



**Glasgow City Council**

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

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

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**Item 8**

**22nd April 2024**

## **GLASGOW URBAN DESIGN PANEL**

### **Purpose of Report:**

Update on the Purpose and 2024 Outputs of the Glasgow Urban Design Panel (GUDP).

### **Recommendations:**

The Committee is asked to:

Consider the contents of this report and the work of the GUDP in championing placemaking and design excellence and its independent role offering critical analysis and input intended to improve the design development of planning proposals.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

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

## **1 Introduction and Context**

- 1.1 The Glasgow Urban Design Panel (GUDP) is a partnership between GCC Planning service and the Glasgow Institute of Architects (GIA) aimed at providing constructive design advice to developers, design teams and planners as part of an independent and voluntary service.
- 1.2 Started in 2006, the role of the Glasgow Urban Design Panel is to promote the value of good sustainable design and to champion the highest standard in architecture and placemaking.
- 1.3 Since then, circa 280 major development proposals, policies and council led spatial strategies have been reviewed and benefited from reference to the panel.

## **2. Format**

- 2.1 The GUDP is informed and structured around the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) *Design Review, Principles and Practice* to be independent, expert, multidisciplinary, accountable, transparent, proportionate, timely, advisory, objective and accessible.
- 2.2 Glasgow City Council Planning Service host and facilitate this “independent design review panel for the city” and invites projects at their early stages of design development for review, while the GIA volunteers as the lead of secretariat and together with the Glasgow Civic Forum (GCF) invites built environment experts to review proposals and to report on the panel findings.
- 2.3 Selected specifically in relation to the nature of each review, the panel members are representatives from public and local interest bodies as well as from the wider development industry, who share their knowledge to inspire the best possible outcomes for the city. Further details on the role, remit and outputs of the GUDP can be found at <https://gia.org.uk/gudp>
- 2.4 Panelists are structured in three groups as permanent, project-specific and guest panelists. Over the years, GUDP has drawn on the expertise and experience of around 50 professionals and some additional 60 external consultants have been drafted in where their specific expertise brings greater clarity to the debate.
- 2.5 The permanent panelists include representatives from Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Institute of Architects (GIA), Glasgow Civic Forum, Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Glasgow Building Preservation Trust (GBPT), Landscape Institute, Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Mackintosh School of Architecture, University of Strathclyde School of Architecture and the University of Glasgow.

- 2.6 The project-specific panelists are drawn in from Police Scotland, Glasgow Pollokshields Heritage, Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, Alexander Thomson Society, Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society, Friends of Glasgow West, New Glasgow Society and Strathbungo Society. Glasgow City Council acknowledges and appreciates the work many contributors make on a voluntary basis.
- 2.7 The guest panelists are usually professionals from the development industry with recognised specific expertise, developers, local interest groups and built environment stakeholders.
- 2.8 These panel members are expected to act in the public interest at all times. They must meet expectations by ensuring that their conduct is above reproach.
- 2.9 Due to the commercial sensitivity typical of the early stages of design development of proposal being reviewed, panelists are bound to confidentiality agreement and need to declare potential conflicts of interest when invited to participate to the sessions of the GUDP.
- 2.10 The GUDP working calendar is established at the beginning of every calendar year, with circa one session per month and breaks for summer recess in July and another in December.
- 2.11 The format of the reviews is well established but constantly updated to be as effective as possible. Each session starts with the planning case officer positioning the development proposal with questions from the panelists on planning related matters. After this introduction, the presenters (usually the client/developer and design team) explain the nature of the proposal and design intention and allow time to answer the panelists questions and requests for clarification on aspects of the presented proposal. This stage forms the steppingstone for the following panelists discussion, where aspects of the design are debated and a common position agreed on potential improvements or aspects for consideration. Digital technology is an increasingly important tool to expand and democratise these collective inputs, with a series of polls/surveys run in the background of the session.
- 2.12 After every review a report is prepared by GIA's reporters and shared with presenters and planners, capturing the nature of the panel discussions and a series of constructive inputs offered to the design team. When the development proposal moves from pre-application discussion into planning application stage, the report is made available on the planning public portal alongside other public views expressed within the statutory planning process.
- 2.13 For clarity, the GUDP views are not part of the statutory planning process but are valued as having an important role in terms of independent critical analysis which can be utilised to drive design improvement and

negotiate the highest possible standards by refining development proposals.

**3. GUDP 2024 / Activities**

3.1 During 2024, the GUDP had the opportunity to review 12 proposals with different degree of complexity and strategic importance for the city:

- February 2024 / Hillhead Church / Residential
- February 2024 / ABC Cinema Sauchiehall Street / Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)
- March 2024 / Tall Building Design Guidance / Design Guidance
- April 2024 / Collegelands masterplan / Residential Mix (Build to Rent + PBSA)
- April 2024 / Dundashill Phase 4B / Residential
- May 2024 / Cumberland Street / Hotel
- May 2024 / Albert Drive / Residential
- September 2024 / Glasgow University / Prism / Academic and Research
- September 2024 / Glasgow University / Plot J Innovation Building / Academic and Research
- October 2024 / Anderston Quay Masterplan / Residential Mix (BTR + PBSA)
- October 2024 / Custom House Quay / Public Realm
- November 2024 / Annual Review

**4 Policy and Resource Implications**

**Resource Implications:**

<i>Financial:</i>	Cost to GCC of hosting the GUDP events in the City Chambers c£3,000 p.a.
<i>Legal:</i>	None
<i>Personnel:</i>	Limited to staff support to facilitate and host the GUDP
<i>Procurement:</i>	No procurement issues.

**Council Strategic Plan:** The GUDP is considered to support the following Grand Challenges and Missions:

- GC3 M2 C30: Deliver place-based interventions and key local regeneration projects.
- GC3 M1 C20: Ensure planning policy supports development in areas with good links to the public transport system and active travel routes.

## **Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:**

*Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.*

Yes. The GUDP seeks to promote good placemaking that improves the lives of all citizens in line with the aims of the adopted City Development Plan. An EQIA Screening Report was prepared for the City Development Plan in 2017 for which no significant negative impacts were identified.

*What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?*

Advice from multi-disciplinary members of the GUDP ensures a variety of inputs to promote design development including equality and accessibility improvements. In the interests of promoting equality and diversity NRS shall share details of the Feminist Urbanism work that the City Council has launched with the GUDP.

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

The work of the GUDP supports the spatial strategy of the council set out in the adopted City Development Plan which includes the regeneration of areas of social and economic disadvantage as identified in the SIMD.

## **Climate Impacts:**

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

The work of the GUDP supports the spatial strategy of the council set out in the adopted City Development Plan which includes the promotion of a compact city form that seeks to benefit from the proximity to public transport and limits the reliance on private vehicles for accessibility to land uses.

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

The GUDP encourages sustainable construction methods and materials as well as positive environmental performance of buildings through good design and repurposing where possible.

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

In general terms yes. As above.

**Privacy and Data  
Protection Impacts:**

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

**5. Recommendations**

**The Committee is asked to:**

Consider the contents of this report and the work of the GUDP in championing placemaking and design excellence and its independent role offering critical analysis and input intended to improve the design development of planning proposals.