



Conversations on Glasgow

Ann Markusen



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The Glasgow Urban Lab
Mackintosh School of Architecture
The Glasgow School of Art

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Preface

Ann Markusen

These Conversations about Glasgow's past, present and future were initiated by the Glasgow Urban Lab's Steering Committee on my arrival as the School of Art's inaugural Fulbright Distinguished Chair in the fall of 2010. Running study groups has been an important outreach activity for me since the mid-1990s, for seven years at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York on the military industrial complex and for five at the University of Minnesota on arts and cultural policy. Lab Steering Committee Member Stuart Gulliver, who headed up the Glasgow Development Agency's economic development work during the 1990s, had run a series of Quiet Conversations in Bradford. We decided to blend the two sets of experience to form a similar group to explore Glasgow's challenges and ways forward.

We began listing a half a dozen or more topics that we thought deserved attention and debate. We sought to create a group of thirty people from broad walks of Glasgow life who would bring differing values and expertise to the Conversations, who would be willing to speak up as well as listen hard, and who would respect candidly expressed views no matter how much they clashed with their own. The thirty people who accepted our invitation came from many quarters – leaders from City government, the private sector and social enterprises; academics from the fields of health care, design, arts and economics; community organisers; entrepreneurs; and journalists. While each member did not formally represent a particular constituency, together we broadly covered the spectrum of policy activists and providers. We could have used more minority and lower-income voices. On average, twenty people participated in each of the six sessions and group members are listed on the final page.

The Glasgow Conversations each began with a short presentation by someone with expertise in the topic at hand. The ensuing moderated discussion was not-for-attribution, meaning that anyone in the room could use the ideas expressed but pledged not to identify who said what. We quickly developed a sense of trust that encouraged candour and speculation. People disagreed with each other energetically but respectfully. We often felt that sessions ended too soon, but we kept our commitment to 90 minutes.

Our aim was not to generate consensus but to explore all dimensions and hear new theories, evidence and voices. The group itself helped to propose and select topics. During our first session pondering 'What makes Glasgow distinctive?' Several people emphasised Glasgow's relatively poor health outcomes. Members articulated a strong interest in tackling the health inequality issue and we did so at our second session. Group initiatives also placed issues like the legacy of the Commonwealth Games and 'growth and inequality' on our docket.

We accomplished all of this on a shoestring budget. We solicited free space from organisations to which our members had access. These are listed inside the back cover. It was fun moving around town, from the Briggait on the edge of the Merchant City to the Chamber of Commerce in George Square to the Lighthouse to the Common Guild in the West End. Every time, some members would admit they'd never been there before. Tours were offered beforehand! The Urban Lab covered the costs of coffee and tea – no tablet or scones. People came for the conversation.

This publication summarises the debates we had each month. The write-ups in the six substantive chapters are culled from notes taken by Julia Radcliffe and myself, hammered into journals, vetted for accuracy with each session's presenter, and distributed to group members as a whole. In response to enthusiasm in the group for a version that could be widely disseminated, I agreed to rewrite the journals for broader public distribution.

In these write-ups, I have retained the 'voices' as much as possible, using the active speaking language we use in spontaneous debate and keeping the many interesting examples that people shared in making certain points. Certain strong points of view are set off from the text to demonstrate the level of candour and passion involved – I chose only a few such expressions from among many candidates. Occasionally, presenters and participants would mention readings that they feel are important sources of ideas and evidence. These are noted in the write-ups and collated at the end as recommended reading.

In an overview chapter, I summarize what I as an American economist and urban planner learned from each session and add some reflections on or examples from the United States. I cannot overstate the value of comparisons: I've learned so much from Glasgow's struggles to remake itself as a post-industrial city. I also note the synergies, or lack thereof, across the six sessions – in many cases these are striking and important for moving forward.

Finally, we asked participants to write a short reflection of their experience as members of Glasgow Conversations if they wished. Some wrote about the process and how they felt about it. Many stressed the value of spending time talking across fences and hearing how people in other sectors think. These reflections are compiled without editing as a final chapter.

I want to thank the Urban Lab team and the Glasgow School of Art's Director, Seona Reid, for supporting and developing the idea of the Conversations; helping to identify group members; participating; and giving feedback on the write-up. Brian Evans and Julia Radcliffe skilfully edited the final version, Tom Burnett contributed the graphic design and layout and Craig Laurie has completed the graphic production. The presenters and the people who offered their spaces for convenings gave the Conversations special gifts without compensation.

Ownership of the ideas and debate by group members was high during the process. I hope this short reprise reaches a much larger group of Glasgow advocates and doers.

Ann Markusen, UK Fulbright Distinguished Chair, 2010-11

The Glasgow Urban Lab,
Mackintosh School of Architecture,
The Glasgow School of Art.

Foreword

David Porter

These Conversations present a unique view of a unique city, Glasgow. They arise from a series of meetings held at monthly intervals where a group of informed individuals gathered and, from a series of perspectives, looked at the city in the round and in context. They were called Conversations because they mixed a degree of informality where all felt they could contribute but within a structure focused on generating a really productive discussion.

The Conversations were inspired and led by Professor Ann Markusen, the first UK Fulbright Distinguished Chair at the Glasgow Urban Laboratory, appointed for the period between September 2010 and April 2011. Ann came with a world reputation for research, consultancy and advice on urban economics and with world-ranking expertise on two topics: the economic and social impact of industrial decline and the regenerative potential of arts and creativity on the macro-economics of cities. This gave her an ideal background for an engagement with Glasgow.

Markusen has worked closely with the group that founded the Urban Laboratory three years ago. These include Brian Evans whose appointment in September of 2010 as the Glasgow School of Art's Head of Urbanism coincided with Ann's arrival; Gerry Grams, a graduate of the GSA who is Glasgow City Council's Design Advisor, an honorary professor at the GSA, and instrumental in developing the partnership with the City Council; and Stuart Gulliver, Emeritus Professor of City Development at the University of Glasgow and previously Chief Executive of Glasgow Development Agency, who has been a friend and mentor to the Lab since the beginning. In the middle of this has been Julia Radcliffe who has made things happen.

This publication marks an important step for the Lab, a partnership formed in 2008 by the Mackintosh School of Architecture at The Glasgow School of Art with the City of Glasgow through its Department of Development and Regeneration Services. Behind the creation of the Lab was a deceptively simple idea: that of forming a working partnership between a higher education institution and a local government agency with the intent to use the partnership to produce new insights into how the city could be better understood and, through this, serve its population and its many visitors in the most successful way possible.

I use the word 'deceptive' for two reasons. First, to achieve a creative alignment between two complex organisations such as an art school and a local government agency may sound obvious but has meant breaking new ground and doing so against the background of great economic difficulty. There has been much talk of such partnerships but they rarely happen to long-term productive effect. Second, it is not as simple as it sounds to produce research from the partnership. In almost all circumstances, research implies minimising variables to achieve the sharpest focus on a single phenomenon. But to be effective, research into place-making has to acknowledge that the phenomena being studied become meaningless if seen in a narrow focus. Urbanism and the life of a city are complex, inter-related and in a constant state of flux. We should therefore not approach the city seeking answers or solutions but instead assemble complex views and see how they can be brought to bear in proposing new action on the ground. This collection of conversations develops exactly this overview.

The overall theme of city visions is central to the Lab's work. From these relatively informal conversations has grown a larger ambition for the Lab to be curator and facilitator for the city of Glasgow in generating its fifteen-year future vision, led by Brian Evans and combining three broad stands: people, place and prosperity. The project, called Future Glasgow, is now underway and will be completed by the end of 2011.

On a smaller scale, seeking and finding a shared urban vision through discussion and debate was central to the Lab's pioneering involvement with the town of Neilston and its Development Trust where, under the Leadership of the GSA's first Head of Urbanism, Alan Simpson, the local community prepared the Neilston Renaissance Town Charter that won the 'Community Involvement' award at the 2010 Scottish Government's Awards for Quality in Planning. The Neilston Town Charter was the first pilot project of the Scottish Renaissance Towns initiative. Developed over nine months and building on several years' work by local people, the charter sets out a 20-year vision for the town, created by the community for the community. A key element of the 'Renaissance Towns' process is building confidence and capacity, encouraging a culture of 'can do', with residents taking individual and collective responsibility for their village or town.

Running parallel with these civic visioning exercises, our students and their tutors have been developing visions in another way – by designing, exhibiting and publishing projects that respond to issues in the city and provoke new thinking. As designers, they are exploring that other aspect of vision: what change might actually look like on the ground. Finally, being in an art school, we are preoccupied with visual communication. We are in an ideal position to explore how people perceive and record their environment, how they communicate what they see and feel about their own sense of place.

David Porter

Emeritus Professor at the Mackintosh School of Architecture,
Glasgow School of Art
Founding Director of the Glasgow Urban Lab

Prologue

Gerry Grams

Glasgow, a City of Contradictions

In many ways Glasgow is a city of contradictions. Having battled its way out of the post industrial period with new found energy and vibrancy to become one of Europe's most interesting cities, it still finds itself haunted with the demons of ill health and poverty which compare it to many in the third world. The legacies of those years still leave their scars and are proving to take generations to remove. There are no quick fix answers, as many Glaswegians are all too aware.

What the Conversations developed by Ann Markusen and the Urban Lab proved, however, is that despite all this, Glaswegians are not only a resilient lot, but a determined and creative community of people working together to solve problems (sometimes against significant odds) to improve the lives of our citizens. The effort is also driven by a strong desire to maintain Glasgow's reputation as an outward looking, international city through innovation and industry.

Glasgow has managed to retain creative thinkers in all sectors who have assisted in redesigning the city's image and developing many initiatives that have made it a place which others imitate and visit. They understand that success does not come easily. They constantly break new ground in neighbourhood and community initiatives, in healthcare and education and in the visual arts and creative industries. In this new age of austerity, Glasgow's innovators will see it through – the city will come out the other side leaner, fitter, and ready to organize the city to tackle new challenges.

Glaswegians do not take success for granted: with the delivery of the 20th Commonwealth Games in 2014, Glasgow will once again illustrate that its communities are its strength and that its places have a real authenticity.

Glasgow can sometimes be a frustrating city. We expect so much of ourselves. Any failure to deliver is taken to heart, yet ultimately builds a determination that forms character whether you work in the creative industries or in healthcare. There is no shortage of ideas and, like any great city, we need leaders who live up to our expectations: to be innovative and recognise that they have a huge responsibility to help our citizens flourish and prosper in a place that they richly deserve.

Gerry Grams

Glasgow City Council Development and Regeneration Services
Urban Lab Member

Glasgow Conversations: A Comparative View

Embedded in Glasgow for seven months, I've earned a marvellous education in the city, its challenges, its charms, its people. Its movers and shakers. In this overview, I summarize very briefly the theme and major debating points for each session and add in some thoughts, sometimes opinionated but often based on research, about the experience of cities and regions elsewhere, especially but not exclusively in North America. I also tease out the connections across the six topics. As we progressed over the months, it was fascinating to see how participants elaborated on current topics with insights from previous ones.

What makes Glasgow a distinctive city?

In this opening session, we explored what makes Glasgow a distinctive city and whether or not it matters. Participants offered many nuanced distinctions: Glasgow's unique intellectual, industrial, social and environmental heritage. Its strengths as an entrepot for waves of immigrants, a diverse lot that includes, most recently, workers from Pakistan and Eastern Europe as well as students from as far away as China. Its remarkable and home-grown arts and cultural scene, especially strong in music, visual art and design. The city's success as a regional shopping and entertainment centre. The contemporary spirit of its people. And candidly, people also noted Glasgow's less attractive distinctions: its relatively poor health outcomes, its reputation for violence, its under-utilized industrial infrastructure.

Not everyone agreed that these and other unique features should be at the heart of a vision for the future. Some in economic development favour strategies to attract new branch plants from elsewhere, compete for prizes and events that will bring the City greater exposure and tourists and market Glasgow as a cosmopolitan place like other successful cities. Because I presented the case for building on distinctiveness, I will not repeat my points here but encourage you to read on to the next chapter. However, certain axes of contention deserve a little more sunlight than we managed to shine in at the session.

As an economist, I've always been puzzled by the singular emphasis on exports as fuel for growth. Exports are not the only way to create sustainable jobs. Many economists, beginning with Scotland's Adam Smith, theorize that internal division of labor and greater efficiency in production aimed at the local market can sustain ongoing job creation. Cross-country studies have found that growth in domestic consumption drives export growth more often than vice versa, shown to be true for the US and UK in particular (Ghartey, 1993; Sharma et al, 1991). Policy-encouraged expansions in the local consumption base offer people an opportunity to spend more of their income locally (Markusen and Schrock, 2009). All cities grow by increasing the share of output that is locally produced, i.e. larger cities have proportionately larger multipliers than smaller cities. If Glasgow offers its citizens more local live cultural experiences, local produce, and locally-managed services, then more, better, and enduring jobs can be created.

The significance of quality of life was also hotly debated in this section. Scholars who study migration in the US increasingly find that quality of life is an important determinant of people's willingness to locate, study or work in some regions and cities over others. In the aggregate, people are willing to pay a rent premium, for instance, to live and work in San Francisco, and many people refuse to consider jobs in locales that do not offer the recreational, cultural and climatic features they desire. If this is the case for Glasgow, policymakers should balance economic development incentives and programmes with quality of life investments.

This session served as an incubator for future discussions: our decision to tackle the relatively poor health of Glaswegians in the next session arose from members' strong concerns over this negative distinction.

How can we improve Glaswegians' health?

In our second conversation, we addressed the problem of Glasgow's relatively low life expectancy compared with peer cities like Manchester, Liverpool and in Eastern Europe, as well as health inequality within the city. Presenter Prof Carol Tannahill, documented the disturbing dimensions of Glasgow's relatively poor health outcomes despite good access to health care. Contributing causes include deindustrialization, long-term joblessness, relatively higher drug and alcohol abuse and the high incidence of violence, especially among young men, none of which completely account for observed differentials. Tannahill proposed that solutions lie beyond the health care sector; reaching across public service boundaries, counselling more emphasis on social regeneration, placemaking, and targeting children and youth.

We debated how public service changes might offer greater voice in both health care and social regeneration; personal empowerment can leave people behind if they don't have the knowledge and tools or good health to act. Young people in particular have no voice in the shaping of either community health or sense of place.

Systematic approaches such as 'food from farm to kitchen' initiatives could make a difference but require city and national agencies to work together. Though embedding service delivery in communities may be desirable, placemaking seems to have fallen off public agendas. In some cases, entrepreneurs and social activists are creating their own special spaces to network and shape their communities.

Health inequality encumbers many US cities and some rural areas, and the pace and character of deindustrialization is an important cause. In cities where economic development efforts ignored the discarded skills, know-how, land and buildings from downsizing industries, the unemployment and health outcomes are worse than in cities where economic developers actively encouraged entrepreneurship, re-use, and recruitment of new companies that matched redundant assets (Markusen and Schrock, 2008).

In my view, the extreme emphasis on competitiveness in contemporary US and UK societies feeds into the health problem. Competition, with its few winners and many losers, is proliferating - in sports, reality TV, even singing and dancing. Cities compete, too, mostly rhetorically. There is a link between competitiveness and violence. Glasgow's social and health problems might improve with greater co-operation, compassion and understanding of others' uniqueness and cultures.

Although youth and children are an important target in both our countries, older people have special issues also and much to contribute. In contemporary culture there is a lack of respect for community elders.

Their wisdom and experience are devalued by the rapidity of change and by a prevailing youth culture stoked by advertising. The problems and participatory barriers that older people face should be addressed. Scandinavian and American cross-generational experiments show positive outcomes in terms of mental health for older people and benefits for young people involved, too.

Some US models of intervention that have worked: decades-long, US anti-smoking campaigns have been effective, though less so for youth. Beyond the Surgeon General's mandatory notices on cigarette packs, persuasive attempts include graphic television public interest advertisements that feature famous actors in late stages of lung disease, showing photos of their lungs and begging people to stop smoking. Tackling alcohol has been more difficult because it is so socially acceptable and because American Prohibition was a policy failure.

Glasgow's future economy

In this conversation, we brooded over Glasgow's longer-term economic future. Stuart Gulliver, our presenter, offered three styles of forecasting for us to consider: visionary, realist and radical. Optimistic about the resumption of growth, Gulliver predicted that output could grow as much as 40% over this period, led by business and financial services, though Scotland's and Glasgow's UK share is not apt to increase. Labour markets will become more flexible, entrepreneurial and nomadic in terms of where people work (at home and in coffee shops).

We debated the pace and shape of future economic growth, the larger trends that might determine its course, how international Glasgow should be, the quality of leadership in city, business and social enterprises, values such as equity, and community engagement in economic policy.

I am more pessimistic than our presenter about Glasgow's – and most American cities' – futures. I do not believe that finance will be a major job-creating sector, especially outside of London and New York. Business services will grow but much of it involves transferring hard and soft technologies to developing countries who will soon be able to supplant both manufacturing and services here. Financial and government-subsidized infrastructure drove the past decade's agenda and will not be repeated.

As an economist, and because exports do not singularly drive growth, I do not ascribe to a 'hands-off', free trade ideology. US and UK current trade rules are problematic. They prevent us from ensuring that workers and citizens in other countries have what we consider to be basic rights - health and safety regulations, the right to collectively organize and bargain, the right to democratically elect political leaders, human rights and so on. Trade rules can be constructed that introduce conditionality in trade agreements. Can these efforts work? Yes, mobilized opposition forced side agreements on labour, environment and human rights into the NAFTA agreements. Protests led to massive withdrawals of investments in South Africa and helped bring down apartheid.

In the UK, students are protesting against corporations not paying their share of taxes by resorting to tax havens – they may change UK and international law. Someone else in our session noted that opponents are using viral means to attack Gap for out-sourcing clothing. Since big companies rely on their image and marketing, they have to respond to campaigns aimed at their reputations.

I found the debate surprisingly abstracted from the specifics of economic development. Perhaps because UK cities have little control over tax revenues, local sophistication at using tax incentives and linking workforce development to business and real estate development lags behind the US, where the federal government abandoned all regional policymaking in the 1970s and confines itself to funding infrastructure and some portions of social welfare. American states and cities have had to exert leadership, and they have come a long way in thirty years.

Glasgow's arts and culture

In this session, we reviewed how arts and culture have been used by Glasgow leaders in all sectors as one response to deindustrialization and pondered the future of these strategies. Andrew Dixon presented an informative case on Newcastle/Gateshead and how that region has remade itself into a cultural hub and destination. We debated whether arts structures should act as landmarks for a city or whether smaller, dispersed cultural offerings can be as good or better generators of activity, jobs and innovation. We disagreed over how to increase attendance and participation – by targeting tourists or the region's current residents, by competing on international terrain, bringing in productions and exhibitions from elsewhere, or fostering and encouraging distinctive local talent.

We also debated how to support artists and stimulate cultural industries in Glasgow – both musicians and visual artists have for decades been creating their own venues and organizations to produce quality music and artwork, either as commercial or co-operative ventures. Architecture and design firms are strong in the city. We reviewed the mixed evidence on gentrification and debated whether cities need to designate cultural districts or not.

Based on evidence from the US, I am a strong believer in cultivating local talent and distinctive cultural offerings and targeting local audiences first as a way of putting a city on the map and eventually generating exports and tourism. Austin, Texas, for instance, did not set out to be a nationally-renowned music centre but built on its own local distinctiveness. Now it draws audiences from thousands of miles away. The most heavily subscribed series at the Glasgow Concert Hall is the Celtic Connections Festival each January. It draws heavily on audiences from within the city but also visitors from elsewhere.

But participation is more than bringing people into venues. The Los Angeles Music Center's Active Arts programme encourages people to "get your chops back" – by picking up high school instruments and playing them in communities. From it, ensembles have formed that now play in cafés and at weddings and street fairs. People are invited for free to dance in the plaza of the Music Center every Friday night in the summer, with lessons before hand.

Active Arts hosts drum groups, storytelling and 'public practice' – amateurs practising on their grounds and in hallways. The idea is to help people make art and express themselves, a long term strategy for reinvigorating the arts.

Content matters also. The New York Guggenheim's exhibit of motorcycles as art/design drew more participants than any other: working class people, many in leather jackets, lined up for blocks to see it. The Minneapolis Guthrie Theater's production of 'Nickel-and-Dimed', Barbara Ehrenreich's account of her experience working as a waitress, hotel cleaner and fast food worker, was so over-subscribed by trades unionists and others that it was held over for weeks.

Effective support for artists is still in experimental stages. Artists are not well-served by existing economic development and entrepreneurship programmes. Scottish Enterprise only does the big-ticket stuff. Several organisations foster business start-ups but their tools are tailored to companies likely to grow large quickly. Current cultural industry strategies seek to network leaders in live music performance, recording and distribution – but not to put money into them. Yet artists could use more help in early stages to move into marketing and build their practices.

My US research across many cities finds that policies to impose cultural districts are often failures and frequently wasteful. For one thing, they imply that all other areas of the city are not cultural districts. In her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Jane Jacobs made the case for a decentralised mosaic of distinctive neighbourhoods without heavy-handed city branding or clustering of facilities. Critical of the then new Lincoln Center, she celebrated Manhattan's SoHo, Greenwich Village, Little Italy and Chinatown, each with porous borders that invited residents and visitors to cross over and visit distinctive cultural quarters. More recently, Chicago's Mayor proposed a Chicago theatre quarter as part of its effort to enliven the city centre in the evening. The multiple smaller theatres on the North Side protested and the City had to retreat to calling it a 'downtown theatre district'. The theatre scene in Chicago remains distributed among neighbourhoods, from the far north to far south sides.

Glasgow's 2014 Commonwealth Games Legacy

In this session, we anticipated the legacy of the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games. Gerry Gormal, Director of Glasgow City Council's Department of Development and Regeneration Services, explored how the city is working to generate permanent jobs, business income, tourism generation, desirable physical improvements and positive health impacts. We also debated whether and how residents of Glasgow are involved in Games-related events and in determining the longer-term use of capacity developed for the Games.

The Games, since they involve huge expenditures on sports events capacity, housing, hotels, and infrastructure to get people to and from events, are generating jobs and contracts for Glasgow people and businesses. Whether and how jobs and incomes will persist after the Games was hotly debated. Economists have warned that excess capacity, cost over-runs and significant losses in bidding for major events can outweigh the short-term boom in jobs and tourism (Coates and Humphreys, 2003). Montreal lost so much on its 1976 Olympic Games that its taxpayers paid a supplementary tax through 2006 to pay off the debt. Current Greek debt burdens are due in part to Olympic cost over-runs.

Nor is there any evidence that cities that have decided against bidding for the Olympics and other large sporting events have suffered. Chicago citizens rejected a City Olympics bid in the 1980s, and it has not hurt that city one bit. The resources the City would have poured into the Olympics went to investments that better suited a Chicago-appropriate development and public service strategy.

I was surprised that the issue of opportunity costs – what Glasgow could have otherwise done with the resources it is devoting to the Games – was not more fully discussed. Indeed, only a few Conversations members expressed curiosity about what has happened in other cities that have hosted Olympics

and Commonwealth Games. Although economists note that it is difficult to fully track all of the subsequent costs and benefits, evidence suggests a wide range of experiences: how the Games are financed and designed makes a huge difference (Preuss, 2004; PricewaterhouseCoopers European Economic Outlook, 2004).

The recent Indian Commonwealth Games generated little enduring economic investments (Arnoldy, 2010). Of course, Glasgow is already committed to the Games but did its leaders fully air and explore alternatives during the decision to bid for the Games? Will they do so, when future such competitions are dangled in front of them?

I appreciated the debate between some who believe that Glasgow is desperate for events like these Games and needs such pacing devices to gain external validation and those who believe that Glasgow, being quite confident and self-determining, does not 'need' them, but rather the opposite: the Games desperately need Glasgow. Now we are really on opinion grounds: there is literally no research that can resolve this debate!

I also found the discussion of how the Games might positively affect the health of Glaswegians quite intriguing. While there may be more post-Games options for people to swim, bike, bowl and play football, will they? Have they elsewhere? What is the City doing about the negative health aspects: the link between heavy alcohol consumption and spectator sports, the likelihood of increased prostitution during the Games, athlete injuries, and the discouraging distance that is placed between people in general and top athletes on whom so much attention is lavished? To ensure that more people engage in healthy sports, Glasgow could take up some of the suggestions offered in the Conversations, for instance, the funding of better sports programmes in state sector schools and neighbourhood parks.

Growth and Inequality

In our final session, proposed and presented by Kevin Kane, we struggled to knit our prior Conversations together by debating growth and inequality. Kevin argued that the two are related but that we deal with them, policy-wise, by divorcing them from each other, spending a great deal on each without impressive results. Four sets of actors – economic developers, urbanists, health and social welfare professionals, and preventionists – hold different theories and beliefs about causes and appropriate responses. In addition, the decoupling of locally-generated public income from decision-making power over revenue allocation stymies more rational planning and policy. To build the 'Good City', Kane proposed changes in city boundaries, public resource capacity and decision-making, business investment and commitment, and the release of moneys and employment tied up in health and social service bureaucracies to benefit innovation and entrepreneurship. We then debated the causal connection between growth and inequality, the definition of the 'Good City', who owns and should own the vision, and ways forward.

Whether growth requires, or necessarily generates, inequality is an empirical question much researched by economists. While some economists believe that it does, as many others theorise that deepening inequality hampers growth. Both Marx (overproduction) and Keynes (underconsumption) argued that rampant growth led to periodic crises because of an imbalance in incomes between the owners of capital and workers. Recent overviews of evidence over time and across nations find no clear-cut relationship (Aghion and Williamson, 1998). In this era, China and Brazil are growing rapidly despite deepening income inequality. However, many countries have enjoyed rapid growth in a competitive environment with relatively modest income inequality - the US in the mid- 20th century, Japan and South Korea from World War II to the present and Finland since the fall of the Soviet Union. Cautiously, we can conclude that a nation, or region, can restrain inequality without hampering growth.

To do so, however, they rely on societal values and institutions. Values do matter, as many of our conversants insisted. A country or city with a collective desire to limit inequality creates institutions such as progressive taxation, limits on corporate managerial pay, minimum wages, worker rights and collective bargaining legislation, and strong, life-long social safety nets. In the US and the UK in recent years, a new tolerance for inequality has ushered in deregulation, tax breaks for the wealthy, and lavish, enduring incentives for business that shift the public service burden to other businesses and residents. It doesn't seem to be working, either in faster growth rates or better circumstances for those on the lower rungs of the income ladder.

Why haven't the negative consequences of a worsening income distribution – more poverty, crime, and centrifugal movement of work and housing to escape these – been taken more seriously? I suspect the complicity of many professionals who have been able to increase their own incomes and consumption in the process. Certainly economists, my own profession, should be held accountable. Despite no good evidence that top end individual and corporate tax breaks stimulate sustained growth, economists generally support deregulation, even after the ravages of the current Great Recession. There are academic voices for reason and balance – I recommend Susan Fainstein's new book, *The Just City* (2010).

We debated the 'Moon-Ghetto' conundrum, first coined by economist Richard Nelson in 1977: why were people willing to support enormous expenditures to put a man on the moon but more ambivalent about efforts to diminish inequality? To the summary in Chapter Six, I would add that the 'man on the moon' (Apollo) programme was not just a technical challenge. The Cold War and American fears of Communism, internationally and domestically (McCarthyism) drove Americans to develop an extremely expensive programme with uncertain promise of success (especially after Sputnik).

What can we do today to improve inequality without stunting growth? We should stop treating just the symptoms rather than the causes, which is what most of our social welfare programmes do. Equality can't be addressed without taking on the jobs issue squarely. A job is the single most important factor in one's equality status. If we put job generation, for those most in need of jobs, at the core of a public economic investment strategy, we can diminish inequality and not retard growth. Inequality is dreadfully expensive in terms of public health and welfare spending, public safety and other costs. Economic development and social welfare strategies can be much more closely integrated (Fainstein and Markusen, 1995).

Glasgow's economic development strategy prioritizes infrastructure spending, winning one-time events and inward investment, rather than entrepreneurship and choosing target sectors by considering the skills of the current and displaced workforce. There is a long history of reliance on inward investment (and that reliance being misguided). Ireland, like many US states and cities, gave huge tax breaks to attract foreign investment that was not committed in the longer run. The same tax breaks undermined local businesses that did not receive comparable treatment and shifted the tax burden for services onto existing businesses and residents. When companies decamped, there was no way of holding them accountable for the jobs they said they would create. In contrast, Japan pulled itself out of its 1990s recession by revitalising its auto industry and not through massive infrastructure spending. And in the US, greater nurturing of entrepreneurs has paid off in committed, local jobs.

Some argue that reforming UK and Scottish fiscal structures might make it easier to pursue growth with equity. I am sympathetic with city frustrations over the strictures on funds that are sent back to Glasgow from London and with the way programmes are refashioned with each regime change. However, the US experience offers many cautionary tales, especially on the revenue side. Local and state control over some taxes (property, sales and income) has abetted corrosive tax base competition among jurisdictions that often creates severe spatial inequality within metro areas and transfers income from residents to companies. Again, workable solutions to rein in this competition for capital are emerging and could be built into new Scottish city taxing powers from the start (Markusen, 2007).

Intersections among themes

Deeply satisfying to us at the Urban Lab, participants increasingly made connections among the topics as our Conversations unfolded. Here are a few fascinating themes that emerged again and again – and on which I'd like to think we made some progress.

For me personally, as an economist with both theoretical and empirical interests, I found the 'values thing' the most important 'ah-ha!' insight. I've always taught, even though it's dropped out of curricula in most contemporary economics departments, that economics posits four, often conflicting normative values: efficiency, equity, stability and, more recently, environmental sustainability. Now, generally only efficiency is emphasized and is linked to a powerful belief in free markets. Our various conversations re-educated me in the significance of values as a shaping factor in our economies and cities. Yes, institutions, behaviour and rules often trump the 'invisible hand' of the market, or at least direct its touch. When the conversation became too 'economistic', when assertions were made about the force of competition and Glasgow's smallness in the world, people worked from value points of view to show what is possible and cases where it works.

We circled back to the significance of a distinctiveness strategy time and again. Probably a third of our group members remain convinced that Glasgow's best bet is to try to attract inward investment, lower its costs of doing business, compete for one-time events, and brand the city in ways that will attract tourists and future residents. However, in our conversations about arts and culture and the Commonwealth Games, multiple voices stressed the importance of Glaswegians themselves embracing and patronising offerings and showcasing what is distinctive about Glasgow during events like the Games. Distinctiveness is a powerful way to breed new businesses that may serve local residents first but go on to become major exporters out of the region. Branding can be built around these nodes of distinctiveness. The Glasgow School of Art's Mackintosh Building, for instance, is one of the top tourist destinations in the city.

The way that policy and service delivery agencies are cordoned off from each other formed another recurrent theme. I learned a lot about housing that contrasts greatly with the US and Canada. Bureaucracies in Glasgow deliver so many services related to one's housing, while in the US and Canada, housing is much more a realm of self-help. High rates of home-ownership, problematic in other ways, foster a culture of home-fixing skills among residents, especially men, who take pleasure and pride in their ability to fix their homes and make small additions. Neighbours often help each other. Perhaps the prevalence of council housing and its successors have undermined a whole set of skills and networks of this sort. Could efforts to foster and share building and repair skills among residents in their communities help reverse the stigma of unemployment and generate a new business sector? Could placemaking in general be a route to widespread reform and improvement?

We spent a lot of time critiquing the lack of participation and empowerment in Glasgow, linked by many to health and unemployment problems, and how to change that. In every session, this theme emerged. Efforts to be consultative seem to be token at best. Empowerment requires a giving over of decision-making power from higher levels of government and bureaucracies to people. And it takes a long time, because in order to make good decisions, people who are not used to power and don't have the skills to exercise it must grow through a process where they acquire know-how and are inclusive themselves.

I think of the emergent union movement in the US and how it sponsored reading groups, created its own newspapers, sponsored public debates, organised by neighborhood, and provided a social safety network. Over time, this movement grew into a powerful force for both growth and social justice in the US – providing the winning support for the 40-hour working week, health and safety legislation, minimum wages, the social safety net and many other gains that went far beyond their interests as workers.

I conclude from all this that we have a lot of work to do, wherever we live. We need better intelligence about how the economy works, how entrepreneurship can be encouraged, and how reducing inequality might spur growth. We should debate values like inequality more publicly and thoroughly, and pressure legislative and administrative bodies to take them into account. We need to experiment with ways of delegating power and resources to communities and monitor the results for re-designing systems. We need thorough bureaucratic reform that reminds professionals that they are public servants and demands that they work to fix problems, even if that requires vaulting existing agency fences.

I look forward to returning to Glasgow for an update. I hope to see significant progress and renewal. I hope, along with the members of Glasgow Conversations, that these write-ups of our debates will have played a positive role.

What Makes Glasgow a Distinctive City?

In this era of increasing world economic and social integration, every city and region works in closer proximity to collaborators and competitors everywhere. In the 19th and 20th centuries, cities saw each other as competitors, each aspiring to climb up the urban hierarchy by increasing population and jobs. Often they tried to replicate what they saw other successful cities doing, in order to be more like them. Ambitious cities sought to build the same infrastructure – a major fine arts museum, a major performing arts centre, a stadium, a convention centre, as well as corporate branch plants – that their betters had erected. In this 21st century, cities may be better off nurturing their distinctive assets and the unique face they present to the rest of the world (Markusen and Schrock, 2006a, 2006b).

A distinctiveness strategy aims to attract new residents and businesses and to retain those that the city already hosts (Markusen and Schrock, 2006 a, b). It encourages leaders and economic developers to look internally for innovation. Austin, Texas, for example, did not construct its international reputation as a young music hub by setting out to attract music companies from elsewhere. Instead, it built on its on distinctive young music scene. Now it fosters music businesses, careers, music exports and a festival that draws a very wide audience. Other cities have failed to remake themselves because their resources have disproportionately gone into look-alike biotech initiatives and large (and largely unenforceable) long-term tax incentives for outside companies.

A city's distinctiveness strategy can encompass some or all of the following: unique character of place and quality of life; economic structure and policies; the special role of culture and the arts; spatial redevelopment; and an emphasis on local consumption as well as export orientation. This conversation touched on all these possibilities as we debated "What makes Glasgow distinctive?" We also debated distinctiveness as a viable strategy and its pitfalls (Turok, 2008).

Glasgow's intellectual, economic, social and environmental heritage

Glasgow's contemporary distinctions are rooted in its long gestation period as a centre of learning (University of Glasgow, 1491, Scotland's first), ecclesiastical leadership (from democratic movements in the Church of Scotland to education for all), Robert Owen's successful experiment in paternalistic capitalism, urban design, and arts and culture.

The city's economic history is also singular: first as a major slave-era trading centre in sugar and tobacco, then as an industrial juggernaut, rapidly excelling in its shipbuilding and heavy engineering complex, and then again as a deindustrialized service city. Unlike some of its English industrial neighbours, Glasgow has survived major crises before, including the end of slavery and the tobacco trade and the big bank failures of the 1870s.

Glasgow is also a city of continuous streams of newcomers: Highlanders displaced by the Clearances, Irish fleeing dissent and the potato famine; Italians, Indians, Pakistanis seeking industrial jobs and, more recently, Eastern Europeans. Newcomers may be fleeing economic, political, religious, or environmental crises at home and/or be drawn by better prospects for jobs and education. Some have moved here since the demise of industry. They don't see Glasgow in terms of its industrial past. The city is both more a-religious and more diverse in its religious practices today. And its post-graduate student population is much larger and increasingly drawn from farther afield.

We are a distinctive city - open to Europe and elsewhere. There is no single set of ideas in Glasgow - we are not 'boxed-in'. We can be creative and rational about our present and our future.

Glasgow's physical setting, on the cusp between the Highlands and the sea, also contributes to its distinctiveness. It provides an interface between the Western Isles, the uplands and the city for residents and visitors alike.

Has Glasgow's economy found a new groove?

The city's mercantile and industrial eras endowed the centre with its magnificent trading markets and buildings, its larger-than-life riverfront, and its extraordinary home-based businesses with their companion labour movement. The post-industrial challenge is what to do with these structures and workers, especially the massive emptying around the Clyde, once the city's trade and industrial artery, and the tens of thousands of long-term jobless. Despite large investments in infrastructure and energetic attempts to win inward investment, adequate jobs for the displaced have not materialised and the banks of the Clyde remain under-used. By and large, economic strategies have not sought to match new activity to the distinctive technologies, skill sets, and physical plant released from the steam locomotive, heavy machining and shipbuilding eras.

Why does a city search for an identity? So that it can understand its competitive edge in economic terms. Outside of London and the South East of England, British cities are all the same. We all have a bit of everything: a bit of financial services, a bit of manufacturing and a lot of retail.

Views on what economic development has achieved are mixed. Some believe that the city is doing the best it can, chiefly through an emphasis on attracting new branch plants and offices. Others think that economic development leaders have failed to identify new niches, match resources to distinctive assets or adequately encourage home-grown firms. They favour a broader portfolio of smaller things: helping small businesses and encouraging entrepreneurship and developing new skills. Some see the city's economy as distinctive in its role as a regional centre of commerce and services, while others think Glasgow's plight is not essentially different from its industrial siblings.

One challenge is the short-term time horizons of politicians, who are interested in big things, like buying in new industries and big infrastructure projects, rather than in the small scale but influential changes that make economies run, the things happening in smaller bits and pieces. Many small business success stories don't attract political attention but add quite a bit of diversity and dynamism. To foster innovation, politicians should understand, value and have confidence in their own entrepreneurs.

Glasgow's spatial and built environment: centrifugal or centripetal?

Sometimes in conjunction with economic policy but often separately, Glasgow leaders and citizens debate the physical form of the city. On the one hand, the city has been committing resources to the historic preservation and gradual revitalisation of areas like the Merchant City. Arts and cultural activity, including artists' presentation and work space, play catalytic roles in such efforts. On the other hand, the city is also pursuing housing and community development in relatively monolithic peripheral housing estates, hoping to infuse more retail and job-creating activity, animate public spaces, and deter crime and violence.

Disagreement still encumbers physical planning. Should transportation infrastructure investments focus on reinforcing car-less access to Glasgow's city centre, or should more motorways be built to knit together the region and enable goods and commuter movements? How can the barriers that motorways create between neighbourhoods be transcended?

These policy trade-offs depend in part on one's vision of Glasgow's future household and business preferences. Will there still be more decentralised residential, retail and industrial growth in Glasgow's suburban enclaves? Or will the pull of city jobs, together with retail, social and cultural offerings, encourage a preference for city centre living? The influx of students, both from suburbia and from elsewhere, into the city's higher education institutions (chiefly in the city centre) has helped stabilise the city's population. Efforts to fill the empty space along the Clyde with housing, museums and performance centres, and new industrial and commercial activity will succeed only if households and businesses are willing to locate there, in part dependent on urban design, affordability and accessibility. These are not small matters – past and present choices shape the city's distinctiveness.

Glasgow's quality of life

Across the developed world, quality of life is increasingly cited as a distinctive urban trait. Clean water and air, for instance, rank very high on household surveys of what matters to them. Glasgow has some of the best water in Europe and a fine public infrastructure system to deliver it. The region's reliable winds bring in fresh air and disperse vehicle emissions, now the major source of urban air pollution. Glasgow possesses many other amenity features ranked highly by households and business managers: recreational opportunities, open space and parks, a diverse menu of arts and cultural offerings (from young music to theatre to world class and free museums).

Some economic experts are sceptical of the significance of quality of life in household and business location decisions. Of the proposal to invest more in urban quality of life and less in business attraction, they ask, "show me where it works?" Recent evidence on location in the US suggests that in this internet-connected world, some people choose places to live first and where to work second, and that businesses are constrained to locate in communities where their managers and workers are willing to live. Nevertheless, more work needs to be done to compare cities' relative and distinctive quality of life profiles and to determine contemporary location calculus by workers and businesses.

Is Glasgow's health challenge distinctive?

Many people elsewhere think of Glasgow as distinctive for its poor health record. The city's health statistics are worse than most other European cities and cannot be explained by facile comparisons. They show a negative trend in life expectancy, even over the last decade, and the health and poverty gaps within the citizenry are widening. Thanks in part to comedians and films that showcase youth violence, Glasgow is perceived by others as a black joke on the health front.

Health is a worldwide issue and also culturally distinctive. A recent Malawi and Scotland exchange exercise was interesting. Malawi people couldn't understand our collective unhappiness. They thought we watch too much TV!

It's difficult to talk about the health issue without talking about unemployment and resultant poverty and their effect, compounded over generations. The failure of policy to successfully tackle the unemployment problem has contributed to growing health inequality.

Has that much changed regarding life expectancy over the course of Glasgow's history? Glasgow always had extremes of poverty, always had an underclass. The city needed its underclass, its labourers, in order to become great. They built the city's wealth. Despite the early Scottish Church's pioneering of education for all, the city developed an elite and prestigious private education system rather than a state school system that was excellent. State school children are lacking in confidence and speak differently, while private school children are extraordinarily articulate with strong ideas.

One great problem is that good research and writing about the health challenge is ignored. Authors can't get onto the festival circuit because their writing on the Glasgow health challenge shows the city in a negative light. Glasgow is marketed as a city of style or a city of design and there is a reluctance in general to face negative stories about the city. Yet they are part of the city's distinctiveness and reputation.

Does Glasgow need a brand, a common image?

Ideas about who Glasgow is as a city, both for residents and to the outside world, are shaped by various actors and may not accurately reflect the complexity of the city, good and bad. Some participants feel strongly that the city needs to work on a common image, "otherwise people will do it for us."

Published in 1981, Alastair Gray's *Lanark* depicted his home city of Glasgow in both realist and dystopian terms. Statistics on the contemporary city reveal relatively low productivity, low educational attainment, high poverty rates, low life expectancy, low graduation rates and poor housing. This reality prompts some to ask, "whose imagining is important? And who will take the city forward, delivering a new and better place?"

Critiques of candour about the city's challenges believe that there is, in Glasgow, a glorification of the negative, that "people fall all over themselves to chronicle *how fat, how poor, how ill we are!*" We returned to this debate in our final Conversation.

How well are Glasgow's leaders doing?

Conversation about past, present and future Glasgow strengths and weakness inevitably leads to questions of leadership and policy. It may take twenty-five years to turn a city around, especially after a shock as deep and permanent as the evaporation of shipbuilding and heavy engineering. The political system, with its electoral cycle, does not seem able to provide strategic leadership.

The 'city' is often conflated with the City Council rather than as more broadly connoting the place and its people. Also, the business voice is 'in' the City but not 'of' the City. Often, when in the role of client, the City has hired outside 'talent': consultants who depart with accumulated expertise when done. The role of City government is perceived by many as too large – it has been the 'ER' for deindustrialization and it has often failed.

Glasgow is a city of fashion. It is 'gallus'. But it is not brave politically. Glasgow was not brave enough to tell Selfridges, the prestigious London department store, what to do with their two-acre city-centre site. It has been derelict for 10 years, causing an investment 'blockage'. Glasgow's deferential position with the big retailer has dire consequences. We should have said, "this site is Glasgow's. You can't sit on this property."

Although the Council has been and is a dominant authority, many feel that it has not been able to deliver and that city leadership in practice should be more diffuse. Others see the Council as having paternalistically managed the city in the past and would like to see the city reorganise from the bottom up. Solutions aren't political but are likely to come from the practitioner community with networks of professionals, communities of interest, and local communities taking the lead.

Collaboration between people is the essence of this city. People are pooling energies, ambitions and ideas - we don't see this elsewhere.

Local heroes have changed the face of the city for the better. For instance, housing activists have raised significant funding to combat deficiencies in community housing stock. But when these initiatives become bureaucratized, the initiators are side-lined. Can we find a way to make grassroots initiatives work and thrive? Housing association activism in the 1970s to the 1990s is a particularly good case study.

Budapest has 'bottom-up' governance and regeneration, with wards or community areas articulating their own solutions. Some areas are former Jewish ghettos, some involve the Roma community with radical or non-conformist ideas. They are allowed to make their own decisions. Informal, temporary occupancy of space is tolerated.

Glasgow shares a serious resource problem with many other UK cities that tempers the potential for bottom-up change. The central government-controlled welfare state may undermine the city's ability to tailor strategy. While 90% of Glasgow's population receives some kind of state support, the Council doesn't have control over decisions about these resources. Glasgow doesn't have fiscal freedom at city level.

Are Glasgow's leadership challenges distinctive? In some ways, yes. In others, no. As the Hungarian examples suggest, more comparative work on how other UK and European cities have coped would be helpful.

Distinctive strategies, risk-taking, evaluation

If distinctiveness matters, then Glasgow should spend energy and resources nurturing its positive traits and combating its negatives. The city needs new businesses in diversified sectors that create jobs: jobs that will match the skills of residents. What Glasgow's future economy might look like is the subject of a subsequent Conversation.

Distinctiveness can be built on local particularities: historic Glasgow culture, immigrant diversity, the city's natural setting, its built environment. Sustained job creation can be generated by serving the regional consumption base, not just by producing goods and services to sell elsewhere. Indeed, one great recent achievement of Glasgow is its public transit-friendly, city centre retail, culture and entertainment complex that attracts people from its suburbs and Highlands and islands hinterlands. Providing new and expanded consumer goods and services can capture larger shares of Glasgow and regional residents' discretionary income while serving as a seedbed for development of exports beyond the region (Cortright, 2002).

For instance, in the arts and culture realm, should Glasgow follow the Bilbao path, bidding for outside funding and facilities, or build on its own unique impulses, energy and cultural practices? Celtic Connections is a marvellous example of the city playing to its strengths and has become the Concert Hall's most successful series. But has Glasgow been able to make the case that arts and culture are central to quality of life and therefore to the city's ability to attract and retain people and jobs? And is Glasgow's cultural policy inclusive of all citizens, by class, immigrant status and age?

A city that is willing to take chances and fail at some things is apt to succeed where a conservative, stuck-in-the-mud approach will not. A risk-taking strategy requires leaders who are willing to reflect on the past, on what has worked and hasn't, and why. It also requires a willingness to listen to new ideas and think outside the box.

Like some of the other 'second cities' of Europe, Glasgow can take risks - it is not afraid to fail. Although this is not necessarily true of its political leaders, it has been the case in the arts and cultural sector and among the housing associations. At the grassroots level, we are good at getting up and trying again if we fail. We're like Budapest and Helsinki in this regard. You can't say the same of Manchester or Birmingham. We need an openness to risk.

Every public (and private) initiative has opportunity costs. Citizens and policymakers have to ask, "what might have been done with the same resources otherwise?" The city and its development institutions should have in place an evaluative framework and should nurture a culture of candid public discussion of lessons learned, including invitations to disagree.

How Can We Improve Glasgow's Health?

Glasgow's relative under-performance in health has been widely reported and, thanks to the Glasgow Centre for Population Health's research, intensively studied. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than for most other areas of Europe, including similarly deindustrialised cities in the UK and Eastern Europe. Glaswegian's life expectancy has steadily increased over time, reflecting improvements in overall life circumstances and nutrition – as a consequence of social policy generally, rather than health policy specifically. However, even although life expectancy continues to rise for men and women (71 years and 77.5 respectively), healthy living has not improved at a similar rate. During their last ten to fifteen years, many Glasgow people rate their health as less than 'good,' or experience age-related illnesses and a relatively poor quality of life.

Although average life expectancy has risen and other health measures have improved, health inequality has increased in Glasgow over the past 20 years. For higher income people in Glasgow, life expectancy has kept pace with Scotland-wide progress. But it has risen much more slowly for lower income people. Between 1990 and 2000, the life expectancy gap between Glasgow City and the best-performing areas in the region grew by a further two years. So the real issue for Glasgow is, "what can be done for those with the poorest health in the City?"

Glaswegians have relatively good access to public services, but lag behind on many other indicators, e.g. housing, employability and environment. Current policies tend to approach each as separate, thematic issues for action rather than studying the whole and seeing the inter-relationships among them. Strategies that would address more than one issue at a time are likely to be more effective and efficient.

Deindustrialisation *per se* is not a sufficient explanation for Glasgow's poor health performance. The city's mortality rates are generally higher and are improving at a slower rate than in the other post-industrial UK regions (Glasgow Centre for Population Health, 2010; Walsh, Jones and Hanlon, 2010). They even lag behind those in Eastern Europe where poverty rates are higher (Walsh, Taulbut and Hanlon, 2009). This is especially true for younger working age men and middle-aged women.

More prevalent alcohol and drug abuse, suicide, and violence for men, and higher cancer rates for women in part distinguish Glasgow from the rest of Scotland. For instance, between 1980 and 2000, deaths among men aged 15-29 increased steadily in Glasgow but not in other cities like Edinburgh and Aberdeen. From 1990 onwards, Glasgow's statistics for cirrhosis of the liver go off the scale and alcohol-related deaths have overtaken heart disease mortality in some areas.

The more closely health inequality is studied, the less clear the picture becomes. Studying Glasgow's health is becoming more difficult, not easier, as more research is completed.

How can this health challenge be tackled? First, Glasgow could place much more emphasis on social regeneration and the infrastructure to support it. Second, placemaking is not given sufficient emphasis. Third, there should be more emphasis on children and young people. Finally, measures of success need to be developed to use in gauging progress on these three indicators. Past decisions were often implemented with such certainty and yet had such negative impacts for health.

Debating the causes

Since the root causes are still inexplicable, how do we figure out how to combat health inequality and what different patterns of thinking, what new dialogues, do we need to explain Glasgow's under-performance? It's very unlikely to be one thing, therefore we need integrated and systematic thinking. Any single hypothesis is not strong enough on its own. In current research, approximately 17 different hypotheses are being pursued.

Drugs, alcohol and poor nutrition contribute to Glasgow's lower than average longevity. They reach across gender, social, economic and class boundaries. It's broadly socially acceptable for the affluent and the poor alike to abuse alcohol. Many things have improved since the National Health Service was founded and our diet has improved slowly. But of course, nutrition suffers if there is a lot of alcoholism and job loss – and poor nutrition in turn magnifies the effects of alcohol and drug use.

Perhaps the particular character of Glasgow's deindustrialisation – and policy responses to it – explains more than research has found to date. Glasgow's industrialisation and deindustrialisation alike were swifter and more dramatic than in many other cities. Glasgow's shipbuilding and steam locomotive sectors demanded skills that were difficult to parley into other industries and, perhaps more importantly, economic developers didn't really try. There was no concerted conversion effort but rather a turning away, toward services, retail, finance and tourism that left blue-collar male workers and their families stranded.

Glasgow had a compressed de-industrialisation. We went from 'heavy' to nothing. There was no soft landing. Glasgow failed to develop a light engineering sector, despite its talent pool. Silicon Glen happened - but not in Glasgow. When IBM came, it went to Greenock.

The housing location and provision decisions made in the first couple of decades after World War II are also implicated. The policy-driven movement of people away from the City centre and older, familiar neighbourhoods transplanted people into high rises and isolated residential areas ('schemes'), exacerbating social problems by disrupting, isolating, and separating people.

In Glasgow, over long periods of time, a paternalistically-organised society has fostered dependency, consumerism, bad working conditions and unhealthy leisure norms. Glasgow has been a very hierarchical society with very large-scale enterprises. Glasgow was a city run by industrialists who applied industrial-scale solutions to everything. This became municipal socialism and it extended into every aspect of the city's life: the trams, the lighting, municipal services in general. How can we supply services that don't create additional dependencies?

The Council is as much a part of the problem as it is a part of the solution. It has constantly and continually said "we'll do it for you"... and, in latter years, "we'll do it for you but, to be politically correct, we'll consult you till you're blue in the face first."

But large-scale systems produced a lot of progress. Average life expectancy in the 1830s was 35 years for men! In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Glasgow developed more parks, more libraries, more museums: it was more like municipal capitalism. And let's not forget that municipal socialism brought Glasgow clean water!

If self-determination and empowerment are so important to health, what can we learn from Eastern Europe and Russia after 1990 with the fall of communism? There is no good news there. Lack of certainty is not good for life expectancy: between 1989 and 1999, there was a 10-year drop in life expectancy for Russian males.

Can we learn from Finland and its interventionist approach to heart disease? Not with any great clarity: the national government there was strong in terms of public policy and took on the food producers. But the decline in heart disease was the same all across the developed world at the time when the Finnish government was taking such a strong line. Scotland's statistics were just as good as Finland's. And heart disease problems are better understood (the research is more solid), more easily treated and therefore prompted rational policy responses.

The newer Scottish health problems are more difficult and complex. It is more socially acceptable to drink heavily. We have more violence and suicide. Ours are quite different problems; more socially driven. And they have an effect beyond the health of an individual. Solutions don't fit easily with media advertising, the NHS and policy-making. We need instead to look at how the city works, what is perceived as health success and what sort of role models we have that influence the prevailing culture.

Giving communities voice

Glasgow could tackle its health challenges by implementing real participation in social regeneration and the infrastructure to support it. The balance of power between the City and its people and organisations is skewed. There is much social inequality: on many measures, we are not doing well. There is not sufficient participation and engagement by communities, nor support for community-led action.

Often we give institutions and their programmes the focus, rather than looking most carefully at the quality and effectiveness of the services that they are providing. People in government positions should be consulting and sharing more widely but I don't see much of the voice in there.

Participation may range from tokenism that simply informs people about systems and decisions made elsewhere to full engagement in strategy and implementation (Arnstein, 1969). Few activities or initiatives anywhere in Glasgow involve participation beyond a relatively powerless information-receiving or consultative level.

In the recent Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) initiatives, the heavy-handed public sector role has been a failure. It imposed form-filling and target-chasing and was a huge waste of time for many people in communities.

The question of empowerment in service delivery suggests that we need to consider life at community level. It seems ridiculous to ask communities to

change society when a cultural change is what is needed. There is still a huge role for government, but very different from what we have, perhaps undertaking some great new experiments but tying them to 'place'.

Cross-sector approaches

Moving beyond bureaucratic and programmatic silos could also improve Glaswegians' health. Currently, systems are constructed to be compartmentalised.

I have experienced difficulties with services collaborating with each other all my professional life. All agencies have difficulties breaking down barriers and they are territorially defensive – like health and social work for instance. We need to cross over these boundaries.

The fact that Glasgow's health lags behind that of Manchester and Liverpool is totally perplexing. We are doing well with anti-smoking. What do you do with wider health issues? What's really worrying is that, with current public sector cuts, the quality of life factors are being cut individually, across departments. There is, potentially, even less scope in the future for cross-referencing and joined-up work.

There are new design approaches that may help integrate across the compartments. For instance, 'food from farm to kitchen' initiatives can help us identify and treat the sources of malnutrition. Design Innovation experts at places like the Glasgow School of Art are doing good work looking at the design of complex systems, including systems approach to malnutrition and the elderly in hospitals.

Transforming service delivery

We talk a lot about policy and service delivery and, though it's a vast generalisation, most of this talk is 'up there'. Most people operate in small networks of other people. What if we got rid of policies and services and put decision-making in the hands of individuals and families, encouraging networked solutions. Would we transform services and outcomes? Do we need a radical rethink, changing from service delivery to putting the *small group* at the centre?

But there are system effects and network effects. We once had Victorian ladies who delivered services in this fashion. There just weren't enough of them, they weren't distributed fairly and they were unregulated. Negative behaviour can develop in these networks also. When these were replaced by the newly-created NHS, the whole system became fairer and more democratic. But systems with scale tend to compound any negative problems in the mix and bureaucratic boundaries are a problem.

I have always felt that I can get things done, simply, straightforwardly, directly, in my own life. When I went to meetings about or in areas of deprivation, I found that there were so many agencies involved, all trying to help, intervening, joining up together, getting in the way and making things more complicated for people who lived there. How can we change this?

Personal Care, introduced by the last UK government, gives those who want it and can cope with it the ability to manage their own budget for medical support. But many older people can't manage their own care. The Patients' Association published a report on substandard care in the public sector for elderly people. It shows that two thirds of the elderly don't receive health care services that are up to standard.

Schools are another good example of service delivery challenges. The elites that direct many of these public services don't have to care: their children go to private schools. The Tories and New Labour have attacked professionals – teachers, for instance – and demoralised them. There is a work-to-rule culture. It hasn't broken down the barriers between schools.

We need to defend schools and teachers. We keep adding to the school curriculum, as if schools should cover everything. Students only spend 17% of their waking hours in schools. We should worry about what happens outside of school. It's insane to make schools do all this stuff.

Personal empowerment sounds good but may also pose dangers. It could create an unequal situation between articulate, informed people on the one hand and people who don't know how to access the best personal care on the other. When people are left to make their own choices about medical care or other services, lack of knowledge or experience of systems means it can be deeply frustrating and de-energising; it can be hard to access the help when you need it.

Improving health through placemaking

Placemaking is not given sufficient emphasis as a way of addressing health issues. The quality and type of places where people live and work are not sufficiently debated publicly. We need environments for people: not just housing, but environments. Even the language used is often unhelpful.

If we look at communities across the city, they are very confusing, even for their residents. Take Yoker, a 'middling' area. If you turn through 360 degrees in one spot, you see the demolition in progress of a multi-storey block on a hill, a new health centre with reasonably good architecture, some boarded up buildings and drydocks, shop units with tanning salons and pound shops, some lovely old foremen's cottages formerly attached to the shipyard with an allotment that suggests community activity and self-sufficiency, some new building developments that are smart and wouldn't be out of place in Knightswood, and two pristine, high-quality, red sandstone tenements. How confusing it is! What's it going to be in five years' time? Will it be boarded-up buildings, pubs and penny stamps, or will it be high-income housing, or will people be doing things for themselves? People who live there wonder, "how do I fit in?" Will these kinds of places get better or worse or just more confusing?

It was so different in the past. Those foremen's cottages were in fact simply worker's cottages but were created with an extraordinary sense, albeit paternalistic, of providing for the working class. Shipbuilder Alfred Yarrow brought 300 workers with him from the Isle of Dogs on the Thames in London. He came to Scotstoun and built houses for his workers on the Clyde. The relationship between most workers and employers today, especially for men, is nothing like that relationship. Alfred Yarrow was a placemaker in his own right.

*Placemaking was not a problem 100 years ago. It used to be the case that you knew your place socially and environmentally. Now we don't know where we are when we are walking down the street - it is hard to make sense of place, and we are often bewildered about place. But it is something we **can** influence. People **can** shape their relationships with others and with the physical environment.*

Placemaking has fallen off the agenda. Glasgow spent years building entirely new places or regenerating old places, decades of New Towns and then Regeneration. But now, few are involved. The big agencies are not interested any more. And some people are detached from place, too: they are at home, in a room, and many don't tend to go out. They don't connect with the city.

In the 1960s or 70s, I remember a film that laid out a very optimistic view of Glasgow as a place. It showed a car driving over the Kingston Bridge and no other traffic! It portrayed a vision of all the future developments that would take place in Glasgow. All problems were going to be solved. It was very positive, optimistic... The Commonwealth Games are being portrayed that way now.

In places like Pollokshields, people are increasingly frustrated about the social situation and different communities (and communities of interest) face barriers in interacting with each other. We need to create spaces and places where these interactions can happen, places where friendships can be explored further. People should be taking things into their own hands and working in networks to find a way forward.

Placemaking is about particular areas. If we focus on a particular area or idea, we only see a certain perspective. In the spirit of our distinctiveness Conversations, we could think about Glasgow as a place, emphasising its strengths as well as weaknesses. For instance, what is the impact of City Centre development? That's placemaking. It had a huge cultural impact, including encouraging artists to live and work here. Nevertheless, approaches to date haven't helped the health of the poorer communities in Glasgow.

Youth as a special concern

Since death at young ages is a peculiarly Glaswegian problem, there should be more emphasis in participation by children and young people. They are absent from the public debate. They have no voice.

Scattered efforts by social service workers and police, here and elsewhere, have engaged young people around health concerns. For instance, police in Glasgow have arranged five-a-side football matches in deprived areas to change attitudes of young people towards police, to open up channels of communication and offer alternatives to drinking and drugs. We need forums that could bring together groups working with youth - police, fire, community planning - to share ideas about what works and to design new, more integrated approaches.

Combating drug use and alcoholism

Abuse of alcohol and drugs is a clear contributor to ill-health in Glasgow. The US has pioneered some youth-oriented campaigns. In Minnesota, young adults are offered AIDS testing in vans outside bars in some US cities. Across the US, Alcoholics Anonymous groups for youth, run by youth, and non-alcoholic bars are tackling the alcohol problem.

Campaigns to raise awareness can help but have been slow to win national or local government support. Psychology and persuasive efforts may take a long time but eventually they penetrate the mass psyche. Witness the recent efforts in the Scottish Parliament to raise the cost of alcohol and ban promotions. Many experts from different fields weighed in to recommend these, but the Bill was not passed. Sometimes the problem is not people but the people's representatives.

Concluding thoughts

Health as an issue is affected by processes that operate over all cities and globally. We know that transitions are quite threatening to health. Movements from elementary education to secondary; changes in employment and relationships breaking up. All these are critical junctures. De-industrialisation and the pace at which it occurs is likely to be very important.

The question is: how to manage these personal and societal transitions? Organisations in the City have to help manage this transition. Glasgow does seem to be particularly vulnerable. What are the characteristics that we need to invest in? How can we put individuals in context? How could the NHS put packages together that deliver services in another way?

There is also the issue of place and the context in which people are living. We need to know more about these. There are some really positive things happening, like the recruitment and retention of young people through higher education, but they are not impacting on everyone. Outreach and inclusion work has to continue.

Finally, we must have measures of success to gauge progress on these several fronts. Past decisions were often implemented with such certainty and yet had such negative impacts for health.

Glasgow's Economy in 2031

Many Glaswegians in 1991 would not have accurately predicted where we are today. Foretelling the future is not, alas, the domain of serious economists, economic forecasters and industrial analysts. When the Queen visited the London School of Economics, she asked their economists, including multiple Nobel Prize winners, why they hadn't anticipated the recent financial tsunami? Economists cede this terrain to the 'scenario guys', the planners, economic alchemists, futurologists and management gurus: the ones we think of as envisioning electric cars heated with recycled pig dung and getting everything you need to know from a piece of plastic stuck to your forehead.

Twenty years is a long time to be sensible about a lot of issues. Looking backwards, we didn't anticipate two major things: call centres and urban tourism. Glasgow's investments in the airport, the SECC conference facilities and hotels did attract tourists, really surprising most observers. But general economic growth accounted for most of the new jobs – in business and financial services, health care and higher education.

There are three ways of looking at the question of our longer-term future: visionary, rationalist and radical/outlier views. A vision-driven route to the future would be broad-based and inspirational, though informed by what's on the ground. A visionary might imagine the next Glasgow economy as fuelled by exports, innovation, and low-carbon technologies and led by private sector investment. Others might foresee a different path.

A rationalist view might unpack the sub-national economy into size of economy, industrial structure (what does the City actually do for a living), labour market structure (how will the workforce respond) and structural balance (manufacturing/service; public/private; geographical) components to forecast changes in each. In Gulliver's view, after a slow, four- to five-year start, we will probably see a steady rate of growth of 2% to 2.5% from 2015 onward. Because the UK Government is unlikely to reign in the dominance of the London and South East economies, Scotland's share of overall UK activity is unlikely to grow. The Scottish government will continue to spread resources thinly.

I'm interested that most respondents find this vision optimistic. I think it's depressing and not good for the city's health.

Glasgow's growth prospects will depend upon the strength of its comparative advantages. Financial and business services are likely to be the biggest growth sectors in UK, along with urban tourism, higher education, life sciences, health care and engineering-intensive manufacturing. In the labour market, we are likely to witness higher levels of self-employment and micro-business, more nomadic work-styles where home and semi-public spaces perhaps become as important as traditional offices, flexible working contracts with fewer core permanent staff, and generational conflicts over lifestyles and digital methods. Balance across geography, public/private, and manufacturing versus the rest of the economy is going to require careful, rationalist choices.

What could help position Glasgow's economy for the future? City regions like Glasgow span many local authorities, making guidance administratively difficult. This might be a good time to streamline. We might initiate a 'Real Glasgow' campaign, like the one for Real Ale, envisioning ourselves as a 1.3-1.4 million strong city with suburbs rather than a series of economic islands. We should move towards elected mayors and shake up the complacency and cronyism of local governments. As a reward for this scale of change, local governments might be awarded greater autonomy, permitting them greater control over tax revenues and in raising private money.

The pace, predictability and location of future growth

It is not obvious that growth will recur even in three or four years. In the Great Depression, it took longer than that (following the 1929 crash) and there was a second deep recession in 1937 that was only overcome by World War II and government demand for output. Also, in the 1990s, it took Japan, the second largest industrial country in the world, a decade to recover from its deep recession.

It's not that we can't predict important trends. Some are completely solid. For instance, sustainability will remain on the agenda and increase in importance. The price of oil will rise with declining reserves, and climate change will determine many trends, behaviours, and activities. Biological rather than chronological age is important, with its associated need for care. All these can have an impact on the economy's shape and growth.

We had a financial tsunami and, for a while, people outside London said they were pleased they didn't live in London and talked about how bleak the future would be there. But London has been very resilient. There's so much critical mass that it just weathers the storm. The taxpayers' trillion-pound bail-out and the Olympics have helped!

However, London's recent boom was based on speculation. Finance will always be innovating but it may not be a major job-producer in the future. It is interesting that in the US, the largest metropolitan areas - New York, Chicago, Los Angeles - have grown less rapidly (in population and jobs) than many second-tier cities (populations greater than one million) over recent decades.

How international should Glasgow's economic strategy be?

The growth potential attributed to exports is questionable on both economic and ethical grounds. There is imbalanced trade between the US and China and, in the future, it will worsen as China strengthens its ability to create its own tools, educational institutions and service infrastructure. China will catch up just as did the Koreans. It would be better for China to pay its workers better so that they can buy what they make rather than exporting their output, based on very low wages, to the US and Europe.

Iran and China can change. The West lectures the Chinese but we aren't learning enough about their culture. Look at working in Russia, for instance. We didn't invade Moscow. We made good decisions about that.

The world is a fast-moving place. If we shut ourselves off, we will be left behind.

There is interesting speculation that the developing economies, especially India and China, are about to go on a buying spree in Europe and the US. Our cherished institutions could be bought up. So one man's buying spree is another man's inward investment. This is worrying because these assets can later be divested.

We should think about this geo-political shift. Perhaps we shouldn't bend over so far for inward investment. To China, Glasgow is a village outside of Greater London. Other leading powers are not interested in the UK. For instance, President Obama is not very interested in the special US/UK relationship. We cut our prices and labour costs to compete globally. We're affordable, but we get poorer.

Suppose we have massive immigration? Because we have affordable entry, poorer people are trying to make their way here from the developing world. We are ill-equipped to respond constructively.

How do we make money as a city as well as a nation? Venice is not that liveable anymore. Glasgow is a jewel, but we are inward-looking in terms of politics, media, culture. Climate change causes deteriorating weather conditions. Our roads get worse. We become Eastern Europe-like. It is harder to capture taxes to pay for things because tax havens offshore proliferate. We demolish parts of the city – we're good at that – like Detroit is doing. We need to think about the bad things to get to a constructive viewpoint.

There is room for a city with intrinsic entrepreneurship. We should not be myopic, defining ourselves against the rest of Scotland or the UK. There's a world economy out there. Its 'players' can bypass London. There are new hubs like Dubai. We are well-placed to connect to this, as well-placed as anyone else.

Glasgow's Economic Development Record

In the interwar period, the steel, coal and shipping barons shaped City policy in a very dramatic and profound way, on both City and Chamber of Commerce sides of George Square. In the Victorian period, they built civic Glasgow. What happened?

It's called democracy.

But are we against democracy? During the interwar period, the boundaries between democracy and capitalism were porous. They were mutually beneficial. Consider Tom Johnson, who went on to head the Hydro Board after a career in politics. And those times were intensely democratic! The electorate threw Churchill out despite his wartime leadership record.

But those leaders were the last two generations before women and non-propertied people began voting.

Economic development became a local, City-sponsored practice just when the big companies became centralised, with their top leadership absent from the region. They can no longer shape things to their own advantage.

Our city has a strong corporate and small/medium enterprise culture. But we haven't sustained a sufficiently strong entrepreneurial culture that is not beholden to the banks and shareholders. There have been one or two entrepreneurs who have achieved success on a significant scale and who have had strong, singular visions transcending policy orthodoxy. But they are exceptions. That's not good, because many of our larger corporations are not based here, don't have place-loyalty, and are culturally conservative. They think our culture is difficult. They are not engaged in the big thinking about or the decision-making for the city.

A negative aspect of the Glasgow business culture is that it's not good to shout about your achievements here. You get shot down. So the business community keeps its head down.

We should celebrate those who give back to the city. Instead, we are often celebrating the businesses that are sold to someone else, not those where ownership is retained locally. We should be celebrating people who build enterprises and keep them here.

A lot of business chatter in Glasgow is focused on the local. But a lot of work here is global. Glasgow does have a strong contingent within the business community trading and operating internationally. It's about people rather than organisations and industries.

Economists and others used to ask, "What's Glasgow distinctive for, economically?" Now that's not so important. We just sell the benefits and describe the assets of being in Glasgow. People come – students, tourists – and they like it. Glasgow beats their expectations. Our message should be "here are opportunities; take them," – and people do.

Glasgow vis-à-vis Scotland and the UK

Broad research on economic development spending across Scotland suggests that it is heavier in rural areas than in cities. We probably spend too much there. It can be argued that rural spending does not generate good value based on return and relative to the economic development issues that need to be addressed in rural *and* urban areas.

It's not just Edinburgh and Glasgow that fuel the Scottish economy. Look at Aberdeen and Dundee. Inverness is the fastest growing conurbation in Scotland.

Aberdeen has high wages and fast growth because of its oil. It is making a massive contribution to Scotland's growth. We can work more effectively with the powerhouses that are already here. We need to work with Aberdeen and use their expertise to build international connections.

We can't deal with everywhere else in Scotland. Some 80% of Scotland's population and wealth creation are in the central belt. The crown jewels are in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Aberdeen is a *robber economy* – fish and oil. That is fine, but its advantages are just the technology for and financing of oil exploration. Can Aberdeen operations work globally?

What happens to the rest of Scotland then: benign neglect?

We have to make choices. Scotland's economic development should be more urban-centric. If we are talking about productivity, value-added, and prosperity, then some rural areas will contribute but not as much. Prosperity will come very much from Glasgow and the central belt. There will continue to be interplay between urban and rural places.

Glasgow needs to be a strong city that is physically attractive with high quality of life. A city that grows micro-businesses. A strong city with links to its rural hinterland. How do we build on this symmetry?

Glasgow needs to strengthen its links to its hinterland with its attractive quality of life. Especially promising are rural pursuits immediately outside the city. And what's our relationship to Edinburgh? Can we see our cities as complementary? Edinburgh is the gateway to the rest of Scotland, but Glasgow is where you have your boat, music and pleasure? In other words, let's see our physical place as an asset and think, "how can all these things strengthen our economy?"

We can encourage people to play in the Highlands. We actually are more cut off from the rest of Scotland than we should be. Can we imagine a different kind of life, different demographics, new kinds of companies – more atomised – and without the corporate cultural dominance we've had, where people come for education and quality of life and stay longer?

Regarding the consumption versus export base: we do need to strike a balance. It is not just about exports. Local consumption can and should grow. We should look to Inverness, where the population is growing and wealthy, and to Aberdeen and its success. Glasgow's track record regarding population change is poor – we are not growing (or are growing very slowly) and Glasgow is also poorer:

Imagine if Scotland were sovereign? In a way, Glasgow might be better off in an independent Scotland than in the UK. We might imagine Glasgow as an uncontrolled city that is international, not as a Scottish city. That would draw people from even broader regions of the world. We need to be more international: we could be a northwest European version of Seattle or Vancouver. They have a mediating economic relationship with their hinterlands and at the same time a relationship with Asia.

Glasgow's age, class and education as economy-shapers

To the original list of things that we didn't spot in the 1980s, let's add the massive increase in the number of students. There are 80,000 of them in Glasgow. They make up 12% of the population. They are economically very active and to some extent funded on credit by the banks. And they have re-colonised the city. This is a significant part of our economy and shouldn't be ignored.

Several factors are unique to Glasgow relative to other cities. We will not have an ageing population. We have a rapidly growing young population, more today in the 25-44 age group than in the 1981 Census. But due to out-migration and lower life expectancy, we don't have Galway's one-in-three elderly.

Is the City getting younger because older people have moved out to suburban and ex-urban locations, avoiding local taxes? The increase in 25-44 year olds is due almost entirely to the growing student population. It is not related to increased births. Most of this population increase resides in the west end and city centre.

These are a generation of students who were suburban but did not come from multi-generational unemployment. We've imported them in a way. Like an earlier 1970s generation that wasn't particularly prosperous and had to make new rules and new jobs for themselves, these young people could do the same. We need to build on this new group's young energy.

Still, we have serious deprivation in Glasgow. Some 18-20% of our population live in the in worst areas and they haven't moved on. The City is apt to become more unequal. Some less deprived sections of the population are moving up, but there is a group that is 'stuck'.

Glasgow must begin to make progress on inequality. Concentrating on the corporate thing only is negative thinking. For example, there's a growing artist community and we can't build studios fast enough. Students are important to the economy. Just flagging up the success of financial services is boring: let's get beyond that to Glasgow as a 'real' place.

We require a vision of the 'real' Glasgow and what it needs. There is currently an urban fiction about what Glasgow is and could be. Yes, we have visitors and elites but there are all kinds of other people. For example, the 'Style Mile' is a concept that is limited at best and appeals to a small number of people. Glasgow is about other things and is good at some of the things that we go to other cities to see. Knowledge economy isn't what it's all about: it's people who matter.

We already have a city that is different in its outlook and values than the people around this table, especially for younger people, the 25-44 age group. There are subcultures with economic impact – music cultures for instance. The creative barons are the new currency for Glasgow. We underestimate these and the political classes don't really understand the small vibrant cultural economy.

But others are protesting the gentrification that comes with a growing population of artists, just as they do in the Williamsburg portion of New York City. What happens to our many and diverse young people? Why do they stay in Glasgow? Where are they going to work in twenty years time? If we want Glasgow to be a real place, we have to think way beyond this.

Recent research by the University of Glasgow's Keith Kintrea (2011) shows that young people all over the UK, including Glasgow, have very high and enduring aspirations but not particularly realistic ones in terms of occupations to which they aspire.

We should worry about children and young people: the many kids not at school! The Merchant City for example hosts a cross-section of the population. There are wealthy, aspirational types living near the Sheriff Court. But around Glasgow Cross and the Saltmarket, there are second generation unemployed, the lost generation. They are now having children. We could have a third generation unemployed. Something happens to these Glasgow youths. Children who in primary school have been innocent and receptive to positive messages become unteachable, cynical, anti-social. In a culture such as, for example, Tehran, teenagers are still open, innocent, aspirational, hopeful. In Glasgow we need a youth culture that is engaged in city opportunities and challenges. There's a world of difference between Nitshill and Hyndland. What goes on for these kids? Meanwhile, suburban youth get urbanised, leave the suburban areas for the City and its bars.

Values, metrics and economic decision-making

Our media has a tendency to talk of economies as autonomous 'things,' as if people aren't driving them and making the decisions that determine them. Our economy consists of live systems that enable us to do things. We don't have to be purely responsive. We can make decisions to shape these relationships and systems, to enable us to be productive and active.

We need to talk about the economy *and* ethics together. What are the rules regarding behaviour in our economy and how do they relate to people's experience? We need more candid discussions about the relationship between capitalism and democracy, economics and values. We talk about output and jobs: not wealth and income - but wealth and income are important.

We need to 'grow a native plant' rather than an imported one.

We do have our social enterprises, a very active sector with a lot of small- and medium-sized firms. We're re-engaging a different kind of business culture, not waiting for new tobacco lords. We are measuring growth not in turnover but jobs. We have options, especially if we can re-engineer the architecture of finance.

We should measure growth in terms of community engagement and ethics while still caring about jobs and the economy.

We need to make links among the things we talk about each time. The questions to ask are: What would a resilient Glasgow be like? Real Glasgow and localism should be explored more thoroughly, especially local economic strategies that might be about diversity. It's about relationships with the people as well as economic development strategies.

Arts, Culture and Glasgow's Future

Arts and cultural investments and activities have formed one axis of response to deindustrialisation. Since the Nineteenth Century, Glasgow's offerings have been strong and diversified. But over the past twenty-five years, city leaders prominently targeted the expansion of arts venues, festivals, events and cultural industries, aided by new funding resources from European programmes and the UK lottery. How have these investments paid off? What remains to be done? How might recent experience help the city decide which types of arts and cultural investments will increase participation, revitalise neighbourhoods, improve the city's quality of life and help attract and retain jobs?

Arts and cultural commitments serve multiple public needs, and that makes them complicated. They may contribute to greater participation by diverse groups in the city, increasing cohesion and capturing more of the city's discretionary income for locally produced artworks and performances. They help attract tourists, business and residents, further enhancing economic returns. They foster an important group of creative workers – artists, writers, musicians, performers, designers, architects – who bring visibility and income into the city and start local businesses that may grow into larger employers. They may enliven and reverse under-utilisation of neighbourhoods with ageing commercial, industrial or residential structures. And as their major mission, they offer intrinsic benefits to all: beauty, expression, movement, humour, insight, critique and artistic innovation.

Following two-plus decades of major new and renovated facilities, a series of Festivals, and innovations like Celtic Connections, Glasgow's arts and cultural sector faces an era of fiscal austerity. Few large new investments are thinkable in the medium run, and existing capacity is expensive to maintain. Public investment in the arts is in jeopardy in England and the Big Society agenda may further undermine public investments. England is cutting its Arts Council funding by 30% although Creative Scotland's arts funding has been spared cuts for another year, in part due to cross-party support. The City's ability to maintain arts and cultural programming and facilities is also under severe fiscal pressure.

Under these circumstances, city leaders face a series of challenges for arts and cultural policy. Should the city concentrate its resources on large, chiefly centrally-located cultural venues? Or spread them more broadly among smaller, more dispersed nodes to increase participation and inclusion? Should the city's arts and cultural policy be fashioned to attract tourists, requiring landmarks, or focus more on reaching and serving the region's residents? Should its investments build on Glasgow's distinctiveness in heritage and art forms or seek to compete in 'high end' arts with other regional cities? Should Glasgow impose cultural districts or quarters or build on organic ones that are springing up around the city? Should space and business assistance be supported for artists and, if so, can this be done without causing undue displacement and gentrification?

Learning from other cities

In making choices today, Glasgow can learn from an analytical review of its own recent past and from the successes and failures in other deindustrialised UK cities. The experience of Newcastle/Gateshead, in a comparably deindustrialised region, is instructive. Twenty years ago, these two cities' cultural offerings were, effectively, closed from Sundays to Wednesdays. Across all socio-economic and age groups, they had the lowest levels of attendance in all art forms except jazz. Because Victorian wealth had gone south (less true of Glasgow), residents had few arts and cultural offerings. Civic and arts leaders proposed a plan to raise and invest more than £200M over ten years in arts and cultural venues.

When we first launched the Newcastle/Gateshead initiative, some people said “you are mad” while others said “wow!” It was our rallying call for a generational change, a social and a regeneration strategy. It succeeded because it was ambitious.

Newcastle/Gateshead arts and cultural renewal happened in three ways: 1) organic growth (artists populating buildings); 2) strategic sites and new and renovated buildings for cultural organisations; and 3) masterplanning. The key strategy was to back individuals and talent, eg. a woman selling children's books envisioned a Centre for Children's Literature. The initial feasibility study was not promising but, because the vision was strong, the initiatives leaders decided to support it anyway. The most successful of the new venues is Sage Gateshead, the large Tyneside music venue that emerged from the merger of an orchestra and a folk music agency. It enjoys an endowment, works closely with the region's Universities and schools, and hosts all forms of music to ensure high levels of usage. Much of its programming is targeted to the region's residents but its orchestral music also draws considerable numbers of tourists. More controversial and less well-attended is the Baltic, a stunning contemporary art gallery built inside a derelict flour mill, also on the Gateshead riverfront. Unlike the Sage, the Baltic exhibits chiefly high end fine art from outside of the region.

Newcastle/Gateshead has an organic, artist-initiated district, too – Newcastle's Ouseburn, also on a site featuring water; in this case a steep tributary of the Tyne. A bit of water is always good for a place! At Ouseburn, warehouses were animated by artists and other creative sector entrepreneurs, organically, in a place that is difficult to get to, although actually very close to the city centre.

How might Glasgow arts and cultural offerings appear to newcomers and tourists? In contrast to Newcastle/Gateshead, it's harder to see where the cultural sector is located: Glasgow's grid structure makes it perversely confusing to a stranger. It is hard to read and navigate. Lots of people say “we'll meet at the sewing machine shop!” There are clearly developed cultural quarters but they are hidden away skilfully, either because of topography or to be modest. People wouldn't know how many cultural organisations there are around Trongate, for example. Perhaps the Celtic Connections festival is so vibrant because it is in the city centre.

Yet the diversity of venues located around Glasgow is a strength. The city offers more interesting architecture than in many European cities. It can make the most of this distinctiveness.

Expanding participation and inclusion

Glasgow's arts and cultural participation rates have increased steadily since 1990. Before that, they were below the Scottish average. Today, Scotland has some of the highest levels in the UK. Often, Glasgow audiences are very diverse (even within a particular venue): at the King's Theatre in Glasgow, for instance, or the Citizens'. Yet the arts sector's biggest challenge is over-capacity. Where is the potential broader audience? Some think arts and cultural tourism can solve the problem, while others look to the region's current and diverse residents.

We are always fighting the market in respect of the creative product. We have terrific facilities in Glasgow but probably an oversupply. The CCA is a boring place to go. The Baltic is a super building but hardly anyone is in there. The Lighthouse struggles: it didn't develop its market. The Jazz Festival is struggling. How do we keep them running and get people to turn up?

Glasgow is a hub for national and international audiences, in both large and small venues. We send work from here to other places, like the Glasgow Boys exhibition to London. Sometimes we are not an inward-looking audience: our catchment area is large. For instance, an event on Irish dancing or the pipe bands competition brings talent and participants from Ireland and Canada. We could think of the city as one big Glastonbury Festival with different bits to it. Still, how do we raise visibility? On the south side, there are places that offer dance and tapas together: how do we evolve things like this? Where is the ethnic diversity?

Designing arts capacity around tourism is a poor route to success. If your own population does not embrace and patronize your arts sector, people from outside will not be attracted. Because of Glasgow's climate, the city only attracts tourists during four months. Its arts and cultural offerings have to survive for the rest of the year on local patronage.

The next challenge for Glasgow City Council is to connect everyday creativity - interior design, fashion, music - with the classical canon. Most people will say they are creative, but they won't say they are artists. The Concert Hall is beginning to do this, to provide opportunities for mass participation through storytelling. We must work harder to make our arts venues appealing places.

Glasgow, with its museums, music programmes and events, need not be just a four-month tourist destination. Celtic Connections attracted 200 delegates from other countries in January! We can do more to market Glasgow's arts and culture, to help people coming to a shopping centre or a professional or business conference find their way around. We can make sure people are not just drawn to TKMaxx but to Trongate and Glasgow's festivals. Scotland-wide, there are over 280 festivals a year. There are events every single week of the year.

If the region's multicultural residents form a significant market, then content and message matter. People respond to the messages of art as well the media. London's Geffrye (Interior Design) Museum created a West Indian room in order to exhibit 1950s Caribbean interiors and it brought in huge numbers of people who had never been there before.

Small-scale arts and cultural engagement can be a key ingredient, sometimes the lead agent, in placemaking. A neighbourhood, even a poor one with high rates of unemployment and violence, can host a small venue where young people practise various arts forms, adults and youth alike produce community theatre, people make music and dance together. Successful efforts to improve community life often emerge from cultural venues like these.

Design also offers tools for placemaking. Dublin's recent Designing Dublin initiative engages community participation in placemaking, a partnership between the City Council Planning Department and Design Twenty first Century. People walk the city and create different pathways for local talent to participate.

Does the legibility of Glasgow's arts and cultural offerings matter?

Does Glasgow need arts and cultural landmarks that make its arts and cultural character legible? Despite the Baltic's limited traffic, it has become an iconic image for Newcastle/Gateshead. Almost every photo of Newcastle/Gateshead seems to bear this image and carry it internationally. Remarkably, it's not a bit of new architecture, not a Gehry or a Hadid. But it is a landmark.

Yet landmark buildings can be very expensive to operate and they can be disappointing in their draw. An alternative model is the National Theatre of Scotland. It functions as a theatre without walls – it can show up anywhere and set up a production. Yet its effect on the ecology of Glasgow's performing arts is powerful. It supports lighting designers, musicians and many others. Cultural organisations could move around like this, without the burden of maintaining a space. It is brand and quality that matters. Similarly, the Glasgow International art festival operates without a landmark space in dozens of venues around the city.

Intelligibility cannot be reduced to landmarks. In Chicago, you don't ask "where's the cultural quarter?" The whole city is a cultural venue. Here, too, Glasgow is the landmark. Landmarks are not structures: they are the connectors. Newcastle/Gateshead's bridges are its most important landmarks: they connect the two cities. We have the Clyde, which has amazing potential as a connector; but we've mostly turned our back on it.

Networks are important for legibility. Housing the Sculpture Studios, a Chinese supermarket and activities associated with the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and Scottish Opera, Speirs Lock is very close to the city centre – but most people would not know that. You need someone to bring you over and walk you through the Chinese Cultural Centre: no amount of signage seems to help get you there. We need network integrators that will help propagate mental maps. You can see absolutely nothing travelling on the London tube, yet you can pop up at every 'village' in the city.

Analytics and graphics can make the city legible. Glasgow has big institutional problems here. Responsibility for legibility falls between the City Council and City Marketing Bureau. In the flat portion of Glasgow, it is just ten minutes' walk from the People's Palace to Trongate, but most residents and visitors don't perceive it as being so walkable. In the West End, it's hard to see the link between the Hunterian and Kelvingrove, even though they are but a short walk apart. A map of venues and talent would be great, would make things legible. We have an amazing arts infrastructure here, but getting it to work is a problem.

Cultivating Glasgow's artistic dividend

Artists form a significant pillar of Glasgow's arts and cultural edifice. With their high levels of self-employment, they often bring income into the city by selling their artwork, publications, recordings and design services far beyond the city limits, travelling to perform elsewhere, and helping to make Glasgow-made products and services more productive. By creating work, exhibition and marketing spaces, they bring activity into under-used structures and neighbourhoods near the city centre. Many are entrepreneurs, starting businesses that employ others and generate local income (Markusen and Schrock, 2006).

Glasgow's wealth of artist training programs at The Glasgow School of Art, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde draw talent to the city and provide excellent instruction and work apprenticeships. Many artists, musicians, designers, performers, writers and architects stay in Glasgow on graduation (Lowndes, 2010). Yet business development assistance for artists is very thin. How can the city reinforce their prospects, encouraging them to stay and start businesses?

Providing artists with work and live/work space is one way. Artists have unique space needs – to store materials and artworks, develop photographs, rehearse music and movement – compared to other self-employed people. Glasgow-based WASPS now manages 750 artist studios in Scotland, including the Briggait.

Whether the city should try to influence where artists and designers live and work is hotly debated. Property owners' and developers' interests (including City Council interests) often seek to influence decisions about arts space. Yet in choosing where to live and work, artists make their own choices. They want to work, exhibit and perform in a place authentic to their practice.

Glasgow's artist-led culture is one of its great strengths. You can't ghetto-ise artists. Their groupings and locations emerge organically. Things pop up here and sometimes disappear. Artists are not orderly! It's very pluralist and energetic, with no single provider. The diversity of artists' practices creates hubs and platforms that should be embraced.

Corporate efforts to build artist live/work spaces often fail. A location in the city centre does not necessarily draw artists, designers and their publics. To succeed, an artist space-fostering policy effort must work with artists' needs and preferences in mind. The long, careful and low-budget work of Glasgow City Council in Trongate has worked well in supporting artists' work and presentation spaces without setting off gentrification.

Revitalisation without Gentrification

The impact of organic artist activity on place has become a widely-studied and debated phenomenon in developed societies. While artist-initiated workspaces and galleries like Glasgow Print Studio and Transmission Gallery, dating from the 1970s and 1980s respectively, have anchored revitalisation in the Merchant City, there is concern that artists and other moderate income residents and businesses will be priced out and forced to move in the future.

Displacement of a creative hub is not just a problem for individual artists: it can undercut productivity and sales in the creative sector. Can an organic arts district remain mixed income and mixed use? Can transformation happen at a digestible pace? Public policies can quicken the process or, if designed carefully, moderate it.

There are some hidden places where arts and cultural industries bubble up, often artist-led. Hoxton, in London, was like this until developers moved in and out-priced the artists and small firms (Pratt, 2009). Bethnal Green is currently threatened. In Newcastle's Ouseburn, artists and creative industries sprang up, but now land values are rising and there may be a tipping point. Other cities have encouraged developers to build high-priced housing that renders existing arts space unaffordable.

Large-scale public investments are particularly problematic. Placing one or several big facilities in one place will precipitate a tipping point. For instance, Glasgow's BBC footprint is very big. There is no fine grain to it or easy way around it. Nor is there synergy between the BBC and STV. The massive new BBC building in Salford, next to Manchester, will not be accompanied by mixed uses or foot traffic. But in Glasgow, do we know what the BBC's effects on its neighbourhood are?

The Merchant City's atmosphere and future prospects prompted thoughtful and diverse comments, reflecting its success to date as an organic artistic quarter with gentle city support.

I thought the Merchant City would be trendy and up-market - I was thinking about living there. But now it's where people eat, drink, get their haircut and buy leather jackets.

The Merchant City needs to be a bit more organic. It does not need Selfridges. It doesn't need landmarks like that. At present, it is funky and skuzzy. Let's do that for a while and see what happens.

There's not going to be a tipping point in the Merchant City. It's too derelict for that. Trongate 103, where the City has helped house multiple arts organisations, is very brave. It is not using artists to raise property values but is investing in them.

What about the next generation? You know the joke about the Victorian industrialist surveying his factories and saying to his children, "one day all this will be art galleries!" Is this the Merchant City's future?

Many historic and older buildings in the area have been redeveloped for commercial use on street level with residential units above. Several developers built higher-priced speculative housing recently on the fringes of the Merchant City, often with river views. Caught in the housing bubble and, some believe, poorly designed, many of these units remain uninhabited.

Should the city designate and subsidise cultural quarters?

Designated cultural quarters or districts have been debated in many first world cities over the past two decades and views remain divided (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010). On the one hand, some believe they can jump-start a revival of an under-used area. Developers often appreciate and lobby for the branding involved. But others argue that cultural districts unjustly favour some locations and arts venues at the expense of others and may force costly moves on the part of arts organisations. Furthermore, dubbing one area as 'cultural' implies that the rest of the city is not.

Glasgow's Speirs Lock is a case in point – it houses a number of arts organisations and has ample artists' workspaces as well. Some advocates believe it is possible to accelerate the development process through public subsidies so that artists can get in there before the tipping point. Others point to mixed or negative results where public money has been spent trying to impose cultural quarters and build capacity.

In some UK cities, cultural quarters have nothing in them. One gallery doesn't make a cultural quarter! I'm always surprised when cultural gurus want cultural quarters. It's cultural apartheid!

Glasgow leaders have considered designating culture districts. In the 1990s, a small Glasgow delegation went to Dublin to see what that city had done with its cultural quarter. They returned with no consensus.

I question the need for cultural quarters. I don't believe in putting everything in one place. Talent hubs are good, like the map of tube stations in London. Branding brings a danger of ghettoising areas and is a dangerous proposition. Hubs can be places to let things grow or die.

Glasgow's arts and cultural sector's dynamism is built on its distinctions. These include a robust artist population trained by excellent local institutions and self-organised into visual art and music enterprises. Scottish and Glaswegian content is strong, as in Celtic Connections, Plan B Dance Company's 'A Wee Home', Alasdair Gray's 'Lanark' and art movements from the 1970s onwards. Unique museums and performance spaces are spread around the city, such as Kelvingrove, St Mungo's Museum of Religious Art and Life, the Hunterian, the Burrell Collection, the People's Palace, Tramway, the Citizens Theatre, the Glasgow Concert Hall and Oran Mor. Nevertheless, allocating scarce public resources over the next decade and making decisions regarding target audiences, locations and spaces, programming, and creative worker and business support can make a huge difference to the sector's contributions to arts experiences, inclusion and economic benefits.

Glasgow's 2014 Commonwealth Games Legacy

In 2014, Glasgow will host the Commonwealth Games. Following its successful bid in 2007, the city has been working to build the infrastructure and deliver a legacy strategy. The key goals in terms of legacy are, in broad terms, the Games' ability to stimulate the economy, to enhance the physical look of the city, to bolster long-term tourism and to improve the health of our citizens. How well are we doing so far and what are the prospects for Glaswegians to participate in the Games and their legacy?

Economic development

The major Commonwealth Games projects – the National Indoor Sports Arena and Velodrome, Tollcross Pool and the Games Village – are currently creating jobs and training opportunities. The Commonwealth Apprenticeships Initiative and the Commonwealth Jobs Fund, for 18-24 years olds who have been unemployed for six months or more, are linked to the Games.

Glasgow companies have won a number of these contracts. Working with Scottish Enterprise, the City Council has developed a Commonwealth Games Business Portal to equip Glasgow companies to bid for contracts. All jobs for contractors are advertised through the Portal. With Scottish Enterprise, the City Council is working to help Glasgow companies be competitive and business-ready. In Melbourne, Australia, 85% of all Commonwealth Games contracts went to Melbourne firms. Glasgow doesn't have a target – that would create nervousness. A second wave of £500 million-plus in procurement is still to come on stream so there are new opportunities across the board. These entail not just big technical jobs but include more everyday things like clothing and uniforms.

The big challenge is the follow-up. When all the money runs out, will we have developed sufficiently to keep companies and jobs going beyond 2014?

The record of past Games and similar large-scale events like the Olympics is quite mixed. Research shows that cultural components of sporting events such as the Olympics in Sydney and Barcelona have chiefly been used to get buy-in early on but are poorly promoted and do not end up engaging many people, tourists or residents (Garcia, 2008; Kasimati, 2003). Commonwealth and Olympic Games absorb tremendous resources for facilities that are often empty or torn down afterwards and the jobs created in construction and operations are temporary. The London Olympics are heavily criticized by many UK citizens as a snake trying to swallow an elephant and sucking money out of all other regions. It's important to think about the opportunity costs: what other things could be done with the same resources?

Is competing for these large-scale events the only way to produce growth and jobs? How many other expensive bids has Glasgow put together and lost?

But these are real opportunities. Thinking about "what if?" is a luxury. You only have a short time. Opportunity cost is an 'after the event' question.

Some 70% of this stuff would have been done anyway – the Velodrome, the swimming pool. The Games have allowed us to do what we'd have done anyway but have brought additional resources and sped up delivery. In total, £547M will be spent: 80% from the Scottish and central governments and 20% from the city.

Despite a downturn in the housing market, the Games have secured private sector input into big housing projects – otherwise known as the Games Village. Four private sector builders are developing a housing regeneration project at a time when no one would have touched it with a ten-foot pole. The Games will give them a commercial return that they would not otherwise have had.

Writing on sustainable communities, Sir John Egan, who came from the car industry and worked on British airports, asks what lessons can we learn from other places? (Egan, 2004) He asks us to consider the Japanese in vehicle manufacture, or learning from what Edinburgh has done since 1986 with its Commonwealth Games venues – Meadowbank Stadium and Royal Commonwealth Swimming Pool – or Athens (both times, 100 years apart) and Helsinki. Some of their Olympics venues are still used for community sport. Some of Atlanta's structures were blown up afterwards. What was the thinking there? How do we make sure the lessons aren't forgotten? Let's not blow the opportunity.

Improving the physical city

The Games, with its external and local investments, offers us an opportunity to re-organise the city physically, especially to decentralise new public facilities and housing into under-served areas and to help remake the Clyde waterfront.

Are we building an Athletes' Village in Dalmarnock? Yes, but what we are really doing is developing a new residential area in the East End that happens to be used for athletes for two weeks during 2014. We are creating key infrastructure in the city for long-term use and it happens to be used for the Commonwealth Games. We are starting in 2012 and simply stopping for a few months in 2014 but real assets are being created.

Glasgow is the quintessential Commonwealth city because of its historic trading role. It has the second largest public transport system outside of London, but this needs improvement. We need to say to the Scottish Government – how can you have a world class city with no airport rail link? And no Fastlink (bus rapid transit) along Clyde? When are you going to commit to better transport infrastructure? We need a view that's greater than the sum of its parts.

There are issues around 'place' quality and infrastructure. The Commonwealth Games projects must be fit for purpose and Glasgow must not over-invest. Take Clyde Gateway, for instance: we are not sure how well it will be realised. We have an opportunity here to do something for the hollowed-out East End. We should link the East End to the City Centre as well as the West End is linked.

What about walking and cycling routes? This would be a great legacy, very strong for the city. The proposal to upgrade London Road, called 'The Great Street', would have connected to the Go Well project. We need safe cycle lanes and to encourage people to use public transport. Are there funds for this in the Games budget?

When the public sector is at rock bottom, there is no money for a street like London Road. That's the reality. We are working against market conditions and with public sector investments strained. We need to use our imaginations to develop new funding sources, like the Buchanan Quarter TIF.

We have to be holistic about the Games and their legacy. There is a relationship between the redesign of George Square – the public realm – and the health of the city. If we have parts of the city where the space is nice but no one is there, then we're not investing in the people. We need to tackle people and places at the same time.

But where has such a legacy worked in any other place, and how?

Tourism as a strategy

The Games are an opportunity to showcase our city and to develop Glasgow's tourism offer for the longer term. The city economy benefits from over £900M annually in tourism already. More people are employed in tourism today than ever worked in shipbuilding.

Physical improvements are a major part of this strategy. Hotel development is moving forward. We hope to use tax increment financing (TIF) to finance £20M in improvements to the public realm in defined areas, such as George Square and improving our city centre generally, including shopping and retail offerings. Glasgow can be an attractive destination for short breaks. The City hopes to encourage people who come here once to come back – people who come for the Games, for instance.

I came to Glasgow because of the 1988 Garden Festival and the 1990 Year of Culture initiatives, partly because of a perceived 'brand,' and stayed. Others came, too.

The Games' sports structures and venues offer legacy opportunities. The new bowling greens at Kelvingrove, for instance, will be there for Glaswegians and visitors alike, and so will the swimming pool and sports arena. With facilities like the Velodrome, Glasgow will be able to bid for more events in cycling and athletics. Glasgow Life is leading a major events strategy that includes conferences. If these efforts are successful, we'll see more major international events coming to the city, before and after the Games. For instance, Glasgow will host the Olympic football tournament during the 2012 London Olympics.

The Games are a classic 'pacing device', a term coined to chart ways of getting through a period of twenty years or so with events as markers. The Games are bigger than various of Glasgow's other events, like the 1999 UK City of Architecture and Design. As Lord Keynes said, "the root of the successful economy is confidence." However, this is not a sexy athletic event. It could end up being in the shadow of the London Olympics.

This city is desperate for a shot in the arm in this very tough time. The timing is really neat, if we can just get in front of this wave. It will be a confidence boost for people in the city, encourage confidence in the city's economy.

The Commonwealth Games is about confidence-building. There is not a lot of real confidence here at the moment. There is a certain attitude of 'please like us' going on.

It's not that we're desperate for this! It's not "pew, we got it." It's not that we're unhealthy! The Commonwealth Games needs Glasgow! They are lucky that their event is coming to Glasgow.

The Commonwealth Games organisers have said that they are worried about the future of the Games. They are appreciative of Glasgow's positive attitude. We do have commitment.

The Commonwealth Games Foundation believes it has a strong brand despite the fact that fewer and fewer cities bid for them. There is a certain arrogance there. In fact, in the next round, it will be in some difficulty. The Organising Committee thinks these are its Games. The Commonwealth Games Foundation thinks the same. First Minister Alex Salmond thinks they are his. There is a lot of competition for control and influence over what happens.

It's fascinating to think of the role the Games could play in celebrating the city's culture, festivals, architecture. For all this infrastructure, just two weeks of activity! We have to achieve a lot in that two weeks of the Games. It is very important that in 2011 we are working for it and benefiting from it, including the challenge of getting young people more involved in sports.

The internationality of the event is the nub of the opportunity. We don't have to *make* it an international event – it already *is* one. Glasgow is a trading city: this is our chance to showcase economic stuff, our global companies. There are some very large emerging markets in the Commonwealth. How can we present Glasgow in the light of what we want it to be? Glasgow is the most diverse place in Scotland. Salt Lake City used the run up to their Olympics to project what they wanted to project (themselves as Mormon Central among other things!).

The challenge for us is: can we take the city's economy *and* citizens forward in competing with others and internationally? Barcelona's Olympics was successful in this regard. But the Commonwealth Games are fading. They are struggling to get BBC coverage. It's not an event that *has* to be shown on global TV any longer.

We'll have a good party. When the Games and the visitors and media attention are long gone, we'll still be living here, we'll benefit.

*The Games will get its mojo back, here in Glasgow!
Because we know how to throw a party. It could be
better than the Olympics. Start celebrating.*

Maybe being a 'party city' is part of the problem, especially regarding the health aspects – as in the 'Saturday Night in Glasgow' marketing pitch that obliquely celebrates alcohol consumption.

The Games and Glaswegians' Health

Glasgow is one of the unhealthiest cities in Europe. Changing that for our residents is fundamental. The biggest Commonwealth legacy we can achieve is to make citizens healthier in the future. The health challenge here is really about diet and alcohol. We can use the games to move us forward, to motivate both adults and young people to get involved in sport.

Michael Johnson is an example of a sporting hero who inspired Glasgow's youth. In the run up to Glasgow's Commonwealth Games bid in 2007, Johnson came to Glasgow and visited the east end of the city. There he talked to local people about his life, goals and aspirations. He talked to young people particularly and communicated well, encouraging them to see sport as a way of changing their lives. We need Scottish sports heroes.

Kids need space. They need mentors. Not heroes. We can achieve both youth and adult sports participation with clubs and neighbourhood space.

*There is substantial opposition to new stadia and
undue expenditures on professional sports where
people are mainly beer-drinking spectators.*

It's difficult to get young people to participate, especially in more than a token way. Glasgow Life is supporting clubs to be more organised and offer more to young people in the city.

Sport is important and needs to be considered as exercise as well as spectacle. We need to blur the boundaries.

You can blur boundaries but sport does put people off. As a 15 year old, the Commonwealth Games would not have turned me into a sports enthusiast.

There are ways to engage people in sports actively. Young girls are being encouraged to take up cycling with initiatives emphasising that exercise is good for the skin and keeps you trim. And kids can use their bikes as customised accessories, as a chance to use their creativity.

Sport does have an important role to play in health. We need people to get more physically active. Can the games be a way of doing that? For example, there is an effort through Conflux Street Theatre to train people to do street theatre for the Commonwealth Games and to encourage dancing.

If you want to do something about health and wellbeing for the Glasgow population, you have to tackle it directly, not indirectly through the Commonwealth or Olympic Games.

It would be wonderful if kids in public sector schools had the kind of sports provision and infrastructure that the private sector schools have – beautiful playing fields, good uniforms. In public sector schools, coaches do it in their free time. We need to plan for the long haul to get schools healthy, by involving kids and schools in sports among other things. We can do it through Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence.

There are also the intrinsic benefits of the Games themselves. Perhaps some local Glasgow heroes will emerge, like Edinburgh's Allan Wells who, from raking the long jump pit at the 1970 Commonwealth Games, went on to win the 100-metre race in the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

Glaswegians' Participation in the Games – and Legacy?

The Games are not just about outcomes. They are also an opportunity to increase citizen participation in the planning and delivery process, improving the prospects for enduring legacies. How can the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games create sustainable outcomes for all Glaswegians?

The short answer is that it won't – and if we were to set a target like that, we'd fail. We have to maximise the benefits that the games will bring, and accept that we can't benefit everyone.

At a reception in Glasgow recently, the then Mayor of Barcelona, Pasqual Maragall, was asked how had he engaged the wider population in Olympic Games planning. Maragall's answer was "involve people from far-flung neighbourhoods, unpack it and take it out to them." It's not just about sport. "Monumentalise the suburbs and dignify the centre," the Mayor said. The majority of Glasgow's population is in the suburbs and periphery. There are very few venues in certain parts of Glasgow, so how should we engage people in those areas and people who aren't sport-minded and who aren't buying tickets? A real challenge is the continuing legacy and real involvement in the wider cultural life of the city.

In parallel, the city will hold a major, Council-organised festival with free events that are out in communities in the period before and after the Games. There are parallels here to 1990, when Glasgow was European Capital of Culture. There will be a cultural festival from this summer onwards, officially kick-starting the build up. It will reach city-wide. This is our biggest public cultural moment, biggest chance to aim at where we want to be in 2020. This is parallel with the development of sports clubs.

Glasgow does want to celebrate. We need the party in 2014. We need more thought on this, reflecting back to 1990. We'll be seeking big names from within and outside of Scotland now that we're hosting something international here. We can showcase Scottish culture.

But 1990 was so successful not because Glaswegians were really 'into' culture, but because we redefined culture, showcased what culture means to us and made it our own. We need to redefine this so that it is on our terms, not just the Commonwealth Games Foundation's terms.

The City has a volunteering strategy for the Games. We are searching for 14,000 volunteers. There is no doubt that people will be involved. Can disadvantaged groups access these opportunities and use them as a stepping stone to training and paid employment?

How will this volunteering strategy work? Who will the volunteers be? Drawn from all ages, neighbourhoods, ethnicities?

We should distinguish between sports and the Commonwealth Games. I'm proud to be a Glaswegian and support the Games. I walk, I run, but I feel excluded from the Games. So engaging people through other routes is important. And it is not easy. I worked in education with children for seven years, at the grassroots. I'm sceptical.

The expectation is that people will want to join the party, even if they don't care about football. If sport is putting people off, then the message has to be "come and join the party." Our marketing needs to get that across. It's about bringing the city to life over this period.

When Glasgow won European Capital of Culture, it redefined the accolade and what it stood for. We did our own thing, doing events all year and out in the community. There were gigs on Glasgow Green and in George Square. The Garden Festival built up to this. Before these events, taxi drivers would not say good things about the city and its culture. 1990 changed all that. I remember it as a kid: it inspired me to work in the cultural sector. What can we do to energise people?

What about the other face of the Commonwealth Games, the non-white, multi-racial nature of the Commonwealth, with its 1.5-2 billion people? This is a moment to get a message out to the world. George Square will be on TV all over the world for two weeks. How will we look when seen through the lens of the worlds' TV and other media? How can we think of ourselves and present ourselves as more multi-racial and international in our outlook, as a city that can make stuff happen?

We can't reach everyone. All these aspirations can't be sustained. Let's not set out things on which we can't deliver. But the outward-looking consciousness is important. I went to the brilliant street party in Sydney during its Olympics, full of black people who had won or not won medals. Start in the context of visioning the city of the future. If we say we are a global city, it changes how we think about ourselves. For a fortnight, yes, we will be a global city!

The word 'legacy' is overused. Actually, more thought is going into "how do we build on what we have already and how will it pan out to 2020?" The offer is for Glaswegians to *host* rather than culture being 'brought to' Glaswegians.

But you can't deny the investment levels. People will judge the City Council not in terms of how many people volunteer or participate in sporting activity in the widest sense but in terms of how many jobs got created, how many contracts were let to Glasgow companies and how *sustainable* it all is as we go forward.

Growth and Inequality

Over a long period, two strong movements have sought to make Glasgow a better place to live, to make it a 'Good City'. One involves growing the Glasgow economy. The other seeks to reduce inequality and exclusion. At all levels of government – city, Scotland, UK, EU – distinctive initiatives have addressed each goal. Overwhelmingly, resources are directed at ameliorating disadvantage, while much of what passes for economic development expenditure is income-distributing rather than economy-growing: rural, regeneration and transport subsidy expenditures, for instance. Those working on these issues are 'siloes' and, in Glasgow, we must bring them together by developing an opportunity-led, work-led narrative for the city and its people. Let's not waste this crisis! Let's use the public expenditure crisis to drive change and innovation.

Four distinct groups of protagonists are trying actively to shape this big city: economic developers, urbanists, health and social welfare professionals and preventionists. They are not uniform groups; each has its sub-tribes as well as some limited crossover. But for all groups, Glasgow is an Urban Design Laboratory. Group protagonists all have a deep knowledge of Glasgow's heritage and current positioning, though they work mostly in their own domains.

The economic developers see Glasgow as undergoing structural economic transformation. They envision a Glasgow whose growth is stronger and more balanced, making significant inroads into employment disadvantage. They believe Glasgow must increase its productivity and competitiveness, increase its productive economic base, reduce non-productive resource uses and flip to a high skills, high wage, high value economic system.

The urbanists want a better-designed, more beautiful city. While they know that economic wealth and social and political 'vision' (often meaning public expenditure) are key, they seek increasingly to influence private investors on the value of design in maintaining commercial and economic value. For them, Glasgow needs to: 'get beautiful' by building on its own, distinctive design heritage; invest in urban design and the public realm (especially in the city centre); and focus investment to create wealth and create new neighbourhoods.

The health and social welfare professionals know that most of Glasgow's human needs are the direct and indirect results of economic inequality, especially in employment and skills. However, it's not their job to fix the economy: they address needs that are immediate and pressing. For them, a better Glasgow would be one where people have greater control and choice over their lives and well-being, think more about the future and their family's (long) life and are happier with life.

The preventionists understand the links between present human need and past (and indeed continuing) economic inequality. They are on surer ground on early intervention in health and education, though the timescales to prove their theses are frustratingly long, especially in electoral terms. They would like a Glasgow where there is greater expenditure on early interventions in health, education and well-being. They prefer smaller investments in acute and hospital-based care, with more emphasis on preventative and community-based care. In education, they want both better results and a reduction in educational inequality.

The engine of well-being and of creating Glasgow as a 'Good City' is the economy. Whether Marxist or realist, "it's the economy, stupid." All too often, and perhaps subconsciously, Glaswegians view their economy as being destructive of health and wellbeing. Indeed, historically, it was – in its industrial relations, workplace injuries and in the impacts on housing during the city's hyper-industrialisation. The civilising force of Victorian, Edwardian and Liberal reform investment (in public water and sanitation, power, transport, education, recreation and culture), extended by the post-War Labour consensus, bred a belief in 'public value'. This increasing public investment, a product of the Welfare State (be it in housing, transport, health, education and other local services) was, increasingly, underwritten by the UK taxpayer and *not* the city's residents and businesses.

This uncoupling of locally-generated public income from local expenditure has had baleful political consequences, not just in Glasgow but in every other major UK city. Britain's cities have been nationalised by stealth, fostering a city politics that focuses on expenditures and is unconcerned about how they are to be paid for and financed. It has bred an uncomfortable dependence on Central and Scottish Government that does not sit easily with Glasgow's heritage and self-view as a city of enterprise and innovation. It has relegated the city's own value of its economic performance to that of a '4p in the pound' concern for local electors and politicians.

To achieve the 'Good City' in Glasgow, we need to:

- widen boundaries to encompass all who help generate and share in the city's wealth – people as well as businesses;
- raise and spend our own resources;
- decide where to invest for growth and wellbeing (e.g. community care over hospitals);
- create a better business investment environment, willing and able to co-invest in development and share in the proceeds;
- bring together economic developers and urbanists, listen and act upon the analyses of the preventionists, and release some of the wealth and employment tied up in health and social service bureaucracies to benefit innovation and entrepreneurship in the wider economy.

The Relationship between Growth and Inequality

A central issue is whether ever-widening inequality holds back competitiveness.

The *Spirit Level* analysis (Wilkerson and Pickett, 2009) would say "yes". Their analysis is conducted at the regional and national level. Does inequality work this way at the level of a city?

Whether growth requires inequality is an empirical question. The hypothesis that inequality could be retarding growth is a strong one, but understudied. We don't have a really good account of how inequality impacts on our economy. We can observe cases where relative *equality* seems to foster growth and sustainability. Finland is a good example of a country with relatively less inequality. It focuses on small businesses and entrepreneurship and is very successful.

I reject the idea that there is a simple relationship between growth and inequality. The growth machine is a metaphor. There are different growth machines, not one.

In the old days, it always seemed easier. There was clearly a problem of unemployment and inequality. We built a lot of factories and offices, created jobs and increased prosperity. People moved out of poverty. We believed that inequality would diminish in both income and physical terms. But instead, we got private affluence and public squalor. The simple relationship between economic growth and inequality – that the former would reduce the latter – just isn't working anymore.

We know that inequality is growing on many fronts, including life expectancy. What can be put in place to ameliorate this: community structures? Should we be supporting people rather than bigger institutions?

The Moon-Ghetto metaphor (Nelson, 1977) ponders why contemporary societies have had more success at getting a man on the moon than in solving the problems of the ghetto. The conundrum of growth and inequality is a question of this scale.

We are preoccupied with visible behaviours and organisations in the city and look much less to internal norms and values or to accepted 'ways of doing things'. Ken Wilber's (1997) Four Quadrants – individual, collective, exterior, interior – are useful for approaching almost any problem. We pay far more attention to the external than the internal. We don't think enough about the interior/individual level, about the resources that people need to do well.

Are the culprits structures and processes – and should we look to these for solutions? From this perspective, problems can be explained by poor partnerships or bureaucratic structures, not a fundamental trade-off between growth and equality. Or is it about norms and values, captured in Wilber's 'collective internal'? If the latter, we can change these.

What is the Good City?

The 'Good City' is about the people but the city is different for different people. It's not an end state but always a work in progress.

Balancing economic development and inequality is a moral question. Glasgow has a distinguished track record of examining these twin themes: this search is part of Glasgow's DNA. But balancing economic development and inequality is a moral issue. We should strive to find the 'Good City'.

There has been a long and distinguished enquiry into the 'Good City', the most recent being Allan Jacobs (2011) book of that title. Plato, in *The Republic*, was one of the first to write on this and it is a concept that has been explored by the International Remaking Cities Institute.

I'd like to knock the 'Good City' idea. To me, it smacks of religiosity, a throwback to the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Patrick Geddes and Ebenezer Howard and others were talking about the increased productivity of industrialisation with its companion massive inequality and failure to promote the common good.

We did have a 'Good City' vision in the eighties and nineties – the Glasgow Garden Festival and tenement cleaning, for instance. These things were visionary and we did them well. And it's worth noting that they weren't very consultative! We got on and did them. Taxi drivers were proud of them. Mums were proud. Glasgow's leaders then had the confidence of the people. We were flexible. We were able to do lots of things.

It's not about the city – it's about the people. It's not about the physical design of the city. The world of the 1940s and 1950s was much less unequal. Anyone could go to university for free, though of course only 8% of people went to university at all. But at that time, it was easier to get a good university degree. It was easier to get to where you wanted to be as a person. Society is much less mobile now. And many who do earn a degree are saying, "what am I going to do with this piece of paper?"

The goodness or the badness of the city is about the values and expectations of the people here and in the hinterland, about ourselves and our relationships with each other.

Venice's city-state leaders plundered to get power and then put a fence around the wealth locally. What would happen to Greenock and other peripheral places if we left them to look after themselves? So it comes back to values. A large bit of Glasgow's mercantile wealth was based on slavery. But then, a lot of the anti-slavery campaigners also came from here. One side says "it's all about the economy, stupid," but there are also the ethics of it.

Today, Aberdeen has economic growth and new wealth but it doesn't have happy people. Peter Ellyard, in his piece *From Cowboys to Cosmonauts* in Liz Byrski's book *The Way Ahead* (1998), lays out two views of the planet: the cowboy view that sees resources as something to exploit and make money from, and a communitarian view where it is important to strike a balance. In Helsinki, they do try to strike the balance and that is partly due to communitarian values.

Who owns the vision?

The notion of the 'Good City' is singular and refers to an end state, as if you can achieve it. The 'basket case' is also an end state. But cities can't be end states. We should consider the city as a place to intervene and change things.

Glasgow suffered a political/strategic/funding impasse for years because half the people in Scottish Enterprise thought the city was a 'basket case,' so any new spending was a waste of time, and the other half thought this was the biggest economic development opportunity ever. But it's much more complex than that. Many debates about Glasgow or within Glasgow are very black and white. We don't yet have the language to tackle this complexity.

As a business-person, I feel quite unsupported in our city. Feedback is important. We need a more human way to engage.

It's interesting that we have already started to argue about language. Some don't like the 'Good City', others don't like 'resilience'. We have made community engagement too hard, creating complex structures, methodologies and systems that make it difficult for the wider population to participate. They hear about matrices and accountability but they have no clue about what is really going on. It turns people away. They can't see what is happening or how they could control it.

The city is so complicated that it is difficult to conceptualise. We are talking in metaphors: factory gates, tsunamis, the moon-ghetto. The 'city' itself is metaphor; a shortcut, for the thousands of people who are here, living their different lives. A great metaphor can allow us to express this. But if we are lazy about the metaphor, then we are covering up the problem.

The moon-ghetto image is striking because people could clearly imagine and trust the processes of getting to the moon. But there is no clear image of how to make a better city.

It's much harder to work in a city. NASA and its equivalents had a shared common interest, themes, an organisational body and so on. An arts community is a themed community of interest. Fragile communities haven't got this. In the worst parts of Glasgow, community spirit is broken. People are lucky to get through their day, let alone plan for the future of their city. Their community networks are fragile because they are spiralling downward. They can't communicate a vision. They can't easily rebuild. An example is the Saltmarket, where a very small, embattled set of people are just trying to get through the day.

When I think about this problem - how the average citizen thinks about the City - I think of my elderly mother and how she always said to me, a person working for the government, "what are they doing to the city now?!"

Many citizens think of us – people working in the public sector – as “people who do things to us”. That's what “they” means. We don't come into contact with these people. Cities are complex and we keep people in their boxes.

Complexity is not a bad thing. Cities have always been complex but now we can appreciate them more. In the past we've been guilty of over-simplifying, looking only at a few broad trends. Now we're better at the details. We can intervene in different ways. We can use complexity to ensure that our interventions are the best they possibly can be.

Ways forward

Inequality won't be solved by the growth machine. The growth machine is vital and important but it is not going to solve the problems of inequality. Proximity to the factory gates does not mean that people get jobs. You have to address the issue of inequality directly.

Inequality is, by definition, a relationship between one thing and another. To address it, we must look at the top of income/wealth distribution as well as at the bottom. Inequality is not the same as poverty.

We don't have the confidence of the people anymore. Where did we lose that? There was excitement in the late 1980s and 1990s. We have to take responsibility as leaders and share the vision rather than consult and pass the buck. We have to re-find trust.

We have to have generalists. The broader the range we've got, the better. Glasgow has a strong tradition of breaking down disciplines.

Our language is so value-laden. Tribes, for instance. I don't belong to a tribe, or perhaps I belong to two or three. I'm a cross-breed. Are cross-breeds worse or better?

In its founding manifesto, The Glasgow School of Art, one of twenty educational institutions established in UK manufacturing centres between 1837 and 1851, commits to serving the city and the country by improving the quality of product design and providing training for industry. This idea that you can 'fix it' is different from what we grew up with.

We should fear urban entropy: if you build something and don't look after it, sooner or later it will fall down. The balance between economic development and social equality is a case in point. Cities need to be able to intervene. They need balance. How do you strike a balance? People have been at it for centuries. Whether a city is good or bad is not important: if you don't intervene, stuff gets done to you.

There are two styles of leadership: adaptive change and technical challenge. The adaptive leadership style could be the model for the ghetto, because it is an adaptive challenge. Getting to the moon was a technical challenge.

But if you go to the space museum in Houston, you'll see moon buggies, bits of tubing held together with string! The basic materials were prosaic. It was more experimental than technical.

Greater fiscal capacity at the city level would help. There is a big economic cost to inequality. Growth created the assets it did, but now taxpayers are going to pay for it. Glasgow's drive to eradicate inequality is hardwired into the city but responsibility for the cost burden has been spread across all UK taxpayers. If we had a city with more fiscal freedom and responsibility, we'd have to ask our own taxpayers to pay.

As the city became more dependent on UK taxpayers, it was less able to act independently. Our dependence on central government is not really healthy. The city must make important structural decisions that are costly, like the location and quality of hospitals.

To make Glasgow a 'Good City', our politicians should live *in the city*. I would like them to respond to the mums who are asking, "what are they doing to the city now?" A schism has grown up between politics and what people really think. We are coming up to an election – will this be part of the debate?

Consultation is the default position in the public sector but there is a failure to use it effectively as a networking agent. During a recent Architecture and Design Scotland 'Learning Towns' exercise in Garnethill, John Worthington led a delegation of urbanists into the Chinese Cultural Centre. The delegates were outside, discussing the building and its function, but he just walked into it and started talking to the people who inhabit it. He crossed the threshold and made us consider the people who make the building what it is.

Yes, crossing the threshold... for years in Glasgow we've had 'Open Doors Weekend', where we walk into buildings to find out more about them. What if we had 'Open Minds' as well? Cathy McCormack, a community activist in Easterhouse, has said "being poor is being on the wrong side of a war – without bullets." How can we understand what it's like on the other side?

This very direct engagement is the antithesis of consultation, with its flip-charts. Real collaboration is listening to and sharing ideas with people who have the power to make decisions. This is a problem with bureaucracy. We don't value individual people. We should redefine the meaning of participation, prioritising networking and integration across boundaries.

We've been all about validation. But there is no validation, really, by individuals on housing estates. No-one really asks them, 'what do you think?'

We can't go back to the leadership style of the 1970s and 1980s. Consultation needs to be rethought. Now, when you speak to people in communities, half of the information you might tell them they can get from the Internet and Wikipedia. And Glasgow is much more multi-cultural but that diversity is hidden and is not coming through. We need constructive engagement across groups.

Glasgow leaders should target individual needs more. The Curriculum for Excellence is beginning to do this. Education does fundamentally alter your life chances. Lack of employment is so important but our education system is not good enough and it is getting worse. So there is flight to the suburbs.

We like to think of ourselves as a city-state: we should look at the wider city and at progressive local income tax. That's how we raise the public finance to invest in the resources to combat inequality.

We also have to figure out what sort of leadership we need. Adam Kahane, author of 'Power and Love: A Theory and Practice of Social Change', who has much experience of peace negotiations, including in Israel and Africa, spoke in a seminar recently for the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, about power and love, power over love and power to love (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8Scjqk25yo>) about how to reach out and enable others to do things. That's the kind of leadership we are empowered to do without abusing our power. What is the role of mutual leadership? What would an 'Open Minds Day' look like?

Reflections by Glasgow Conversations Members

The Glasgow Conversations series has been a rare opportunity for cross-disciplinary meeting. We haven't always agreed with one another – perhaps we haven't even often agreed – but the space between our perspectives has been made visible to us. And in that unclaimed territory between what I think and what you think, we have had room to engage in genuine speculation.

This is a strength of 'conversation' as a methodology. By mostly listening, and by speaking sometimes, we can extend the boundaries of our single-point perspective to take in the viewpoints of others. Conversation allows for this third space, often non-vocalised, which belongs neither to one participant nor another, but which is the territory of the conversation itself. As the talk moves, our personal moorings may be lost as the landscape shifts to unfamiliar topologies. But still we can navigate, through the shared experience of talking and, more often, listening.

This isn't just some idle pleasure in which we engage, navigating and verbally travelling new territories out of curiosity. What we are doing by talking about our city is essentially human – because it is essentially social and essentially important. Cities are so complex and ever-changing that no single perspective could possibly hope to encompass all (or even most) of their facets. Cities are the geographical points at which vast numbers of individual people choose to live in close proximity. This proximity and the interdependence of individuals that it necessitates is associated with a particular set of problems, which can cause tragedy, pain, heartbreak, and inhumanity. I have a responsibility – as does, I believe, everyone – to try to understand the specifics of this context in which we live. And by understanding it a little more, I have a responsibility to try and make it a little better.

Conversation, I believe, can begin to engender a greater understanding. As we move away from our own voice in order to listen to the voices of others, we can learn.

Two features of the Conversations really surprised me. Firstly, people brought a remarkable balance of ideas, evidence and values to the discussions. If we got into a detailed debate about particular facts or theories, someone would bring us back to values: why we care about the issue in the first place. If we explored a problem from a normative point of view, such as why health inequality is unacceptable, someone would ask how bad is it in fact and why is it this way? Everyone seemed comfortable with, or at least respectful of, these dimensions. Secondly, participants expressed, very seriously, interest in what works – ready to criticise what hasn't and curious about what we know from other places. People are really committed to making Glasgow a better place and not just saying it is so, or marketing its strengths, but facing its problems and dysfunctions. I found this so refreshing.

The Glasgow Conversations proved to be a very stimulating and enriching experience. The range of participants, the neutral space and the very open facilitation of the sessions led to a very high level of discussion on a range of key subjects of importance to the city. Glasgow is currently undertaking a period of review of its future strategies and vision. Many of the participants of the conversations are involved in that. The insights and varied perspectives provided by the conversation process can only benefit the development of the future approaches of the city. On a personal basis this was a very stimulating intellectual experience but it was also one that was grounded in practice.

What I learned:

- There's less common ground between partners than at first sight;
- The built environmentalists (urbanists) are developing their own agenda, in some ways separately from other partners;
- There's a conservatism about some of the principles around which we work – it's as though what was relevant thirty years ago still applies.

What I thought about the process:

- It was kept at quite a high level – higher than a broadsheet newspaper feature, and didn't make concessions to oversimplify;
- It pushed one or two people into saying something quite revealing about their attitudes and approaches;
- It relied on people having a memory of other events in the series so as not to view the conversations in isolation.

What might be done with the results:

- Disseminate the process as it shows you can successfully run these conversations at a high level of discussion;
- Revisit the themes every year to reflect on what has and what has not changed;
- Embed it into some kind of work in practice.

There's a need to take things back to first principles and to ask why we do things in a certain way, and whether we need to change, without being told to do it, or there being an explicit reason to do so, for example a change in government, a cut in funding, etc. A top policy advisor to the new Blair government in 1997 asked one of the permanent Cabinet Secretaries to provide him with a review of employability programmes over the last thirty to forty years. "Oh no," was the reply. "We can't possibly do that. We've never been asked to do so in the past and, besides, we wouldn't know where to start." The policy advisor was astonished: he had this idea of the Civil Service as a form of collective memory about applied government policy, whereas the reality was that the Civil Service saw its role as implementing current policy and nothing else.

Looking back over the meetings, my main impression is of how refreshing they were. A group of people, new ones joining, others having to skip a few, but coming together to look and re-look at what should be familiar territory – the place where we live and work. Being one of the few who managed to attend them all, I saw a fascinating picture emerge. The benefit was not so much the new information that I learned, but the growing sense of interconnectedness that emerged by seeing Glasgow from a series of different viewpoints. It was like seeing a three dimensional picture slowly emerge by shining light on the city from a series of different directions. Not just three dimensional, but in four dimensions – time, how things are changing and affecting each other. And this in a sense of comradeship.

I was fortunate to be involved in the Glasgow Conversations from the outset when Ann proposed the idea (in one of her earliest meetings with Glasgow Urban Lab participants). Ann's sense of purpose - her positive, non-sentimental and forensic style of enquiry - impressed me right away. And I was intrigued by her exposition of the process based on her experiences with similar exercises in the USA and by the integrity and mechanism of the process. It sounded like fun.

I realised that the process could work well in Glasgow given the open-mindedness of most professionals and practitioners in this city. Ann's commitment, enthusiasm, expertise and intellect were not in doubt but it remained for us to identify, invite and encourage a knowledgeable, representative and diverse group of people who would embrace the spirit of the process.

In the event, Ann's leadership, David's support and Julia's disciplined reporting ensured the process was well-managed from the outset. It seemed to me that subjects for discussion fell into place in quite a straightforward manner – identity, distinctiveness, health, economy, major events and so on. These suggested themselves easily to Glasgow veterans and novices alike and Ann was quick to knock them into shape. No-one really felt able to say 'no' to a summons to present or moderate.

For my own part, I thoroughly enjoyed the sessions although sadly pressure of work kept me out of town for some. The group seemed comfortable with its own company – enough people know enough people for an informal and candid atmosphere to prevail and I think that the opportunity for mature reflection amongst the group was quite therapeutic.

This document represents a thorough and insightful reflection on the city and I will promote its dissemination far and wide!

For me the conversations were excellent because

1. they had a breadth of background from contributors - arts, science, economics, culture, etc.
2. there was a mix of deeper, internal (Glasgow) knowledge and external awareness and comparison but perhaps not enough external awareness at times - i.e. a risk of complacency for city and citizens.
3. there was a mix of inductive, intuitive response and thoughtful narrative with more analytic, empirical examination. There possibly could have been more of the latter but this could have made the conversations a little dry, perhaps?
4. there was a willingness to contribute by participants - reflect and evolve ideas - and I think this could be taken even further if we were to have more conversations, i.e. try to evolve more advanced positions from even deeper debate around two or three core points.

The weaknesses lay perhaps in the randomness and unstructured shape – but that was also a strength or part of the fun. That meant some ideas went unchallenged or did not have critical review. This may be unfair, as it was not a debate, but it meant some propositions could be weak. However it enabled comfortable involvement, as opposed to competitive debate.

The danger lies in treating these conversations as in any way authoritatively empirical or directional, as I fear some may have wanted to. They were largely anecdotal, albeit from a position of knowledge. If there were a different 20 people involved, I suspect the issues, themes and 'answers' could have looked quite different.

... so it was more art than science, but fun, engaging and illuminating because of the conversational approach.

One thing the conversations taught me is the power of knowledge that exists in the people here, and the power of knowledge that comes out with some provoking from outsiders. A good place to be, a good place to learn. I also learned that I have a lot to learn and I saw people who carry this idea of learning through their lives. It was really inspiring to see that hunger and respect for learning from each other.

It was good to be part of the Conversations – a really enjoyable experience and I'm pleased I managed to attend most of them. I will of course remember them for their content but, I think, two things stand out for me. First, the range and the variety of venues (we had a different location for each of our Conversations) brought something of a surprise package to the informality of the experience and, I think, helped invigorate the discussion. The top venue for me was the top floor of a gallery, The Common Guild, overlooking Glasgow's skyline, where we discussed 'culture'. This venue gave the Conversation, aided only by a few uplighters, a genuine transcendental quality. Good stuff!

Second, the mix of people who came to the Conversations. We talk a lot these days about people and professions continuing to think and work only in silos – and it's easy to understand why that continues. The security, safety and comfort of our own silo is difficult to resist: the silo as comfort-zone. But, I suspect, the really intransigent problems of Glasgow can only be addressed successfully in a multi-dimensional way; the way we tried to address them in the Conversations – and there are too few opportunities to do it. Perhaps we secretly think it a bit of a lightweight approach (not sufficiently rigorous) and that would indeed be a mistake. These Conversations were testament to that.

It is somehow emblematic that it took a visitor, an outsider, to bring together such a multidisciplinary and diverse group. The process felt very open and encouraged a generosity amongst the participants to listen and absorb the ideas of others, without being afraid of challenging opinion. Why has this not happened before? Is this kind of dialogue not what the city's world-leading educational institutions are there to stimulate: to take their debates into the public realm, in a practical engagement with practitioners?

There was much more than has been usual of a sense of each discipline being given respectful weight. Often the economic is thought of as being more important than the social or the cultural as a lens through which to view the city. Even in Glasgow, where the role of culture and creativity are at least acknowledged as being important for the city's rebirth, they are often discussed purely in instrumental terms and not as a central part of the solution to the city's challenges. This felt different, as if legitimised by our visitor's endorsement.

People were drawn out of their sectoral comfort zones and routines of thought and encouraged to examine different layers of urban experience. With so many people active in a daily pursuit of trying to enhance the city in different ways, it felt like there was some form of mandate to the discussion made more resonant by having different voices join and fall silent as the dialogues ran their course. Perhaps a little sporadic, the conversation needs to continue if it is to engender a cohesive train of thought – but keeping that mix and flow in and out of ideas, viewpoints and participants would be vital. Oh, and it was intellectually stimulating and a lot of fun.

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Presenters, Participants and Venues

Session Presenters

Ann Markusen	What Makes Glasgow a Distinctive City?
Carol Tannahill	How Can We Improve Glasgow's Health?
Stuart Gulliver	Glasgow's Economy in 2031
Andrew Dixon	Arts, Culture and Glasgow's Future
Gerry Gormal	Glasgow's 2014 Commonwealth Games Legacy
Kevin Kane and Carol Tannahill	Growth and Inequality

Glasgow Conversation Participants

Karen Anderson	Mark O'Neill
James Arnott	Stuart Patrick
Ruth Barker	Alan Pert
Katrina Brown	David Porter
David Cook	Julia Radcliffe
Liz Davidson	Seona Reid
Brian Evans	Rachel Smillie
Gerry Grams	Carol Tannahill
Stuart Gulliver	Lesley Thomson
Steve Inch	Ruth Wishart
Kevin Kane	Alf Young
Gordon Kennedy	Stephanie Young
Janice Kirkpatrick	
Diarmaid Lawlor	
Eleanor McAllister	
Ann Markusen	
Kevin Murray	

Glasgow Conversations Venues

The Briggait

The Lighthouse

Glasgow Chamber of Commerce

The Common Guild

Trongate 103

The Glasgow School of Art