



# Turning The Tide in Scotland

## Local Urban Lab 2 (of 2) Glasgow, 2024

LUL 1 was vital for gathering case study evidence locally of artists impacting on the narrative around climate change.

At the end of the first LUL day we were left with the question - how do we take ideas forward into practice.

Glasgow's LUL 2 therefore brought together two senior planners from Glasgow City Council's Planning Department (Gillian Dick and Etive Currie), 2 artists (Robyn Woolston and Louise Welsh), an architect (Jude Barbour from Collective Architects), an activist (Iain McGillivray from CDPI) and 2 academics (Professor Graham Jeffery and Dr Liz Gardiner from University of the West of Scotland) in the room and online.

The conversation was wide ranging and (because the numbers were small) frank, open, honest and intense. We had intended the dialogue to be 1.5 hours and in fact, people were still debating after over 2 hours.

Everyone in the room is on the same page. The missings were the land owners and developers who were absent. It was agreed that the dominant dialogue currently is that everything is weighted in favour of the economic bottom line. The land owners have the final say with little accountability. Our question was "How can we change that power balance?"

There was agreement that the climate crisis has changed the context of the dialogue and we perhaps haven't quite caught up with the reality but the fact is - no longer can profit trump sustainability. The crisis has reached such a level that there is general recognition that without fundamental change, there will be no planet to pollute and abuse.

During the conversation, Louise and Jude (who run a podcast called "Who Owns the Clyde? <https://open.spotify.com/show/4qWayogEjRwgiRUGBiwT2X>) introduced us to the United Nations concept that rivers are legal entities with rights of their own. All agreed this is a key concept which is worth pursuing. Perhaps the River Cities Network could look at this? Could that context upturn the power dynamic?



If the river has rights (for access, use, protection from flooding etc) could the river then charge for access, fine for pollution, fine for flooding caused by inappropriate housing developments and take back control?

### Conclusions and next steps

Agreed: These conversations are vital to be conducted in a European context. We can find out how all these other cities deal with their rivers. We suspect Glasgow is unique in having allowed so much to be transferred into private ownership. In Vienna, for example public ownership of the water supply really delivers.

We will take this concept to the River Cities Network to explore further.

On the meantime, Louise and Jude will continue with their podcast explorations ( "Who Owns the Clyde?"

(<https://open.spotify.com/show/4qWayogEjRwgiRUGBiwT2X>).