved in delivering on the ambitious new policy context set out in National Planning Framework 4 and Local Development Planning Guidance at a local level.

From 22 expressions of interest, the Key Agencies Group chose six local authorities for their diverse characteristics, providing a rich foundation for pulling out learning that can benefit other places.

We are leading the focused support together with partners from the Key Agencies Group, including the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Water, Transport Scotland, and Public Health Scotland, among others.

### The importance of Local Development Plans

Local Development Plans set out how places will

evolve over time and where development should or should not take place.

Local authorities need to make important decisions for Local Development Plans, such as:

- the location of new homes, schools, healthcare facilities, and other public services
- how to design, adapt and build places and buildings to address challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, or inequalities

Therefore, it is crucial to involve the right people, services, departments, and agencies in planning for the future of our places.

### The purpose of the new offer

The first step in preparing a local development plan is to gather information and data about the local authority area in an evidence report.

The offer aims to support planning authorities in collaborating more effectively across services or





## The six pilot authorities

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council)



Population **3,056**  
**Island** context  
 Land area **3,056 km<sup>2</sup>**

Dundee City Council



Population **147,720**  
**Urban** context  
 Land area **60 km<sup>2</sup>**

Fife Council



Population **374,730**  
**Urban, town and rural** context  
 Land area **1,325 km<sup>2</sup>**

Highland Council



Population **238,060**  
**Urban, town and rural** context  
 Land area **25,653 km<sup>2</sup>**

Midlothian Council



Population **94,680**  
**Town and rural** context  
 Land area **354 km<sup>2</sup>**

Renfrewshire Council



Population **179,940**  
**Urban, town and rural** context  
 Land area **262 km<sup>2</sup>**

Information from NRSScotland.gov.uk and Wikipedia (last updated 2021)

**“Having the help of A&DS and other KAG partners has been invaluable. They have challenged us to think differently and to broaden our understanding of place [...].”**

Bill Lindsay, Service Manager (Policy & Place), Fife Council

departments and key agencies to capitalise on their expertise, knowledge, and skills as they gather their evidence.

Working in this way helps to those involved to develop a collective understanding of the area's strengths and opportunities, drivers for change, challenges, related strategies and plans, and a shared view of the future.

### Collaborating across services and departments

So far, the six authorities have shared their appreciation for the support, and we have seen changes in the way they are approaching the evidence report.

"A lot of ground was covered [...] and we can see the benefits of understanding the issues and challenges of a place and bringing the right people together at the outset [...]" - Feedback from a pilot authority

"[...] We appreciated all of your input and time on this process and we are not discouraged; instead, we are more confident in our own abilities to produce a more actionable Plan." - Feedback from a pilot authority

### Sharing the learning

Through the ongoing pilot work, we are capturing and sharing insights to help other local authorities adopt a place-based collaborative approach to their plan preparations.

In collaboration with the Improvement Service, we are co-hosting a Shared Learning Event in February 2024, centred on the Collaborative Local Development Plan offer. This event provides an ideal opportunity to bring together local authorities, Key Agencies Group members, and the Scottish Government to hear first-hand experiences from those who have been working as part of the offer.

In 2023, we launched an online resource to help planning authorities take a place-based collaborative approach to Local Development Plan preparations. You can read more about this new resource on the next page.



# Snapshots

## Place skills for plan-making

In 2023, we published the [first part of the place skills for plan-making resource](#) to support local authorities apply the five-stage approach to the evidence gathering phase of Local Development Plan preparations.

The new resource package aligns with ambitious new policy and guidance from National Planning Framework 4 and Local Development Planning Guidance, published in 2023. The resource provides practical steps, templates, and case studies to help others apply key elements of the Key Agencies Group offer. We will share part two of place skills for plan-making in 2024 following the next round of learning from our pilot offer.

## Climate Ready School Grounds

The work we have developed in partnership with Learning through Landscapes, has [seen us develop key resources and case studies](#) that will help schools understand more about the climate emergency and how it is affecting their school grounds, whilst helping local authorities with a road map to find up to date policy and technical data.

The project has come to an end and culminated in online resources, case studies and a short film. However, there is a real opportunity to take this learning to inform all future projects we are involved in, especially in schools. The coming year will see us developing further resources and projects in this area, both in Architecture and Design Scotland and in partnership with Learning through Landscapes.

“It is clear from small projects and research across the globe that improvements to the school grounds shelter our learners from the worst impacts of climate change, and that the changes will also increase biodiversity, manage carbon and clean the air. These nature-based solutions offer deep learning opportunities and inspire our communities to take practical action in public spaces.”

Matt Robinson, Learning through Landscapes Chief Operating Officer

Pupils from St Mary's Primary, Dunblane underneath a willow arch on their school grounds.





# Champion good design and collaboration

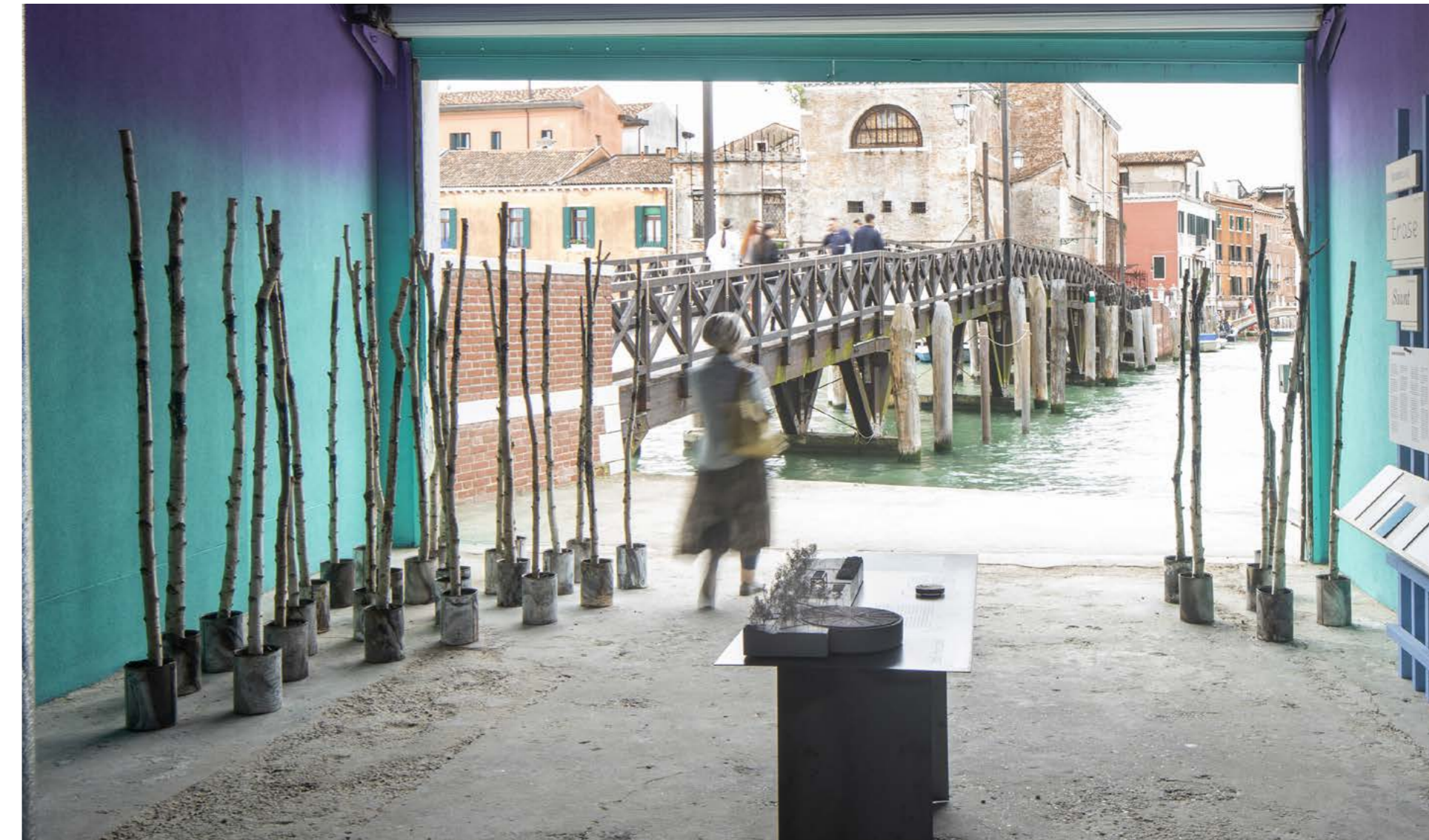
As Scotland's design agency we champion good design and collaboration.

We worked with the Scotland + Venice partnership and the creative team of the Architecture Fringe, -ism magazine and /other to prepare, launch and promote *A Fragile Correspondence* - Scotland's collateral event at the International Architecture exhibition La Biennale di Venezia.

In 2023 we continued our collaboration with the Royal Incorporation of Architects Scotland and the architecture profession to host and celebrate the Student Awards for Architecture.

## Scotland + Venice: *A Fragile Correspondence*

Visitors explore the Ravenscraig section of the *A Fragile Correspondence* exhibition in La Biennale di Venezia.





In 2023 Architecture and Design Scotland, as part of the Scotland + Venice partnership, supported the delivery of *A Fragile Correspondence* at the International Architecture exhibition at La Biennale di Venezia.

*A Fragile Correspondence*, was curated by a creative team led by the Architecture Fringe, -ism, and /other, in response to Biennale curator Lesley Lokko's theme of The Laboratory of the Future. It responded, explored and presented Scotland through three typographies – Highland through the forests around Loch Ness, Island and the seashore of the Orkney archipelago and Lowland with the industrialised remnants of the Ravenscraig steelworks.

The creative team and their collaborators - writers, film-makers, artists and architects - corresponded with these extraordinary landscapes. They focused on key questions: How can we imagine alternative ways of doing things? If we listen to and read the land, what can it teach us? How can we work with, rather than take from the land?

By highlighting cultures and languages that have a close affinity with landscapes, a key part of the presentation was a reading room and lexicon proposing alternative perspectives and new approaches.

### Global relevance

*A Fragile Correspondence* explored issues that are distinctly rooted in place - originated and derived from the landscapes, history and culture of

Scotland - but there are connections far beyond our shores with global relevance to the cultural, ecological and climatic issues that we all face.

Many countries are dealing with some of the main issues *A Fragile Correspondence* has brought from Scotland to Venice - the tension between the human-made and the natural world, post-industrial sites, over-extraction and deforestation, and fragmentation due to coastal erosion.

### Working in correspondence with the land rather simply upon it

*A Fragile Correspondence* explored and collaborated with our places to make a more reciprocal connection so that decisions can be made fit for the scale of the future.

Who are the people to do the listening and make the decisions? Of course, collaborating with local people is fundamental, but it also asks the question of what contemporary architecture is, and what is the role of the architect – or as Lesley Lokko prefers to say 'the practitioner'.

### Inspiring learning

Scotland + Venice is committed to providing development opportunities across the teams of

people we work with as well as for students and early year practitioners.

In 2023 Architecture and Design Scotland led on the dedicated Professional Development Programme (PDP). We delivered this in partnership with universities, colleges and other organisations to provide opportunities to work in Venice at the exhibition and develop students and early career professionals' own areas of research.

We provided a bespoke programme of learning inspired by the creative team for the 18 participants who took part. These opportunities have been highly valued and enjoyable and have seen our participants go on to exciting careers across the sector. The PDP participants themselves delivered a series of events in Venice – ranging from art workshops to Scottish country dancing.

Watch me: A short clip from PDP participants in Venice.



### Key highlights from the exhibition

**15,000**  
visitors attracted  
from May to  
November

**11 events**  
supported the exhibition  
including conversations  
and exchanges from  
Austria, Australia, Ireland  
and Lithuania

Coming soon...

Scottish audiences will  
be able to explore *A  
Fragile Correspondence*  
at V&A Dundee in late  
2024.

**330 online  
23 print  
16 broadcasts**  
media coverage  
reached

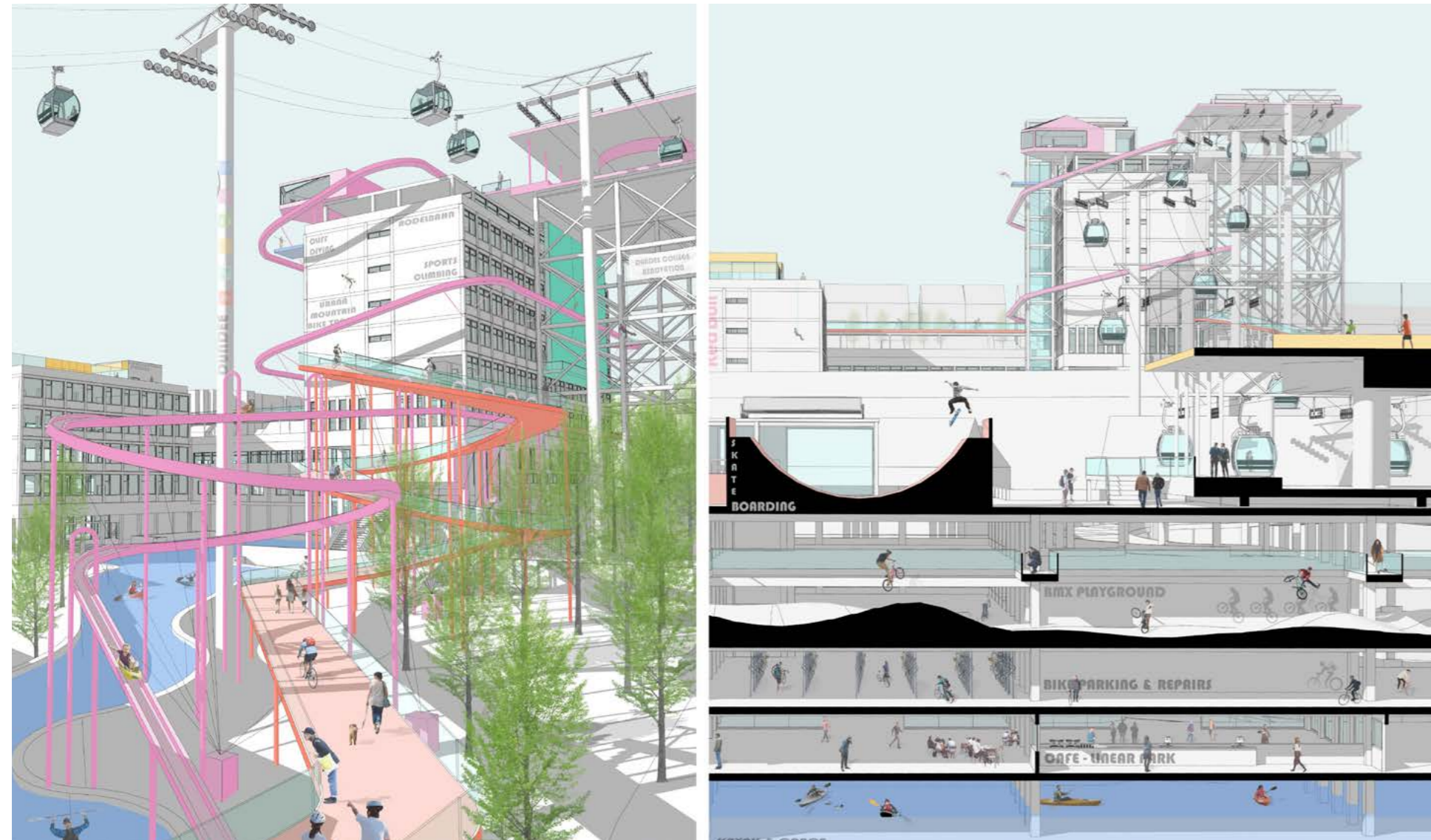
Collaborators from *A Fragile Correspondence* take part in an event at the opening weekend in May 2023.





# A&DS and RIAS Scottish Student Awards for Architecture 2023

Sport, Recreation, & Active Travel project by winner for the Architecture and Design Scotland Placemaking Award, Stuart Waitt – University of Dundee.



The Architecture and Design Scotland and the Royal Incorporation of Architects Scotland (RIAS) Scottish Student Awards for Architecture took place in December 2023. Over 70 projects were submitted, and the judges selected five winning projects across five categories.

This year Architecture and Design Scotland changed the titles of two of our awards to reflect the need for students to consider good placemaking and approaches towards our changing climate in their work.

Jim MacDonald, Chief Executive of Architecture and Design Scotland said:

“We have introduced the Placemaking and the Designing in a Changing Climate Awards this year. This reflects the importance of taking a place-based approach to design, and the critical need for us all to design for our changing climate. It has been a pleasure to see the creativity that the students have put towards tackling the significant issues of our times and their approach to creating a more sustainable place for us all to live in and enjoy.”

The winning projects included ideas on how to reuse materials from redundant buildings, resolve our industrial past, how communities can connect to the land through architecture and why cities can be fun and sustainable.

## The 2023 winners are:

**Rachel Crooks from the Mackintosh School of Architecture** awarded the RIAS Rowand Anderson Silver Medal for best 5th year student

**Alon Shahar from the University of Edinburgh** awarded the Architecture and Design Scotland award for best 3rd year student

**Stuart Waitt from the University of Dundee** awarded the Architecture and Design Scotland Placemaking Award

**Andrea Nicole Casono, Beatrice Kalyani Ryan, Gilian Charisse Fronda, Le Uyen Minh Tran from the University of Dundee** awarded the Architecture and Design Scotland award: Designing in a changing climate

**Michael Becker from the University of Edinburgh** awarded the RIAS Andy MacMillan Drawing Award

Learn more about the winners [here on our website.](#)

Watch me: Student Awards ceremony.





# Snapshots

## Blackburn shortlisted for COSLA Excellence awards

Our Climate Action Towns project work in Blackburn was shortlisted for the Just Transition to a Net Zero Economy category in the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) Excellence awards.

## Supporting SURF Awards

We are continuing our ongoing support for the Improving Scotland's Places category in the Scotland's Regeneration Forum (SURF) Awards, which marked their 25th Anniversary this year. In 2023 our board member Kirsty Macari was a judge for the awards.

## Scottish Design Awards

Director of Design, Heather Claridge and Board Member, Alistair Scott, joined the Architecture judging panel for the 2023 Scottish Design Awards which showcased a breadth of talent drawn from across the architecture and design professions.

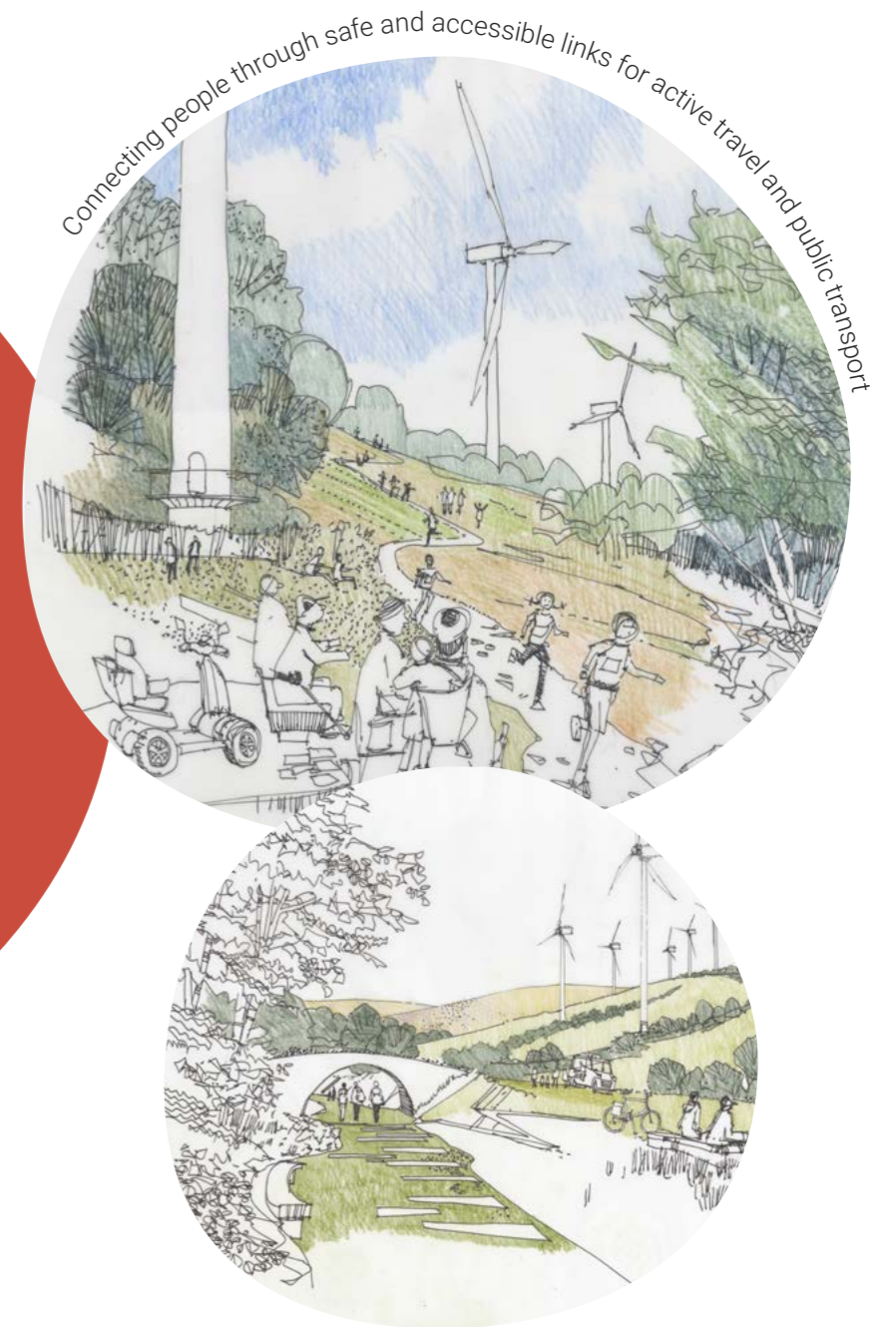
## Hagshaw Energy Cluster wins Scottish Green Energy Awards

The Hagshaw Energy Cluster – Development Framework won the Scottish Green Energy Award in the Sustainable Development category. A huge congratulations to everyone involved including NatureScot, South Lanarkshire and East Ayrshire Council.

The Development Framework for the Hagsaw Energy Cluster paves the way for a new approach to planning for onshore wind energy. It brings a place-based collaborative approach to the energy sector, supporting the deployment of renewable energy alongside investment in the infrastructure and projects that the communities have identified they need. This is how we can plan together for a Just Transition to Net Zero.

Brendan Turvey, Project Manager for the Framework, said:

"We were delighted to have support from Architecture and Design Scotland in the early stages of the project. It helped unlock the spatial vision and for us to home in on a Development Framework. Working collaboratively with the developers, communities and both South Lanarkshire and East Ayrshire Councils, we've developed a positive, ambitious vision for a net zero future, which benefits people, nature and the economy. And we've embedded a Development Officer in South Lanarkshire council to help deliver that ambition."





## Provide advice on projects bringing a range of skills

We provide advice on projects across Scotland. The work varies in size - from a single building through to a region. This work is done in collaboration with a range of partners. This year our work in learning spaces focussed mainly on the outdoors. We started a new collaborative project looking at inclusive design for a pre-school. We also look at the potential of our town centres and the placemaking of capital investment in health projects across Scotland.

PROVIDE  
ADVICE

## Craighalbert Early Years Integrated Nursery

In 2023 we started working with The Scottish Centre for Children with Motor Impairments in an inclusive design project.

Because we believe in power that good design, and design-based thinking can have in answering complex questions, we were delighted to work with the Scottish Centre for Children with Motor Impairments at Craighalbert to test their vision and spaces, to achieve something new.

Inclusive design and place-based thinking are central to this project; themes which are of national importance when thinking ahead to the future of Scotland's Early Learning estate.

This is why we worked in partnership with the Craighalbert Centre, a national centre for children with motor impairments, shaping their mission to create an inclusive, integrated nursery environment where children can learn and play in shared spaces regardless of whether they have profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) or more typical support needs.

### Multidisciplinary collaboration

We used the framework of a feasibility study to

test ideas, explore options, and generate useful deliverables for the project. The project brought in expertise to collaborate. Fraser Livingstone Architects and inclusive and accessible design specialists Chambers McMillan Architects demonstrated sensitivity to the needs of the Craighalbert Centre, whilst making robust propositions over refurbishment or rebuilding. The team also included landscape architects, environmental, and cost consultants.

This range of expertise and skills was utilised to develop the brief, undertake consultations, and develop designs.

Malcolm Fraser, Director, Fraser Livingstone Architects said:

"The work of Craighalbert, as a centre for caring for children with severe and complex motor impairments, is of great importance. But in an inclusive society it's also important that all children are integrated into everyday life; hence Craighalbert's current initiative, to open a pre-school nursery where



▲ Physiotherapist demonstrating how to use an Acheeva Bed during the consultation of the project.



**“With and through A&DS we are working to develop a proposal for a nursery in one wing of their Cumbernauld Centre, as an exemplar for other councils and health boards to adopt.”**

Malcolm Fraser, Director, Fraser Livingstone Architects

mainstream and impaired children benefit from playing and learning together."

**Consultations and visits**

Thea McMillan, of Chambers McMillan Architects, led a period of integrated consultations, observations, and visits to see how:

- a nursery adapted its playrooms to support a child with disabilities and additional support needs
- the specialised Craighalbert Centre operated
- the Hazelwood School near Glasgow had evolved since opening in 2008

We spoke with practitioners and specialised occupational therapists and physiotherapists with years of experience supporting children with complex needs. These discussions broke down barriers around what inclusivity might mean in the early learning environment. The team implemented our design and spatial understandings to respond with ideas and solutions.

**Thinking through design**

The design work has been substantial, and the depth of responses to proposals throughout informal to larger progress meetings, shows how good design

enables discussion in unique ways.

Architecture and Design Scotland’s role was fluid, based strongly on helping the Craighalbert team structure and express ambitions as design or place-based themes, whilst simultaneously facilitating collaboration between designers.

**Project guidance**

We will publish learning materials to expand on what this project realised so far. Our aim is to create accessible and easy-to-understand resources such as early-stage project guidance, conversations on disability and inclusivity, and inclusive design considerations. We hope these resources will help everyone, from Scotland’s local authorities to anyone interested in making education spaces more inclusive, with the goal that every child can access places that support their development, independence, and growth.

Top left: Existing, underused room for proposed 3-5 year old’s integrated nursery playroom, with a south facing elevation to be opened to outside space  
 Bottom left: More existing conditions in the proposed playroom including ceiling and lighting fixtures, and a large sliding partition  
 Right: Early architectural sketches of the nursery spaces





# Our work for the learning estate

The Howff on Queen Margaret University campus grounds.



Throughout 2023, Architecture and Design Scotland's learning estate projects have focussed on the outdoors.

In the past year we have been looking at how we can help to support schools, teachers, local authorities, and communities to make the best of the outdoor spaces to maximise learning and teaching potential.

## Queen Margaret University outdoor learning hub

We continued to work in partnership with Queen Margaret University (QMU) to develop the physical spaces of the university as a hub for outdoor learning and activity throughout the campus.

At the centre of the hub is the Wee Forest, planted in 2022 and funded by NatureScot, and within that is The Howff. Constructed in 2023, The Howff is part of the overall hub masterplan, designed by Wardell Armstrong.

The overall aim of the Outdoor Learning Hub at the QMU Campus has been to create impact on three levels:

- To enrich the students' experience
- To connect with local communities
- To contribute to national and global concerns in education sustainability and health and wellbeing

As part of this project, QMU has developed a Masters

module and short course: [Making Places for Outdoor Learning](#). We have supported this course by guest presenting and working on one-to-one tutorials with the students.

## Feasibility studies for teaching and learning

We have completed a further two feasibility studies on how to maximise school grounds for curricular teaching and learning. These feasibility reports were developed after workshops with the school, pupils and teachers analysing how they use their spaces and looking at the barriers and opportunities for change.

We help take their ideas and aspirations and formulate them into a brief and plan that they can share with their stakeholders. These give a clear plan, with realistic costings to allow schools and local authorities to plan budgets and fundraise.

"If we're not making outdoor learning, Learning for Sustainability (LfS) and climate education the default position in our curriculum and learning spaces - then we're not listening to our children and young people. It is their curriculum and future. Their call to action is clear."

Ian Menzies, Education Scotland



▲ A small vegetable patch located on Mearns Primary School Grounds.



## Shared Learning Events

We have delivered, in partnership with Scottish Futures Trust, quarterly [Shared Learning Events](#), which have involved over 25 local authorities, 250 participants, 17 speakers and covered topics such as; connecting learning environments with learner experiences, lessons learnt in outdoor learning, and inspiring school age childcare spaces.

These online sessions have proven extremely popular and are a great platform to hear first-hand from local authorities and practitioners on how they have pushed the boundaries, challenged the landscape and sharing the learning on how to replicate some of this work and thinking Scotland-wide.

## Looking ahead to 2024

We will start the year by launching a new resource on outdoor grounds developed from the learning we have acquired working with schools across Scotland.

Working with Urban Pioneers Landscape Architects, this resource will help support schools with an 'Ideas Kit' of step-by-step guides on how to tackle small-scale interventions within their school grounds, without breaking the budget.

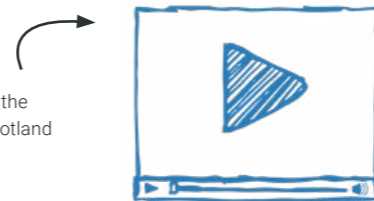
We will be continuing with our local authority Shared

Learning Event series that we run in partnership with SFT, and there will be the official launch of the Outdoor Learning Hub at QMU in the spring.

We are in talks with Learning through Landscapes on a new project that builds on the Climate Ready School Grounds work, and we have some new case study work in development.



**Watch me:** A recap from the 2023 Learning Places Scotland Conference.



# Providing design advice for health developments

Through NHSScotland Design Assessment Process (NDAP), this year we have supported seven health boards and engaged with over 120 stakeholders through Design Statement workshops on projects totalling over £1 billion of public investment for Scotland's health estate.

We work collaboratively to support health boards in the design of health and social care facilities to ensure that the views of patients, staff and communities are captured and inform emerging design proposals. We use digital tools to help develop strategic briefs in the form of project specific Design Statements. The Design Statement sets out bespoke qualitative standards unique to each project and is a statement of need and intent from the health boards to Scottish Government.

Once developed, we use the Design Statement as the basis for future design assessments and support the boards in the design process through workshops, meetings, and formal reporting at business case stages. This is delivered in conjunction with NHSScotland Assure through NDAP.

Read snapshots of our work in 2023 on the next page.

Keppie Design's visualisation looking west towards the Main Entrance approach of New University Hospital Monklands.



## Monklands Replacement Project – NHS Lanarkshire

The Monklands Replacement Project seeks to deliver Scotland's first fully digital and net zero carbon hospital. Following approval of the Outline Business Case at the end of 2022, we have supported NHS Lanarkshire throughout 2023 through a series of workshops with the project team to discuss project developments. Due to the complexity of the project these workshops will continue until December 2024.

## Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion – NHS Lothian

Originally supported at Outline Business Case Stage in 2019, this year we revisited the development of the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion with NHS Lothian. We had workshops to review the exemplar design proposals for the revised scheme and relocation of the facility and look forward to supporting NHS Lothian further as the project develops.

## Primary Care Programme - NHS Lothian

We delivered two Design Statement workshops for NHS Lothian's Primary Care Programme. This was unusual in that rather than focusing on one facility,

NHS Lothian asked us to help them develop an exemplar facility Design Statement for their entire Primary Care estate. It includes a total of 180 GP practices across 130 premises in the Lothians.

## Arran Integrated Services - NHS Ayrshire & Arran

We have been supporting NHS Ayrshire & Arran with their planned investment in health and care services for the Isle of Arran aimed at delivering better service integration and improving outcomes for the population. We delivered two Design Statement workshops which were well attended by a wide group of stakeholders who clearly articulated the challenges of delivering health and social care for our island communities.

## Health Technical Forum

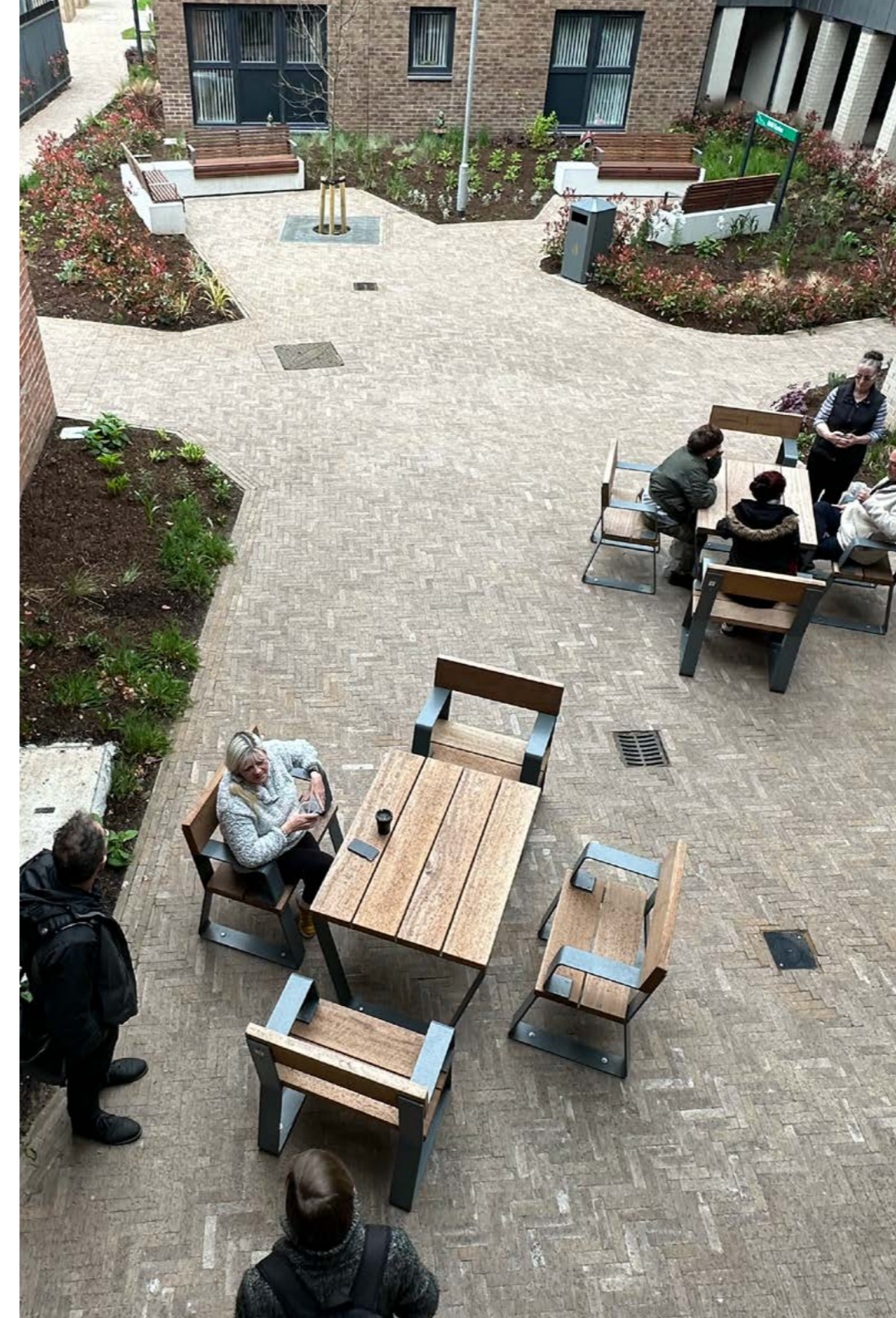
In June we presented to the Scottish Government Health Technical Forum on the topic of 'Healthy Caring Places'. The forum provided an opportunity to share some of our earlier work and techniques used in Caring Places and in Alva to help feed into emerging discussions on a 'Whole System Planning' approach, which all NHS boards are now being asked to consider as part of their business case for new projects.

## Health and Care Futures for North Skye

In conjunction with Scottish Futures Trust, we met with the joint Advisory Board on Health and Care Futures for North Skye. This provided an opportunity to present ideas for how we might support the board to develop a more joined-up approach for creating health and caring environments on the island using a whole place approach.

## NHSScotland Design Assessment Process (NDAP) Working Group

Earlier in the year we established a working group with NHSScotland Assure to look at how the NDAP could be improved, and its benefits maximised in the next decade and beyond. As part of this process, we issued a survey to all health boards about NDAP and the feedback from this, in addition to our own collective experience, has been very useful in helping us identify opportunities for improvement.



# Clackmannanshire and Town Centre Living

Our work in Clackmannanshire has helped us influence a national conversation about town centre living and collaborative work. Delivering the conditions needed for housing in our towns is attracting national and international audiences.

Early 2023 saw the publication of: '[Town centre living - more homes at the heart of great places](#)'. The publication aimed to provide the 'art of the possible' in a snapshot of emerging and delivered housing initiatives in town centres across Scotland, exploring the barriers to delivery and recommendations for action. We collaborated on this publication, which was led by Scottish Futures Trust and with input from Scottish Land Commission.

## Work on the ground

We have worked with Scottish Futures Trust to enable Clackmannanshire Council and 3D Reid architects to build on the outcome of our earlier Pathfinder work in Alva. Whereas the 2021/22 Pathfinder work zoomed out to look at what Alva needs as a town, this zooms back in again to embed a site-specific housing and mixed-use community brief – part of a community centred approach to the regeneration of the former [Glentana Mill site on the High Street in Alva](#).

◀ A courtyard with garden and bench seating for residents to enjoy and socialise at Primrose Street, Alloa.



## Alloa story recognition

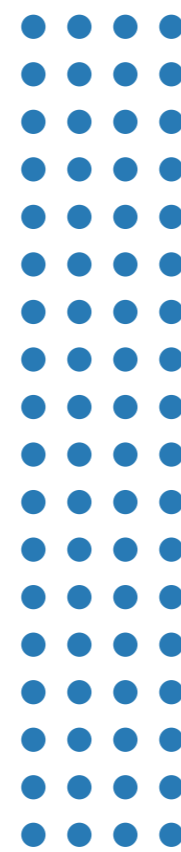
The selection of the Alloa story for the Norwegian visit represents a significant recognition by our national Place Standard partners; Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland and Glasgow City Council, of the impact and benefits of the process of change.

What began as a housing project expanded in its scale of reference across [Alloa to improve conditions for town centre living](#) for the local population, leading to wider physical and social care interventions across the town centre. The process also demonstrated the overlap with other tools and policy agendas. It led to the formation of several new partnerships, cross-sectoral initiatives and a move to collaborative place-based working practices within the council.

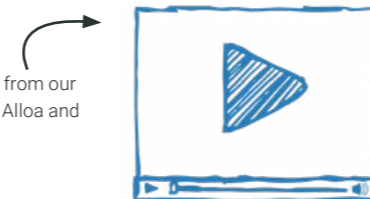
## Roadshow

Our Town Centre Living pathfinder work continues with a planned co-hosted Roadshow throughout Scotland, running from early 2024. Working with Scottish Futures Trust, Scotland's Towns Partnership and Scottish Land Commission we will create a platform to share learning from a series of exemplars and live case studies across Scotland (including several earlier Architecture and Design Scotland case

studies) with a view to exploring new opportunities and ideas expediting the local living agenda in towns and town centres.



**Watch me** A short story from our work in Primrose Street Alloa and Town Centre Living.



# Snapshot

## Sharing the Alloa story and wider Caring Place learning

The story and learning have been shared with increasingly larger audiences – with social housing providers at the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations annual conference in September and most recently in a broadcast conversation with [Scottish Housing News](#) Podcaster Kieran Findlay, which went live in November.





# Our projections for 2024

Throughout this report we have highlighted our projections for 2024 across individual areas of work. In 2024 we will also launch our next Corporate Plan for 2024-27 which sets out our second horizon of our 10-year Corporate Strategy.

Over the next three years, we will continue to use design to help people explore the potential of their place, whatever its scale. In the spirit of the Place Principle, we will work with our partners to test, apply, and learn from new ways of working as we promote people-centred, climate conscious design and collaborate to address inequality, create opportunity, and inform innovation in the way wider public services are delivered.

To find out more about our plans for 2024 and beyond please sign up to follow us across our social media platforms or subscribe to our newsletter. If we can help you or your project directly please get in touch with us.

We look forward to working with you in 2024 to contribute to a healthy, prosperous Scotland.

## Your views are important to us

If you have a few minutes, [please click on this link](#) to answer a few questions on our Annual Review for 2023 to help us shape future reports.



# Credits and acknowledgements

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