

Architecture &  
Design Scotland

Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

# Corporate Strategy

## 2021-31





# Architecture & Design Scotland

## Who we are

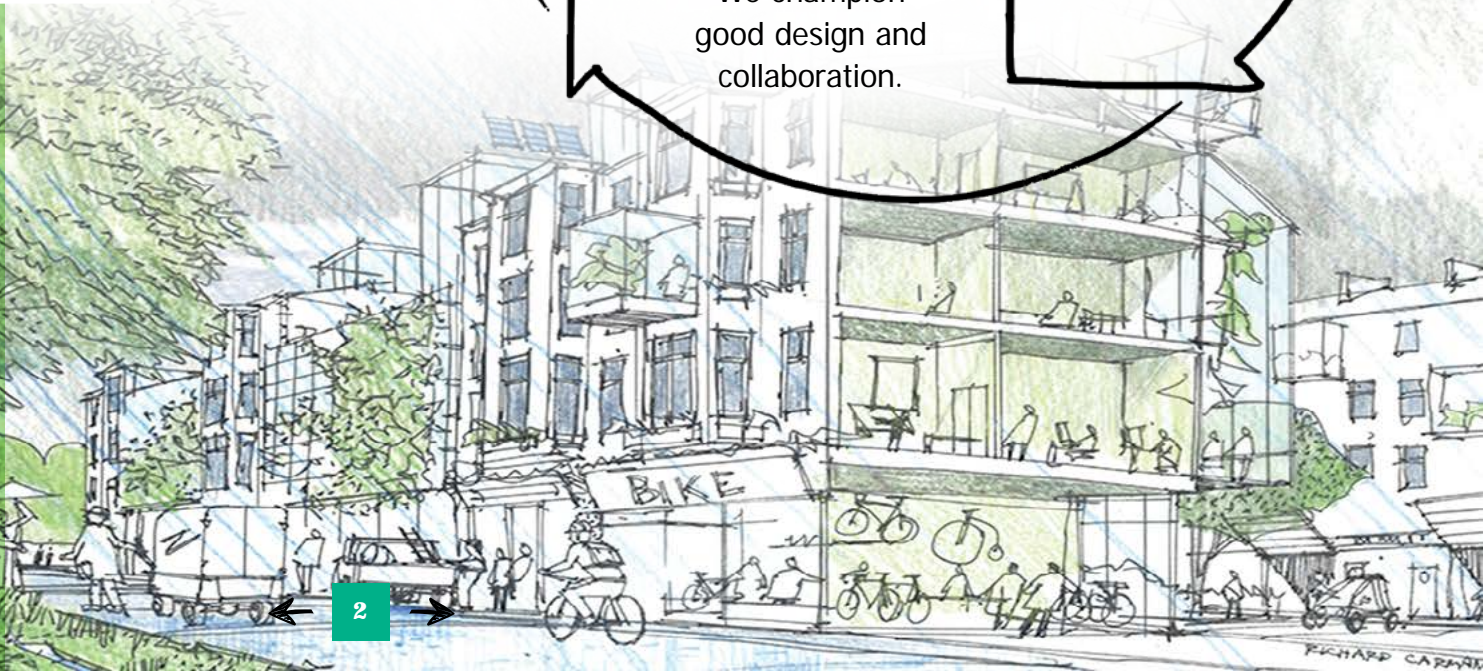
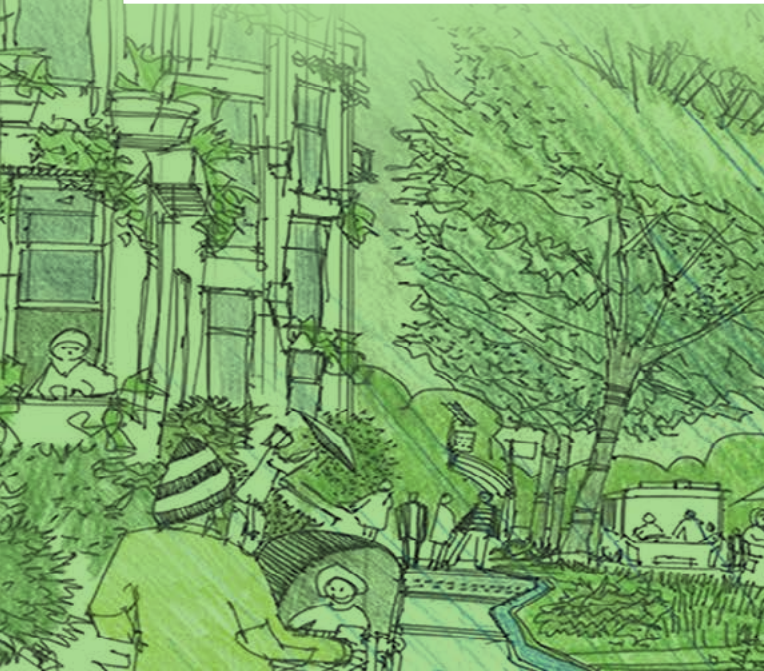
We are Scotland's design champion. We believe in the power of design to improve people's lives. We bring people together to make better places for everyone.

## Our vision

A Scotland whose places are healthy, sustainable and thriving, where everyone works together to shape their future.

## Our aim

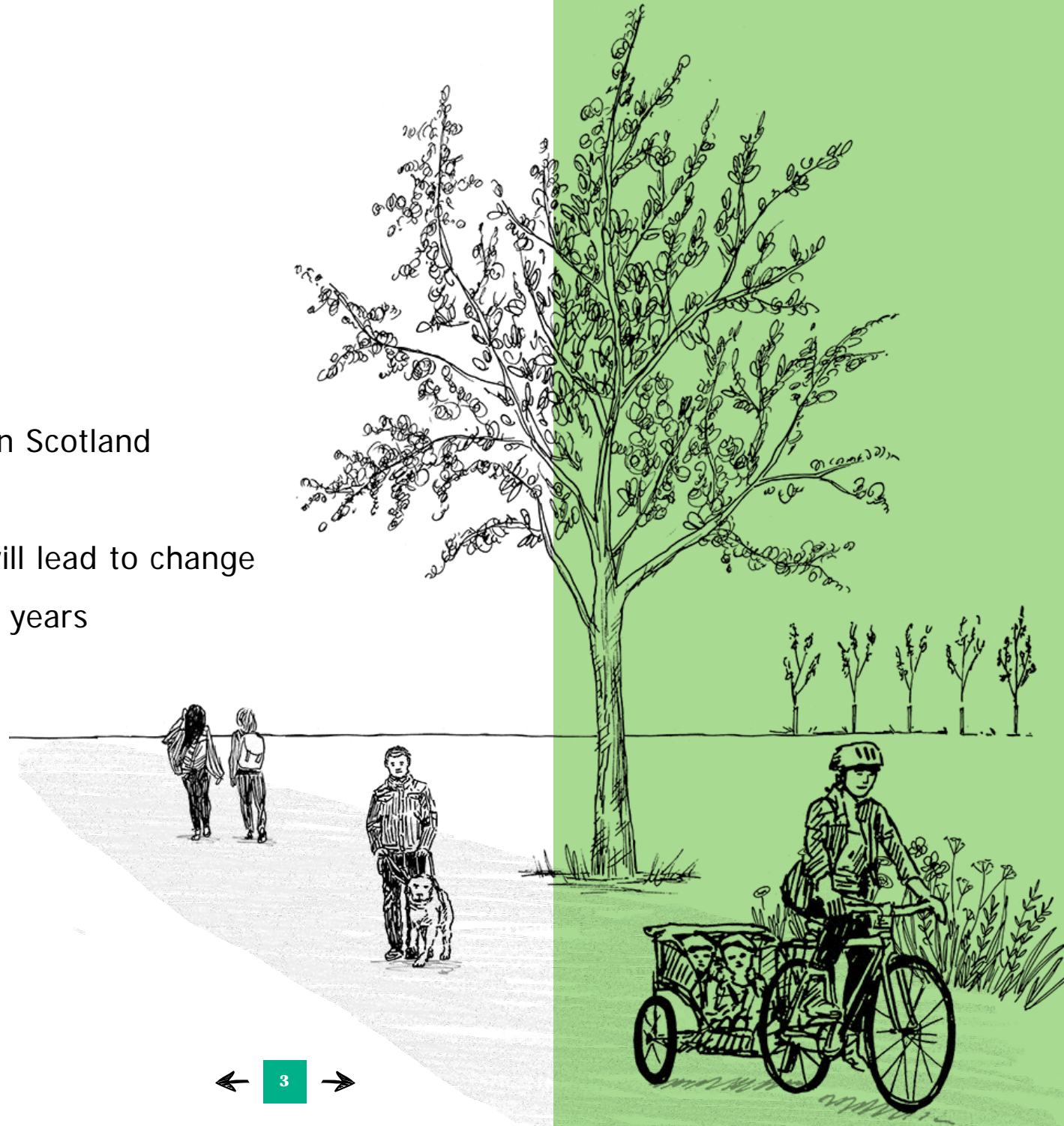
To see the benefits of the Place Principle become an everyday reality in the way Scotland's places are created, adapted and sustained.





# Contents

- 4 Foreword
- 5 Introduction
- 6 The importance of place
- 9 The Place Principle
- 10 About Architecture & Design Scotland
- 13 Strategy for 2021-31
- 14 How we believe our work will lead to change
- 16 Route map for the next ten years
- 17 Timeline
- 18 Understanding our impact
- 21 Conclusion



# Foreword

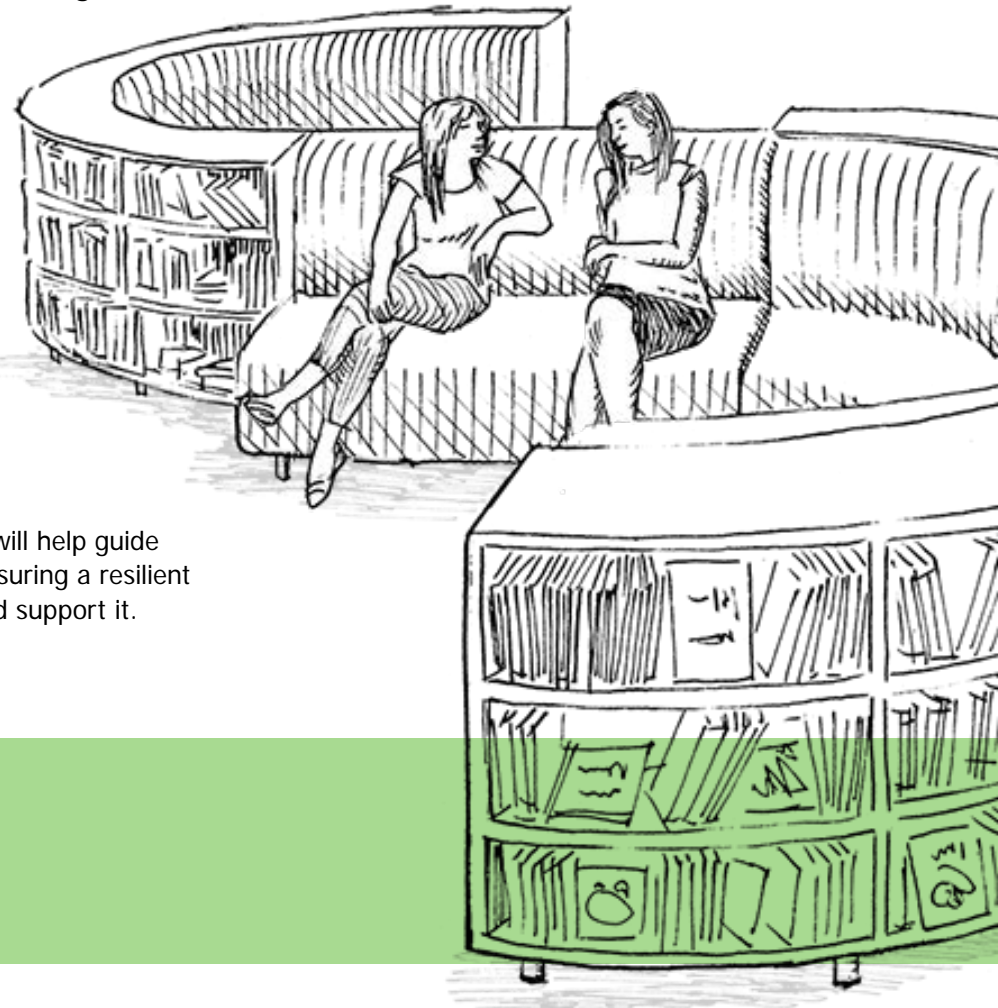


**Fiona Hyslop**  
Cabinet Secretary  
for Economy, Fair  
Work and Culture

Scotland is renowned for its built and natural environment. Its places and buildings play a key part promoting health and wellbeing, supporting an inclusive economy and tackling the climate emergency. For this reason, it is vitally important we plan the future of our places well, and for me this means putting design at the heart of our approach.

Design is a collaborative process, relying for its success on everyone with a stake in the outcome contributing along the way. This is particularly so for buildings and places, where a proactive and inclusive approach to their design creates the conditions for the wellbeing of people and the planet. As we begin our recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, it has perhaps never been more important to embrace this approach.

Architecture & Design Scotland (A&DS) plays an important role in making sure our buildings and places support and enhance the lives of Scotland's people. This ten-year strategy is ambitious in its scope and will help guide Scotland's design and placemaking ambitions over the next decade, ensuring a resilient and sustainable future for all our people. I am delighted to endorse and support it.



# Introduction



**Ann Allen**

Chair, A&DS

**The significance of place – our buildings, infrastructure and spaces, and the way we use them to live our lives – has been highlighted like never before by the Covid-19 pandemic. It challenged so much which we had taken for granted and exposed vulnerabilities across our communities. Its impact on our lives – and how we experience the places we live in – has been profound.**

It was against this backdrop that we prepared our strategy for the next ten years. I want to start with a big thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts and helped us shape this strategy.

Having listened to people and organisations across Scotland, we now have a strategy that responds to the big challenges of our time – the climate emergency, housing need, poverty, inequality and of course, our recovery from the pandemic.

The climate emergency is our greatest challenge and touches almost every aspect of our lives. Fortunately, places created or adapted to tackle climate change are also better places for people. For example, energy-efficient homes also help combat poverty and illness, flood alleviation schemes can create accessible outdoor spaces, and changes in how and where people work can support local economies.

This strategy shows how recovery and change can be supported by the way we design and use Scotland's places. At A&DS, we know

how design can improve people's lives and create a better and more sustainable future for Scotland.

We also know how design can help realise the country's ambitions, captured in initiatives such as Housing to 2040, 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, Community Wealth Building, Town Centre Regeneration and Community-Led Regeneration. In this context the design of our places is central to realising the National Outcomes in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.

We also know from experience that a place is better when the people who live there work together to shape it. The Place Principle, adopted by the Scottish Government in 2019, asks agencies in a place to collaborate with the people who live there to create a shared vision for its future.

A core aim of our strategy is to create the conditions that will ensure the Place Principle becomes the 'new normal' when planning future investment in our public services and assets.

Our role will be to provide leadership on the spatial aspects of the Place Principle to stimulate a step-change in how Scotland's places are planned, designed, delivered and sustained. We will work with our partners to demonstrate what a joined-up approach looks like and the benefits it brings. We will use our experience and professional skills to inspire and support all those involved in creating, adapting and sustaining Scotland's places.

Ultimately, our strategy is to use our remit and expertise to tackle the big challenges we all face. Above all, A&DS is about bringing people together to create better places for everyone, and I very much look forward to working with you to make this a reality.





# The importance of place

**We live our lives in places.** Places can be inspiring and challenging. They reflect the needs, interests and ambitions of those who shaped them. In turn, they shape the way we think about ourselves and the choices we make. Some places work well, others do not, but all of them shape our lives. In this way, it is important that places are made with and for the people who use them.

In 2013, *Creating Places: A Policy Statement on Architecture and Place for Scotland* described the importance of well-designed places. Since then, the importance of our places has become clearer, most recently as we adapted to the impacts of Covid-19.

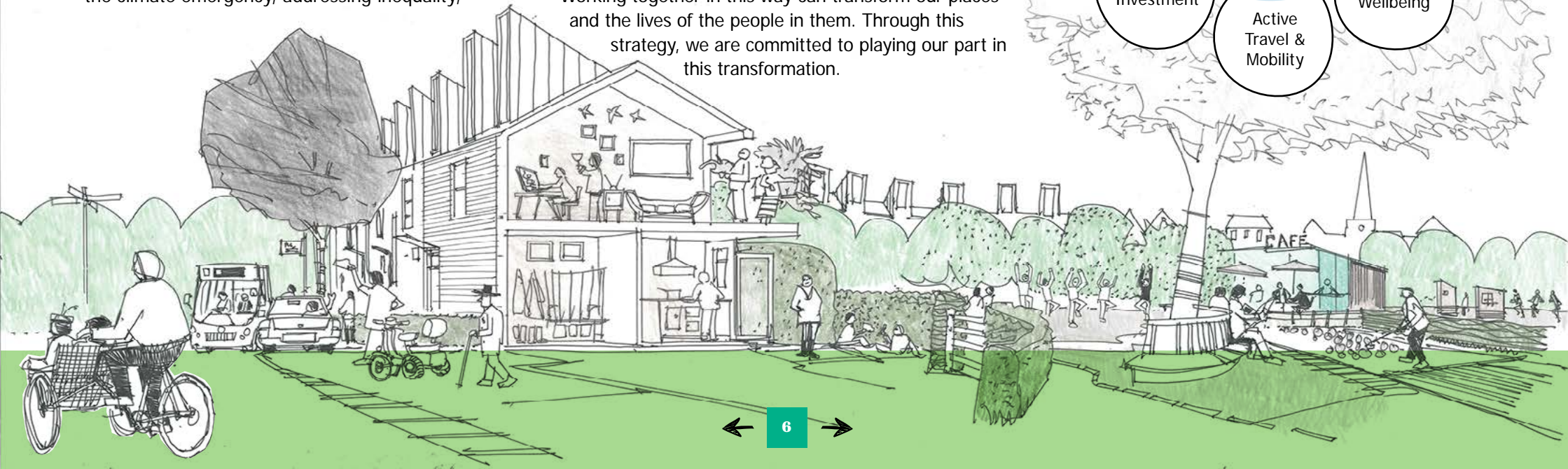
Now, as we look toward recovery, we recognise that our places need to be at the heart of tackling the climate emergency, addressing inequality,

improving the wellbeing of people living in Scotland and ultimately creating a more successful country.

A more joined-up, collaborative and participative approach to services, land and buildings – across all sectors within a place – enables better outcomes for everyone. It increases opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.

Creating places therefore means thinking about how the elements that make up a place – housing and infrastructure, town and city centres, how we travel, green spaces, access to services – come together in 20-minute neighbourhoods. It also means putting the people who use a place at the heart of decision-making.

Working together in this way can transform our places and the lives of the people in them. Through this strategy, we are committed to playing our part in this transformation.



## Making a difference in practice

Pupils from Our Lady of The Missions, East Renfrewshire, with furniture they designed in collaboration with Flux Studios.

### From small acorns

Since 2017 we have helped schools, from the Borders to the Highlands, to adapt their existing spaces for new ways of learning. We ran 'space hacks' with teachers and pupils to test and build a shared vision of how the spaces could be adapted. In some, the young people then became involved in making the changes happen in their school. Taking part in the process helped them grow in confidence and form a wider view of their future careers.

“ We have some spectacular new schools around the country. However, I wonder if the learning spaces are as inventive and creative as the spaces we have created in conjunction with our pupils?

We have some spaces that are unique to our school, that you couldn't necessarily take anywhere else and I think that's the point... we were able to use some of the strategies and approaches alongside the expertise... so that we have a building that suits us, that suits our school and suits our needs.

HEADTEACHER CATHERINE DILLON-RUDDY AT THE LAUNCH OF THE LEARNER JOURNEY EXHIBITION 2019

Adapting a public building such as a school – rather than replacing it – keeps it at the heart of the community, with local people able to walk there and use local businesses en route. This is healthier for people, the environment and the economy, and helps tackle climate change by reducing the need to travel and the demand for new raw materials.





## Making a difference in practice

Fraser Avenue regeneration, Inverkeithing. Kingdom Housing Association with 7N Architects & RankinFraser Landscape Architecture.



### At home in any situation

Ensuring everyone has access to housing that is warm, safe and affordable is one of the key challenges we want to help tackle. In the summer of 2019, we worked with partners to promote Scottish Government's plans for Housing to 2040. We explored and showcased lessons from a range of housing projects across Scotland, and engaged the public through an exhibition and a series of workshops.

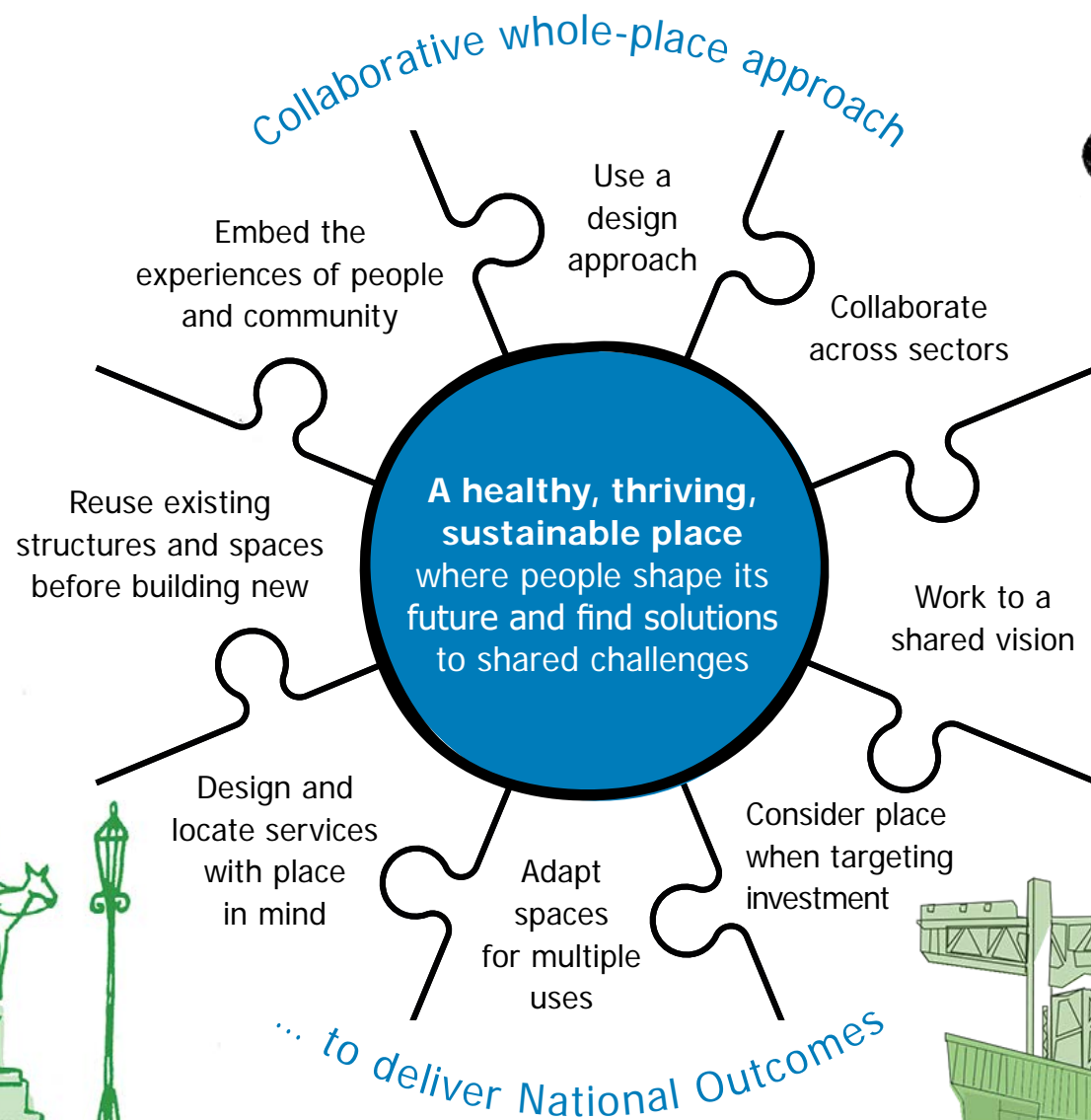
Our work with housing associations, local authorities and NatureScot has also shown that green solutions to rainwater drainage can save money and free up space for more homes. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how valuable greenspace is to mental health and wellbeing, and that we can afford it.

“ When I got my keys, I felt the weight and burden had lifted... Now, health-wise, my kids are kids. They're not limited with illness or GP visits or hospital admissions. In our old house [my daughter] was coughing, had headaches and wouldn't go out. Now she's never in!

TENANT OF FRASER AVENUE REGENERATION, WHICH WAS FEATURED IN OUR HOUSING TO 2040 CONSULTATION



# The Place Principle

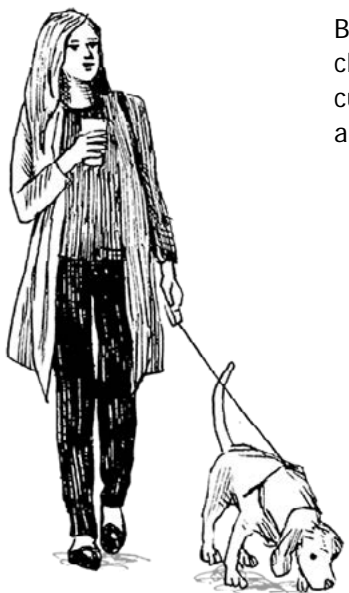




# About Architecture & Design Scotland

## Our vision

A Scotland whose places are healthy, sustainable and thriving, where everyone works together to shape their future.



## Our role and work

As a public body funded by the Scottish Government, our role is to promote the design of buildings and places that meet the needs of everyone in Scotland. Our role and work are framed by *Creating Places: A Policy Statement on Architecture and Place for Scotland*.

To fulfil our role, we will:

- Champion good design and collaboration, nationally and internationally
- Be a leading organisation, enabling the transformation of Scotland's places through the way they are planned, designed, delivered and sustained
- Support and enable the effective participation of people in decision-making
- Work in a range of places to make a difference on the ground
- Work in partnership to promote a whole-place collaborative approach
- Help shape and promote Scottish Ministers' policies for the built and natural environment
- Share learning from the different places we work in.

By doing this, we play a key part in informing and implementing policies around climate change, housing, infrastructure, community empowerment, transport, culture, international relations, landscape, environment, planning, health, learning and regeneration.

## Our approach

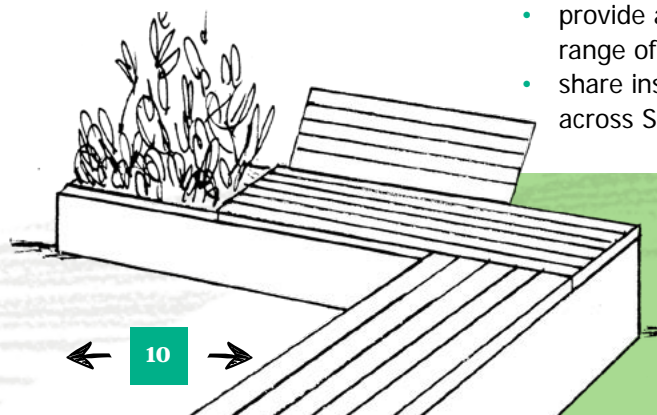
Our belief in the power of design to improve people's lives comes from seeing first-hand how design methods help resolve multiple, sometimes conflicting, issues. Good design makes best use of resources and understands the link between the physical environment and the experience of people using it.

The years ahead will require solutions to many complex challenges: reducing carbon emissions, providing suitable homes, growing green infrastructure and biodiversity, stimulating the economy, addressing social inequality and isolation.

Places provide the setting for all these endeavours. We believe that by sharing a common vision for a whole place, and using that as the lens for decision-making, can deliver the solutions Scotland needs.

Therefore, we will:

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





## Making a difference in practice

### Forging a common purpose

We collaborated with partners in Alloa using a range of tools to help bring about a lasting transformation. We explored the wider changes needed so that older people could live well in the town centre and helped develop the design of new supported-living flats to improve the experience of those who will live there.

“ Through this project, we have found that the crux has been in true partnership working and wider community engagement. When considering multigenerational housing in a town centre, it is good to engage with those who are already working with local older people, those with dementia and with disabilities.

LOUISE ORR, TEAM LEADER, VOLUNTEERING AND ROUTES TO WORK, CLACKMANNANSHIRE THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE

We know that no project succeeds in isolation. Our work supports the collaborative development of strategies which link planning, services and investment. This enables the right development in the right place to support the needs of the community.

Cycling Without Age volunteers use specially designed cycles ('trishaws') to take elderly people on rides, helping tackle social isolation. Featured in our publication *A Caring Place*.



## Making a difference in practice

### With you all the way

Over the last decade, we have helped the NHS embed the voice of patients, staff and the wider community in briefs for new and altered facilities. Communities from Glasgow's East End to the Outer Hebrides are now creating nurturing places of their own, and that other countries look towards for inspiration.

“ Best designed health centre I've ever seen. A real pleasure to be here. Congratulations to the architects and all who assisted them in getting it right.

NOTE LEFT BY A PATIENT AT EASTWOOD HEALTH AND CARE CENTRE BY HOSKINS ARCHITECTS, 2019

As we enter the next decade, the emphasis is on bringing all streams of public investment together to reimagine what diverse communities need to stay well. Learning, landscape, care, community, physical and digital connectivity – ensuring people's needs are met within their local area.

Interior of Eastwood Health and Care Centre, East Renfrewshire by Hoskins Architects.

# Strategy for 2021-31

**This Strategy for 2021-31 sets out how we plan to make the Place Principle an everyday reality in Scotland.** It draws on in-depth engagement with our stakeholders and is aligned with the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.

Place is where our homes, schools, health centres, workplaces, shops, natural environment and more all interact to underpin our lives. The importance of place is reflected in national policies including those for tackling climate change, housing, town centres, regeneration, transport and infrastructure, and in the Place Principle which requires a whole-place collaborative approach.

A whole-place collaborative approach means thinking about the future of these aspects together. It provides a practical and relatable way of looking at the combined impact of complex change on real people and communities. It also recognises the power of place to tackle climate change, improve health and wellbeing, address inequalities and encourage inclusive economic growth.

By aligning a range of policy and investment streams around the ambitions of the people they aim to support, we can make better places.

Success would be a whole-place collaborative approach systemically embedded across Scotland.

Achieving this would see more people working together to make decisions on the future of their places. It would give an even stronger voice to the people who live in and use places, enabling their experiences to guide design and delivery. It would mean we have helped to create well-designed buildings, spaces and places that meet the needs of all those who use them.

## Our focus

We will focus on embedding the Place Principle across Scotland by:

- Championing the benefits of a whole-place collaborative approach to a wide audience, including policy makers
- Collaborating across communities to create lasting change
- Supporting early adopters and examples of the Place Principle on the ground
- Capturing and sharing the learning gleaned from these examples
- Identifying the systemic changes needed to foster a place-based approach, and working to remove barriers
- Helping to build capacity and embed practice across Scotland.



# How we believe our work will lead to change

## If we...

Champion the benefits of systems based on place collaboration

Begin by working with those who are open to lasting change

Support change on the ground and take learning from it

## and...

Share what we learn from specific projects with others across Scotland

Champion the benefits of the Place Principle to a wide audience, including policy makers

## then...

A critical mass of people involved in planning, designing, delivering and sustaining Scotland's places will approach and do things in a way that makes the Place Principle an everyday reality

## and we'll get...

A Scotland whose places are healthy, sustainable and thriving, where everyone works together to shape their future and find solutions to shared challenges



## Making a difference in practice

Workshop with Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority on creating Carbon Conscious Places for Strathard.



### Leading new thinking

Growing out of our work on design advice, we undertook a one-year pilot study with local authorities during 2019-20, testing a place-based approach to tackling the climate emergency. The work was funded by the Scottish Government's Energy and Climate Change Directorate and contributes to the delivery of Scotland's Climate Change Plan.

Working with communities in places as diverse as Shetland, Strathard, Elgin and Glasgow, we captured and shared the learning from this. Our eight principles of Carbon Conscious Places made national TV, raising public awareness of the importance of place and its central role in tackling the climate emergency.

“ We can develop, we can build and we can encourage people to be living in a carbon conscious way and we can make it easier.

IAIN MCDIARMID OF SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL,  
SPEAKING ON STV NEWS IN OCTOBER 2020



# Route map for the next ten years

In this strategy, we describe the route map to embedding the Place Principle in Scotland as working towards three horizons. While we will focus on each horizon in turn, all will be present in what we do from start to finish.

## Horizon 1:

### **Understanding how to work together to create good places for people**

To be successful in changing how Scotland's places are planned, designed, delivered and sustained, we see the need for a common understanding – both of what working together in a whole-place approach means, and ways of knowing when the approach is delivering benefits for people of a place.

By working directly with places, we will be part of creating examples of what this means, and gathering evidence of the benefits that can be delivered. This is already an important part of our work and we will develop it further. We will make sure that the way we gather and share learning connects those who are doing and those who are about to do.

## Horizon 2:

### **Working together is easy to do**

As we work with places that are taking a whole-place approach, we will start conversations about the way they are set up and how this helps or hinders people who want to work together.

Working across Scotland, we will share what we learn and highlight the barriers that exist within the systems controlling and shaping our places. We will champion good examples of effective systems and promote changes to how things are set up on a national scale. To succeed with our strategy, working together has to be considered easy.

## Horizon 3:

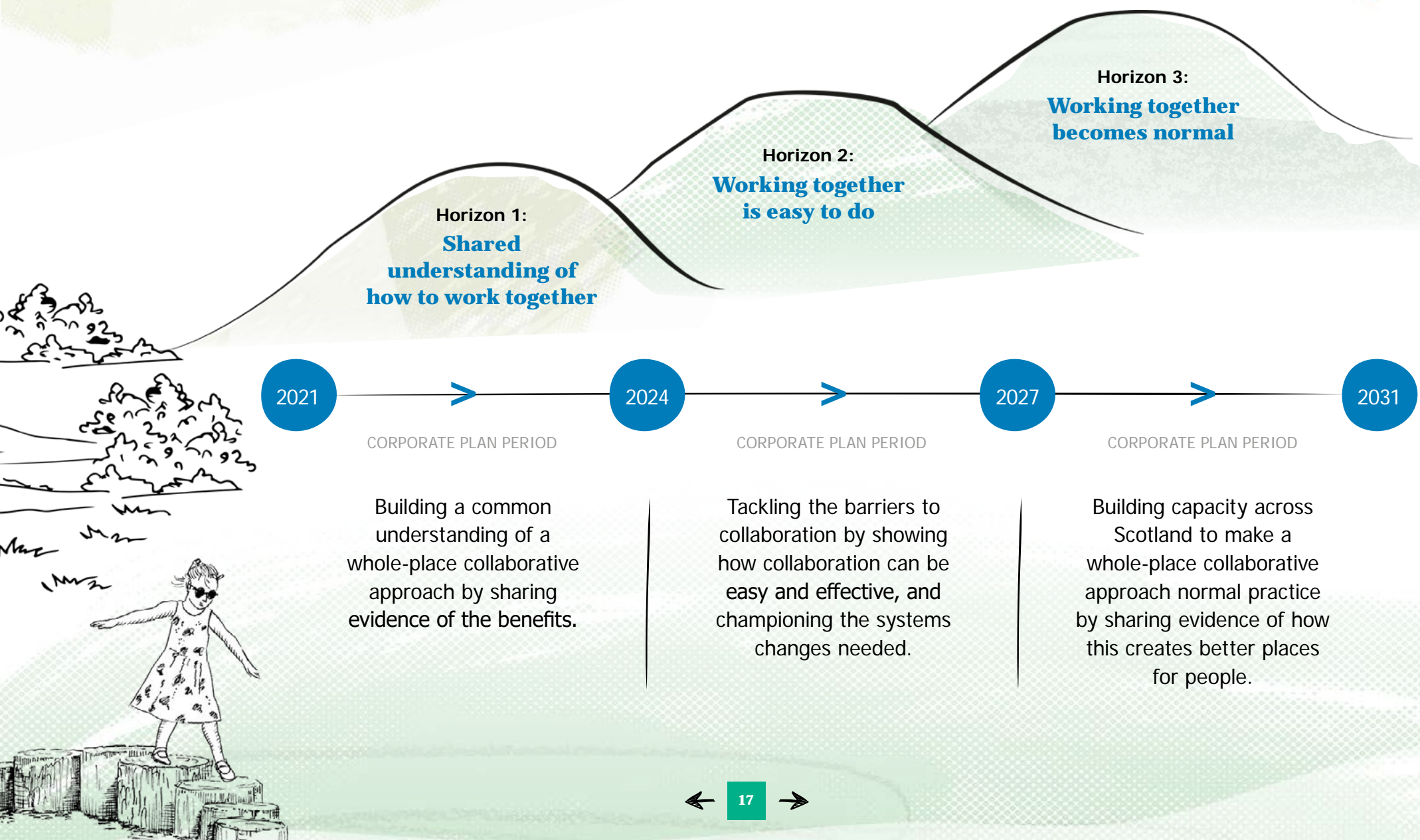
### **Working together becomes normal in most places**

Our support for people and places is always intended to leave them more able to keep working together using a whole-place approach. Over the years, we will work to raise the capacity and capabilities of partner organisations and communities across Scotland.

As systems change locally and nationally to make working together in a whole-place approach the easier option, we expect to see our focus shift towards making sure the capacity to do it is available everywhere. As a whole-place collaborative approach becomes normal practice in more and more places, we will continue to share the evidence of how this leads to better places for people and promote the benefits of good design.



# Timeline





# Understanding our impact



Achieving our aim relies on us understanding the impact of our work alongside our partners. By focusing the evaluation of our strategy on three questions, we can be clear whether we are on our way to achieving our aim and the outcomes associated with it.

## Question 1:

**Is a whole-place collaborative approach leading to benefits for people and communities?**

Throughout the strategy period, we will gather evidence of how putting the Place Principle into practice when creating and taking care of our places delivers benefits to people and communities. We will work with our partners to agree measures for these, set in the context of the National Performance Framework and other policy goals.

## Question 2:

**Are we helping to make working together the easier option?**

When barriers to working together in a whole-place approach have been identified with our partners, we will be able to promote alternatives to decision makers. The extended timescale of the strategy makes it possible for us to put in place measures to understand the path of system changes, both locally and nationally.

## Question 3:

**Are more places in Scotland planned, designed, delivered and sustained through a whole-place collaborative approach?**

We want to understand whether working together in a whole-place approach is becoming the norm across Scotland and that our efforts are supporting people and places to make lasting changes to the way things are done.



## Making a difference in practice

Event on intergenerational housing and age-friendly places, Dumfries, 2019



### Growing our own

We connect people who deliver projects on the ground, enabling them to share their learning with each other.

Through our Public Sector Client Forum and Local Authority Urban Design Forum (LAUDF), we have supported the exchange of good practice and examples of how to create great places in Scotland.

90% of those involved in these events say it changes how they approach their work. Many young professionals who are part of these networks develop to positions of leadership. Through supporting our professionals, even at the earliest stages of their career, we grow the skills needed for the future.

“ It is invaluable to have an opportunity to hear about what counterparts in other local authorities are doing and how they are approaching their work.

PARTICIPANT AT A LAUDF WORKSHOP



## Making a difference in practice

### From Scotland to the world

Our work also promotes Scotland's collaborative, people-centred approach on an international stage. The Place Standard tool, which helps bring different interests and groups together to discuss and develop their place, is now world renowned and has been used in 14 countries.

The Happenstance, Scotland's contribution to the 2018 Architecture Biennale in Venice, co-ordinated by us and led by *WAVEparticle*, started with work in communities around Scotland. The installation, with a structure by Baxendale Studios, presented their hopes and creative thinking about place in a way that welcomed local people and provided an inclusive space for them to gather and explore. A space with a positive legacy long after we left.

“What the Scottish have achieved here in Venice is close to extraordinary: with hearts as generous as their brains they're pointing at the many voids created by mass tourism and filling them with creativity, debates and spontaneous social connections. Wonderful job!

LEONARD DAVICH, VISITOR



Evening film screening  
at The Happenstance.



# Conclusion

**As we look to recovery** and to tackling the wider challenges of the next decade and beyond, much remains uncertain. What we do know is the future of our places is set to take centre stage.

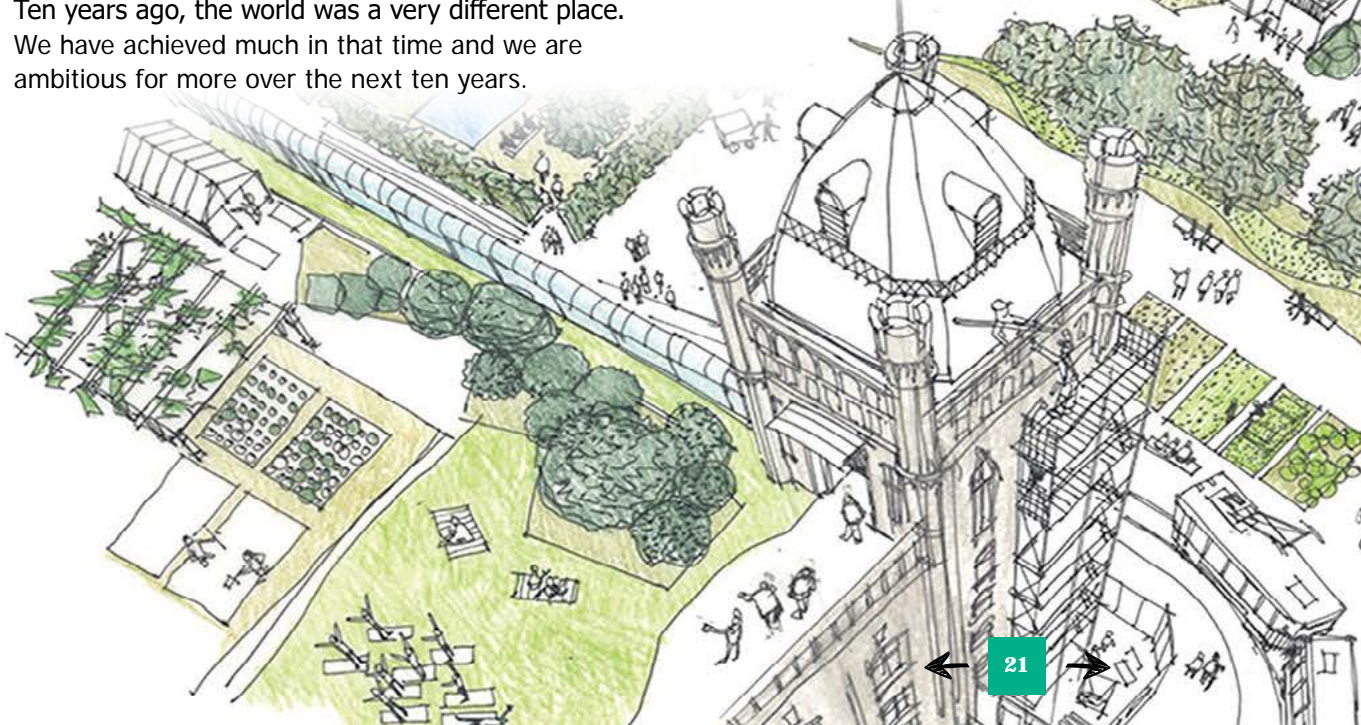
We believe that a sustainable future for our communities depends on all those who support them **working together to create places that offer opportunity to all**. Collaborating around a shared vision for a place must become the normal way of doing things. We are clear that our remit from Ministers means we have a key part to play in this. Our work will help transform systems and ultimately make a positive difference to the lives of people across the country.

Ten years ago, the world was a very different place. We have achieved much in that time and we are ambitious for more over the next ten years.

To realise our ambitions and yours, we need to build and maintain strong partnerships at local and national level. This will be vital as we face the challenges of the future, in particular climate change. We invite anyone with a shared commitment to the creation of healthy, sustainable and resilient places to work with us.

Sign up to our newsletter to find out how we will deliver our Strategy and how we can help you.

[www.ads.org.uk/  
newsletter-subscriptions](http://www.ads.org.uk/newsletter-subscriptions)





# Credits and links

## Illustrations

Cover; pages 2, 6, 14 and 21: **Richard Carman**  
Pages 3, 4, 5, 10, 16, 17: **Silje Eirin Aure**  
Page 9 composite illustration: **Silje Eirin Aure,**  
**Katie White** and  
**A&DS**

## Photography

Page 7: **Lenny Warren**  
Page 8: **Gordon Burniston**  
Page 11: **Courtesy of Cycling Without Age**  
Page 12: **Gillian Hayes, Dapple Photography**  
Page 15: **A&DS**  
Page 19: **Allan Devlin on behalf of the**  
**Crichton Trust**  
Page 20: **Graham Ross**

## Links

**Creating Places: A policy statement on architecture and place in Scotland**  
[www.gov.scot/publications/creating-places-policy-statement-architecture-place-scotland](http://www.gov.scot/publications/creating-places-policy-statement-architecture-place-scotland)

**The Place Principle**  
[www.gov.scot/publications/place-principle-introduction](http://www.gov.scot/publications/place-principle-introduction)

**Scotland's National Performance Framework**  
[www.nationalperformance.gov.scot](http://www.nationalperformance.gov.scot)

**Housing to 2040**  
[www.gov.scot/publications/housing-2040](http://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-2040)

**Community Wealth Building**  
[www.gov.scot/policies/cities-regions/community-wealth-building](http://www.gov.scot/policies/cities-regions/community-wealth-building)

**Town Centre Regeneration**  
[www.gov.scot/policies/regeneration/town-centre-regeneration](http://www.gov.scot/policies/regeneration/town-centre-regeneration)



# Architecture & Design Scotland

Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

## Find out more:

[www.ads.org.uk](http://www.ads.org.uk) | [@ArcDesSco](https://twitter.com/ArcDesSco) | T: 0131 556 6699 | E: [info@ads.org.uk](mailto:info@ads.org.uk)

Bakehouse Close,  
146 Canongate,  
Edinburgh EH8 8DD

Level 2, The Lighthouse,  
11 Mitchell Lane,  
Glasgow G1 3NU

