



Glasgow City Council

**Economy, Housing, Transport and
Regeneration City Policy Committee**

**Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of
Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability**

Contact: Sarah Shaw Ext: 76066

Item 4

22nd April 2025

Feminist Urbanism Working Group – Update

Purpose of Report:

To provide Committee with an update on the progress to implementing a Feminist City workstream.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to note the update for information.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☒ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☒

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Glasgow's strategic plan 2022-2027 includes a number of priorities that centre the needs and experiences of women and girls, building on previous work to empower them in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5. The main commitment driving Council business this term falls under Grand Challenge 4 'Deliver Essential Services in a Sustainable, Innovative and Efficient way for our Communities'; Mission 2 'Run an open, well governed council in partnership with all our communities' i.e.
"Embed gender equality into council impact assessments, budgets, data collecting and strategies, including, but not limited to, the new City Development Plan. Ensure approaches are intersectional and incorporate women's lived experience."
- 1.2 These commitments were further enhanced in October 2022 when Glasgow City Council passed a [motion](#) agreeing to adopt a feminist town planning approach within planning policy, and the new City Development Plan; and to adopt a similar approach to gender disaggregation of data, gender budgeting and ensure gender competence training for key Council staff. The motion also asked for the City Council to ensure equality impact assessments embed gender into strategy and decision making, planning and social and economic policy.
- 1.3 This motion also recognized that Glasgow has committed to embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals within the City Development Plan, in particular SDG5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". The motion follows Glasgow's substantial involvement in international initiatives including Eurocities (below), with liaison with other European cities leading the way on gender equality such as Bilbao's Gender Action Plan, and work with Vienna and Barcelona. Mention was also made of the work by Education Services with girls in Glasgow through Girls@COP26- [The Solutions are Feminist](#) which embraced SDG5, SDG13 with regard to taking climate action, and a series of themes co-designed with the young women e.g. 'Health' (SDG 4), Fair work (SDG 8), 'Place' (SDG 11) etc. This emphasises the links between SDG5, SDG 13 Climate Action and SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities.
- 1.4 A principal vehicle for this work has been the Eurocities Taskforce on Women's Rights and Gender Equality which Glasgow co-chair with Nantes, under the leadership of Vienna which has involved knowledge exchanges in gender sensitive planning by the Chair. In October 2024 at a Taskforce in person meeting in Nantes, Glasgow shared the Lord Provost initiative through the [Carter Center- Inform Women, Transform Lives Campaign](#). Glasgow's campaign kickstarted the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence in November 2024. The campaign involved the launch of the film "[Where We Stop](#)" created in collaboration with the Glasgow Girls Club and others, and Sophie's Stop app as part of the Carter project. This app has been made accessible to all learners within Glasgow schools through free access on all school iPads, as reported at the [March 2025 Education Skills and Early Years City Policy Committee](#). This initiative and ongoing Girls4Equality work is being taken forward in ongoing workshops.

- 1.5 Glasgow has also a long established multiagency Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership, which reports to the Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods City Policy Committee [report 27 August 2024](#). Women's safety in public spaces was the focus of a [report](#) in 2021 by Young Women Lead into Glasgow's urban infrastructure, particularly on attitudes towards the bus system and public parks. This involved surveys with local women and non-binary people to gauge their experiences. Glasgow's strategic plan contains a range of commitments that that builds upon its recent record regarding gender equity and prioritises women and girls and their rights, tackling misogyny and gender-based violence amongst other commitments like economic opportunity.
- 1.6 It is generally accepted that cities were designed for and by men and thus specific improvements are needed to ensure that they work equally well for women. The way many cities are built and continue to develop often makes women feel unsafe and restricts their access of social and economic requirements. The United Nations Development Programme together with Arup and the University of Liverpool produced a benchmarking report Cities Alive: Designing cities that work for women [link](#) which highlighted key areas of focus for improving women's lives in cities based on literature, surveys, case studies and workshops across 20 countries. These areas include Safety and security, Justice and equity, health and wellbeing and Enrichment and fulfilment.
- 1.7 A key point in this report, and in the approach taken by the working group, is that by encouraging a feminist, or gender responsive approach to urban planning and urban spaces and design serves not only women but the whole community- it benefits everyone because all have improved access to the opportunities offered by the city, leading to wider social, environmental and economic benefits.
- 1.8 Another important report which provided examples of areas identified by women as opportunities for improvement is the book "What if Women Designed the City" by May East, which reported on interviews with women in Kelvingrove and Yorkhill, and Drumchapel. The outcome was a series of leverage points at different scales which could make a difference to the city by improving the experience of women and girls. This work was launched at UN 2023 Summit on SDGs (UNITAR) in which Glasgow took part.

2 Update on Feminist Urbanism Working Group

- 2.1 In 2023, a political oversight group was set up for officer and cross-party elected member working, to allow a forum for discussion of delivery on the aims of the feminist city. The purpose of the group is to provide strategic leadership, engage with elected members, council officers and other relevant stakeholders, to adopt a feminist town planning approach that actively addresses socio-economic inequalities within planning policy and the new City Development Plan contributing to wider people centred planning. In addition, to maximise the opportunities to align with gender equal cities including walkability, proximity to services, mixed-use environments, a safe public realm

and open greenspaces; and to identify methods on data gathering, community consultation, and policy development that engage and ask questions about the everyday experience of women to ensure public spaces and services are welcoming, safe and accessible.

- 2.2 Focus in the Working Group has been on delivering improvements to public spaces through lighting in parks and access routes within and to parks; improved play areas with girls in mind, including co-design with girls; and through feminist city training for senior officers and elected Members. Additional improvements are planned for active travel routes including wayfinding in public art. These improvements to projects being delivered by the City Council have been enabled by the allocation of a feminist action fund of £1 million over two years. A gender strategy for the City Council and design toolkits for proposed development are also intended to be developed over the next year.
- 2.3 Collaboration and exchange of ideas with other cities on feminist urbanism issues has taken place and continues; a joint event between City of Edinburgh Council and Glasgow City Council “A tale of two feminist cities” took place on 10 March.

3 City Development Plan 2

- 3.1 Engagement with women on proposed projects and policies is a focus of the delivery of the City Development Plan (CDP) and the Engagement Strategy for the Plan requires to consider how to engage with women most effectively. To date feedback from women on the CDP Evidence Report has been disaggregated and outcomes analysed. Data from this exercise can be viewed through this [dashboard](#). Specific engagement with women has been facilitated for the proposals for Customhouse Quay. The voices of girls have been gathered through the Play Sufficiency Assessment process carried out as part of the City Development Plan preparation [[report June 2024](#)] and this is now being taken forward in proposals for co-design with girls of new play facilities in various parks in the City. Engagement with women has also been carried out through the Liveable Neighbourhoods public realm/active travel programme which has included the development of personas including women of different backgrounds to encourage people to share their views.
- 3.2 National Planning Framework 4, Scotland’s National Planning policy, includes the imperative for “supporting the prioritisation of women’s safety and improving physical and mental health ([one of](#) Six Qualities of Successful Places)”. This includes designing for: lifelong wellbeing through ensuring spaces routes and buildings feel safe; healthy and active lifestyles through the creation of walkable neighbourhoods, food growing opportunities and access to nature and greenspace. It also includes designing for accessibility and inclusion for everyone regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, ability and culture, and designing for social connectivity and environmentally positive places.

- 3.3 As part of the Feminist Planning agenda to make our streets and neighbourhoods more accessible to all, we will look to incorporate the learnings from [Urban95](#) and [Start With Children](#) into our urban design process. This will build on the work of our Play Sufficiency Assessments and younger people's Place Standard Tool.
- 3.4 The new City Development Plan will need to deliver and encourage a city based on these principles. In the meantime, we will support the preparation of a toolkit for officers, developers and other stakeholders setting out Glasgow specific guidance to provide a consistent approach to decision-making, project implementation and engagement.

4. Parks Lighting Review

- 4.1 A key area of work has been the Parks Lighting Review, supported by Greenspace Scotland, coming after a survey in September 2022 for local residents and key stakeholders including a range of equalities groups who gave their views on safety and lighting. The Review also involved workshops for each of the three pilot parks, below, which included walks through parks with women and girls, in darkness to allow place and time specific solutions to be proposed. These workshops used the Place Standard to assess the places, together with an online consultation. [[committee report April 2023](#)]. Lighting works have been carried out over the last year and further works are proposed through the funding made available in the next financial year.
- 4.2 Examples of early action and pilot work undertaken in Kelvingrove Park and Queens Park includes pruning and removal of vegetation to improve sightlines (identified as an important factor for safety and perception of safety) and trials of solar lighting. Similarly Cranhill Park has had works to optimise existing lighting along main routes including pruning or removal of vegetation; further works to the entrance are planned along with enhancements to play area lighting as part of Play Park Renewal works.

5 Public Toilet Strategy

- 5.1 The provision of public toilets has been identified in reports referenced above as being a key element of a feminist city, affecting women and elderly people disproportionately. The Council has developed a [Public Toilet Strategy](#), reported to Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods Policy Committee on 18 March 2025, which recognises that public toilets are not only a key to health but also provide a pivotal role within the City's economy.
- 5.2 The Strategy recognises that public toilets should provide a welcoming and dignified experience which is affordable and open to everyone, and ensure that the needs of women, girls and trans and non-binary people are achieved. The Action Plan set out in the strategy includes not only provision but maintenance of facilities.

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 The Feminist Urbanism Working Group will continue to pull together the different strands of delivery of the Feminist City. Projects described above will be delivered through the Feminist City Action Fund.
- 6.2 The creation of a Gender strategy will cover how the Council delivers all its services. Further training through delivery of a GOLD course is also planned.
- 6.3 In addition, benchmarking and collaboration with other cities on feminist actions and policy approaches will continue.
- 6.4 An annual update on progress will be presented to this Committee.

7. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	Finance has been allocated to enable projects to be delivered.
<i>Legal:</i>	No legal implications.
<i>Personnel:</i>	Officers within GCC will support delivery of projects and any new policy guidance
<i>Procurement:</i>	Consultants may require to be procured to deliver some elements of the projects, and will be procured in line with procurement requirements.

Council Strategic Plan:	Grand Challenge 1: Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities Grand Challenge 2: Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens Grand Challenge 3: Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable innovative and efficient way for our communities
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Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.</i>	Yes.
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What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

It is envisaged that the Feminist City work will have a positive impact on equality.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

The outcomes of feminist urbanism will improve women's access to social and economic opportunities.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

The outcomes of feminist urbanism will :

56. Reduce the need to own and use a car through measures in the City Development Plan, Glasgow Transport Strategy, and the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

Women are disproportionately impacted by climate change so gender will be an element of delivering the Climate Plan: [Gender Inequality and Climate](#)

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

There are not considered to be any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report

8. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the update for information