

A+DS Planning Performance Framework - Annual Report 2013/2014

1. National Headline Indicators (NHIs)

The section on National Headline Indicators / Key Outcomes is not directly applicable due to A+DS's non-statutory advisory role as a Non-Departmental Public Body. Information provided in this section presents an introductory overview, sets a context for comments in other sections of this report, and demonstrates how A+DS has been responsive to customer enquiries by tailoring our resources to prioritise and be proportionate when offering support across the range of planning considerations.

Our support for the plan-led system has mainly been through our [Urbanism programme](#) which has assisted policy preparation and plan-making processes through focussing on quality of outcomes. Over the year we have supported national policy development through:

- supporting the development of the NPF3 and SPP
- informing the development and launch of *Creating Places*
- supporting the development of a *Place Standard* as a commitment arising from *Creating Places*

We have input to Development Planning through contributing to key stakeholder events (e.g. in relation to the strategic planning review), facilitating workshops (e.g. [design led approach to development planning](#)) and helping to promote improved graphic communication in plan making. We [reported on the sustainable placemaking programme](#) in association with SNH which has informed plan-making, and facilitated further events e.g. ['masterplan awareness' training](#).

Development Management has been supported through our [Design Forum programme](#) where 16 Design Forum Workshops reviewed 14 projects, with 11 at pre-application stage. We have sought to influence positive outcomes from the outset to help avoid revisiting issues later in the process or to miss opportunities altogether. Over 40% of Local Authority areas have seen engagement since the launch of the refreshed Design Forum in 2012, and feedback continues to be positive, e.g.: *"[the process] was clear and focussed which allowed us to respond to it in a productive way and, ultimately, to improve the scheme."* In addition, we offer support to Local Authorities in developing and running Local Design Review Panels, holding an annual event where officers and panel members can share learning and offering advice and assistance as necessary through the year.

We maintain an active role in attending and supporting the Key Agencies Group (KAG) and have [reported our role as Chair](#). We also supported the formation of the [Local Authority Urban Design Forum](#) as a network to share ideas for local authority practitioners. 32 people, representing 23 local authorities and public bodies, took part in the first LAUDF meeting in May 2013. Feedback gathered after each meeting learns from participants experiences and helps to improve the support offered through the network: e.g. *"One of the biggest benefits to me is hearing what's going on outwith my patch...I learned things that are directly relevant to my work."*

A+DS has helped to support planning processes generally through assisting skills development and making available learning resources. The fourth [Design Skills Symposium](#) took place in March 2014, and the mixed disciplinary, workshop based event brought together approx. 150 participants from a wide range of backgrounds and was delivered in partnership with Clyde Gateway, Glasgow City Council, The Scottish Government (APD) and Improvement Service. A focus was on transferrable lessons for placemaking and also offered associated [drawing skills workshop](#) and [world cafe events](#).

DSS feedback was very positive: 100% of respondents indicated they would attend again or would recommend attendance; 98% of respondents indicated the event will have a positive impact on their practice; 92% responded positively on the transferability of the methods they were introduced to: *"A more place-based approach... has given me further information which can then be added into my work."*; *"It gave me insights in how to build good design and what goes into making good design"*; *"communicating the needs for design quality seems sometimes to be a big challenge...the symposium gave me the chance to refine my specific skills"*.

A+DS has also helped to raise awareness of current or topical issues e.g. reporting on: [Better Approaches to Masterplanning Practice](#) (Nov 2013), the [Sir Harry Burns inaugural BEFS lecture](#) (Feb 2014), the [RTPI Scotland annual conference](#) (Oct 2013), the [Scotland's Adaptation Conference](#) (Sept 2013), the [Geddes Lecture on Transition Towns](#) (June 2013), the [Shaping Places Exhibition](#) (Nov / Dec 2013) the [RTPI Scotland vote for Scotland's best place](#) and [Planning Aid for Scotland activities](#).

2. Defining and measuring a high-quality planning service

<p><i>Open for business</i></p>	<p>The A+DS website sets out clear information about who we are, what we do and how to contact us. We invite and encourage early engagement in an effort to advise and influence the best possible outcomes.</p> <p>Project enquiries are mostly managed through our Design Forum programme which makes available information about that service; how it is project managed to support projects, who key contacts are, and how to make contact.</p> <p>Design Forum liaises with planning authorities to monitor significant enquiries and has sought to identify and proactively engage early with projects of national significance. We also actively support Local Design Review Panels. Our desire to be involved from the earliest stages has resulted in a number of pre-engagement discussions which set up the potential for forums going forward. We have informed nationally significant projects with staff having taken part in the ongoing HS2 Scotland working groups and Grangemouth Freight Hub action group and also engaging with other significant projects.</p> <p>Feedback regarding Design Forum is consistently appreciative and positive e.g.: <i>“Comments have proven useful in developing parts of the next stage of the project” Project Team for Town centre masterplanning project; “The A+DS Design Forum process has been of considerable value to me as the Case Officer dealing with this significant development proposal and I have no doubt that it has added value in terms of ‘Placemaking’” Local Authority – Masterplanning project.</i></p> <p>A+DS continues to collaborate with key agencies to reinforce a commitment to effective and early engagement on national and major developments.</p>
<p><i>High quality development on the ground</i></p>	<p>The role of our organisation is to support Scottish Government ambitions, expressed through Creating Places, to encourage high quality development on the ground, and we undertake this through active participation, offering advice and sharing good practice with our customers.</p> <p>We collaborate with others to sponsor and support design competitions and awards e.g. RIAS awards 2013, Scottish Civic Trust Awards, A+DS Sust award for sustainable design, Scotland’s scenic routes competition, the best use of timber awards, and Larbert Loch design competition.</p> <p>The updated Design Forum website provides an interactive online resource / Aite to share evidence and research gathered from over a decade of project reviews about how value might be added to a development. Case studies are described and facility exists to download helpful advice relating to ‘Key Placemaking Issues’ from the Quality of Place section, and compile images into a scrapbook in the Briefing Resource section. Publications + Links make available additional source material by A+DS and other organisations, under subject and topics.</p> <p>We have also supported an independent review of public sector construction procurement which emphasised the importance of putting design at its heart and cited work led by A+DS as a model of good practice in this regard.</p> <p>An extensive image library is continually being updated and made publicly available as an open source learning resource, with the Steve Tiesdell Flickr image collection now providing over 8000 images to demonstrate aspects of place making from across the world.</p> <p>These resources are complemented by our Smarter Places / Schools programme and our Healthier Places / Health programme each of which promotes high quality outcomes and shares good practice through a selection of features, guidance, case studies and publications.</p> <p>Our Health programme has, through the NHSScotland Design Assessment Process, engaged in over 40 projects representing nearly £900m of public investment, including NPF projects such as the RHSC in Edinburgh and the new</p>

DGRI in Dumfries. A recent survey to monitor client and project team feedback on how helpful the process has been covered a range of issues including timing of engagement, usefulness of advice, feedback on staff engagement, the value of e-resource, etc. Feedback has included: *"The advice directed the delivery team's attention to aspects of the design that could be significantly improved. This definitely resulted in a much better design outcome"*; *"The support has been very beneficial both in terms of 1) pushing the design team to improve the design and 2) in relation to our engagement with the local planning authority"*; *"In addition to raising the importance of design generally, there are specific aspects of the design of our project that have been significantly improved during the assessment process"*. Over 90% of clients, and 85% of delivery teams, felt the process had improved their projects.

We hope to be able to share more information in our next PPF about how Design Forum and Health programmes are testing a Quality Audit method to demonstrate impact in/on projects through a graphic representation of the movement of the project in relation to design/public benefit aspects to give a feel of the whole series of interactions. We are also developing methods to demonstrate areas where key improvements were made, through illustrating a before and after pair of drawings showing the aspect of concern, the improvement/resolution and the benefit that's likely to be realised from that when built out.

Our [Access programme](#) helps to promote high quality development through a range of seminars, debates and exhibitions; and our [SUST programme](#) provides specialist advice in relation to sustainable and low carbon development.

Certainty

We provide clear written advice on individual projects, and offer clear guidance on the types of projects we can help with. Our website communicates information about what our customers can expect when they engage with our service; for example, (as noted above) the Design Forum guidance note provides clarity about which projects we seek to engage with, and how and when this should happen.

We take care to work with our customers to clearly define their requirements (e.g. in defining the brief for various sustainable placemaking events that have been delivered) or to clarify the scope and content of training and skills development events: e.g. the Design Skills Symposium, and masterplan training exercises.

Communication, engagement and customer service

We continue to engage with our stakeholders and customers through a monthly newsletter, and regular reporting of events (e.g. the [inaugural BEFS lecture](#), [RTPI Scotland annual conference](#), [Scotland's Adaptation Conference](#) and annual [Geddes Lecture](#)) which are promoted through articles and features on our website relative to our various programmes. Where appropriate, social media (e.g. twitter) is used to communicate / update our work.

Our [Access programme](#) hosts and promotes outreach events that communicate with the public and stakeholders, and engages in novel and interesting ways about the value of quality design. Following our work which we previously reported to support the 'High Street exhibition' which linked with the town centre agenda we have been pleased to support the [launch of the Town Centre action plan](#).

We have promoted a regular series of design related presentations '[This Friday Presents...](#)'; and our main public gallery hosted the collaborative '[Reactivate](#)' [exhibition](#) which explored changes in design professions, new ways of financing buildings, new products, use of empty buildings and collaborations to create new sites for social renewal. Feedback highlighted that lay, professional and student audiences became better informed around current and future ways of working: *"Thank you – really inspiring. I hope the news spreads - there is surely a huge need and appetite for these ideas."*

In March 2014 we launched [GREEN2014: the environmental legacy of the XX Commonwealth Games](#) which has included a series of exhibitions, events, seminars, workshops and tours with the aim of inspiring and engaging people to consider the untapped potential within a place (runs till October 2014; at 24.08.14 visitor figures were 13870, with 38 events and 1633 participants). Feedback has included: *"Great exhibition; wonderful to see the drive for a sustainable games*

legacy...”; “An engaging display and it inspires me to take the ideas back to Pittsburgh”; “Great exhibition – inspired! I love recycling and green spaces, the ‘stalled space’ project is something I’m keen to get involved with.”

In our ‘Noticed Board’ gallery we hosted a regular series of ‘mini’ design exhibitions e.g.: *the Saltire Housing Design Awards* for innovation and excellence in Scottish house building and place making (04.09.13 – 22.10.13); *Lets Talk Shop* – a creative Learning project examining the heritage of Govan through its high street (12.12.13 -22.1.14); *Derelict Glasgow* drew out the beauty and told the stories of a broad range of derelict buildings (24.1.14 – 12.3.14); *The Andrew Doolan Awards for Architecture* exhibition featured the 2013 winner and showcase the other 11 shortlisted entries (8.11.13 – 22.11.14); and *The Scottish Civic Trust My Place Awards* (27.03.14 – 04.05.14).

For each event feedback and comments are gathered to gain knowledge and inform future planning of events. A variety of methods are used:

Qualitative Feedback - a traditional approach using paper based questionnaires to survey and gather feedback from event delegates. The questions are generally closed and consistent for each event or exhibition to make analysis easier. The disadvantages are that data has to be input manually and analysis is not available quickly. We introduced digital feedback from exhibitions by using an ipad with a feedback survey. The survey software used is quicktap and this quickly and simply provides the survey analytics. A downside is that there is less interaction between the visitor services staff and visitors with this method. Visitor books are often used to gather general open comments from exhibition visitors.

Other more interactive or fun methods to gather feedback are also used. In Green2014 visitors are invited to respond to a series of multiple-choice questions by placing ping-pong balls in a slot to select their answer and bat shuttlecocks into hanging umbrellas. This gives an immediate visual record of responses. We get open feedback from exhibition visitors using comments postcards stating “Join the conversation please leave a comment.”

All responses are recorded and fed back through summary reports and our evaluation procedures.

Monitoring and Evaluation Process - Our exhibitions and events are self-evaluated. For quantitative data we monitor visitor numbers to the exhibition, the number of events delivered and the number of people attending events against our targets set at the start of the project. We also monitor media coverage, marketing and communications campaigns against targets. For qualitative data we use the above feedback and comments methods. We also invite feedback from partners and colleagues that we have worked with on the management and delivery of projects.

All this information is summarised in evaluation reports. Based on the overall feedback received these reports also make recommendations on where there are areas for improvement, and lessons learned. These recommendations have a bearing on the development of future projects.

Efficient and effective decision-making

As part of our aim throughout our programmes and activities to provide early advice in an effort to aid effective decision making we adapt our organisational structure to provide support for our customers and respond to emerging issues.

In response to customer feedback following the [Design Skills Symposium](#) we adapted our work activity to help establish the [Local Authority Urban Design Forum \(LAUDF\)](#) as a collaborative network to aid decision making regarding issues pertinent to day-to-day planning practice. We continue to host, support and help co-ordinate LAUDF events through on-line resources, reporting, [newsletters](#) and signposting to relevant articles and good practice.

Our [Design Forum programme](#) provides early engagement for projects (as described above) and an opportunity for planning authorities and project teams to work directly with our staff and Panel of expert practitioners.

	<p>Our Urbanism programme has responded to enquiries from plan and policy makers to inform decision-making about better outcomes and support whole place reviews to make best use of existing assets. Feedback in connection with the sustainable placemaking programme suggests it provides positive support, e.g.: “... the workshop raised the challenge in balancing complex issues ...Although it did not give definitive outcomes it certainly gave enough of a steer for us to progress the strategy. We have had very positive feedback from the attendees about the value of the event.” (Fife workshop, July 2013)</p> <p>Our Health programme supports decisionmakers in Health Boards, Government and Planning Authorities on the design merits of significant projects so that these issues can be considered early in the decision to approve the project for funding and for planning.</p>
<p><i>Effective management structures</i></p>	<p>Our work is overseen by a Board who meet regularly, and a dedicated planning sub-group reviews planning related matters as and when appropriate; e.g. our planning policy consultation submissions.</p> <p>Our CEO chairs regular Management Team meetings to co-ordinate the work of our programmes and integrate joined-up approaches that assist the delivery of better outcomes. Day to day work is delegated to programmes with finance and strategy reserved to Management Team/CEO and Board.</p> <p>Outward facing activities of the organisation are supported by a Corporate Services Team that provides logistical support to the programmes and staff. We have enabled work experience opportunities through our graduate employment scheme and hosting secondments as appropriate (e.g. a PAS exchange student).</p>
<p><i>Financial management and local governance</i></p>	<p>As above</p>
<p><i>Culture of continuous improvement</i></p>	<p>We recognise and actively support a culture of continuous improvement. We encourage and invite stakeholder feedback to inform the development of our work programmes (see notes above), and invite key representatives from client groups and other organisations to participate in focus workshops to test ideas and/or monitor and feedback on our activities, e.g. as in relation to the lead up to the launch of our new corporate strategy.</p> <p>Design Forum hosts semi-regular working sessions with the Design Forum panel of practitioners and other members of the development and planning communities. Feedback continuously informs the development of our work activities, e.g. ideas raised at the annual Design Skills Symposium directly led to our supporting the formation of the Local Authority Urban Design Forum.</p> <p>We work with Improvement Service and others to develop and deliver training events that are targeted to meeting customer demands; e.g. design led approach to development planning. Along with Scottish Government and NHS Scotland colleagues we have facilitated dedicated workshops to seek the views of client groups in support of the development of a <i>Place Standard</i>.</p> <p>Regular staff appraisals review performance, agree future objectives and provide opportunity for 180/360 feedback. Training needs are identified and staff are supported in their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through delivery of in-house training or attendance at conferences or other learning events. The formal appraisal process is supported by team and programme meetings that monitor work activity, customer feedback and foster positive working relations.</p>

3. Supporting evidence

Part 2 of this report was compiled, drawing on evidence from across A+DS's work activities and programmes, e.g.:

- a] stakeholder feedback in relation to the Design Forum
- b] Urbanism's work with planning authorities in relation to the 'sustainable placemaking' programme
- c] our involvement with the Key Agencies Group
- d] feedback gathered from visitors at exhibitions and events
- e] feedback gathered from the Design Skills Symposium and LAUDF
- f] experience gained from carrying out work to implement our Business and Corporate Plans

4. Service improvements: 2013-14

In the coming year (April 2014 to March 2015) we will:

- *work with Scottish Government and NHS Scotland partners to develop a Place Standard, promote this more widely, and identify case studies where appropriate*
- *work with the Scottish Government and other partners to support a series of events and activities to communicate transferable learning for planning from the Commonwealth Games*
- *refine the 'sustainable placemaking programme' in partnership with SNH and deliver a minimum of 3 events across a range of scales to support development planning*
- *explore how spatial and community planning can be better integrated so that better services can be delivered to support better lives*
- *proactively offer our Design Forum service to projects of national and/or strategic importance, and monitor the impact and effectiveness of this engagement*
- *develop a Quality Audit method to demonstrate impact in/on projects through a graphic representation of the movement of the project in relation to design/public benefit aspects*
- *work with KAG and other partners to support planning authorities and planning services generally by responding to emerging issues*
- *support the Local Authority Urban Design Forum as a network to share and disseminate learning for local authority practitioners with an interest in urban design matters*
- *work with IS and other partners to tailor training events such as the Design Skills Symposium; refining and adapting this activity in response to customer requirements*
- *develop and maintain the professionalism and skills of our staff through regular appraisals, team and programme meetings to ensure our service is prioritised, proportionate, responsive and adaptive to the needs of our clients*

5. Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2013-14:

Committed improvements and actions (From A+DS PPF – September 2013) <i>In the coming year we will:</i>	Complete?	Evidence
<i>support Scottish Government ambitions for better places through taking forward commitments noted in 'Creating Places'; e.g. through helping to develop and promote Place Standards, and identify and promote appropriate case studies</i>	Yes	We have worked with SGOV and NHS Scotland partners to help support the development of a Place Standard ; we have promoted this more widely through hosting workshops and collaborating with related events, e.g. the Good Places And Decent Society (GLADS) research programme
<i>we will work with the Scottish Government and other partners to support the '2014 Commonwealth Games hub' launch, and support a series of events and activities to communicate transferable learning for planning from the Commonwealth Games</i>	Yes	We have hosted an exhibition and managed an accompanying series of events to promote and support learning from, and the legacy of, the Glasgow Commonwealth Games
<i>we will refine the 'sustainable placemaking programme' in partnership with SNH in response to customer feedback and emerging issues, and aim to deliver a minimum of 4 events across a range of scales to support development planning; gauging impact and effectiveness through gathering and monitoring feedback</i>	Yes	We have reported on the sustainable placemaking programme , facilitated events e.g.: supporting a design led approach to development planning and ' masterplan awareness' training . We continue to monitor feedback in relation to training events, which indicates positive customers' experiences e.g. " <i>Enjoyable, and a helpful reminder we are planning for people</i> " Inverclyde workshop participant
<i>we will continue to proactively target and offer our Design Forum service to projects that are of national and / or strategic importance, and monitor the impact and effectiveness of this engagement through feedback and DF panel focus sessions</i>	Yes	Our Design Forum service input to 14 projects of national and / or strategic importance across a third of Local Authority Areas, and extended the geographic spread of engagement through different ways including talking to people about what we do and how it is being received (extra-Forum engagements) and supporting local Design Review panels
<i>we will continue to work with KAG and other partners to support planning authorities by responding to emerging issues; e.g. through supporting the LAUDF, working with IS and others to tailor training events such as the Design Skills Symposium; and we will refine and adapt this activity in response to customer requirements</i>	Yes	We have regularly attended KAG meetings and contributed to associated activities ; supported the LAUDF ; held a Design Skills Symposium to address the legacy of the Commonwealth Games
<i>we will develop a new corporate strategy for 2014-17 through a series of staff and board workshops, an online public consultation and a series of stakeholder workshops across Scotland</i>	Yes	We have developed a new Corporate Strategy which is available on line
<i>we will continue to develop the professionalism and skills of our staff through regular appraisals, team and programme meetings to ensure our service is prioritised, proportionate, responsive and adaptive to the needs of our clients</i>	Yes	We maintain a regular programme of staff appraisals, team and programme meetings, and gather regular client feedback from events to inform A+DSs development