**Glasgow Urban Design Panel** **29th May 2008**

**Proposal:** **Community Growth Areas, as outlined in Glasgow & the Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan, 2006**

The panel thanked the officers for the presentation, and were grateful to get the opportunity to comment on initiatives of this nature. However, it was noted that the decision to "activate" the Community Growth Areas has already been taken, and therefore comments on their nature, location, and suitability were likely to have already been superseded by events, a situation the panel view as unhelpful.

General Remarks:

The panel noted that the phrase "Community Growth Areas" smacked of the disingenuousness of a certain type of governance. The proposed areas for developments have only a tenuous connection to existing communities, will in some cases simply overwhelm the communities they attach to. They are not organic growth but newly initiated settlements of c1500 new homes as well as all the infrastructure these will require. The argument that there is a requirement for family housing was accepted & understood, but the assertion that no (or insufficient) sites suitable for such developments existed elsewhere in the city (in particular on brownfield sites) struck the panel as showing a failure of imagination and leadership from the council. Especially as at the panel today (& most others) a presentation of flatted developments was made, once again featuring one & two bed units unsuitable for family uses. It seems that planning policy is being led by market forces in the crudest manner. It seems to the panel that the proposals represent a means of releasing what would otherwise be green belt land for development, and the pressure for this action comes not from Urban Design or Planning reasons but pressure from the market.

Having said that, it was appreciated that the officers presentation covered the preparations for issuing a brief for the Masterplanning process that the Joint Structure Plan required. In that respect it was exemplary, with the following reservations:

1. The sequence in which the developments take place is critical: i.e. housing development should be contingent on solid commitments to infrastructure developments. This is hard to achieve especially where it is funded from the private sector.
2. The public transport system should be carefully considered as such communities are very likely to generate high levels of commuter traffic.
3. Sustainability should be at the heart of any proposals, from house typology to drainage systems, and not seen as the main area of negotiation.

<u>Conclusion:</u>

The Panel opposes in principle the basis of the proposals, in particular questioning the need for release of greenbelt land when there are so many brownfield sites available. Moreover developments of the nature envisaged are not of their nature likely to be the most sustainable family housing