

# For a Resilient City

Insights from a Civic Conversation in Glasgow

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***civic***: *adj., of or pertaining to a city.*

***conversation***: *noun, the speaking of two or more persons alternately with each other.*

***civic conversation***: *a process by which diverse groups in a city work together to identify its aspirations, discuss its possibilities and realise its potential!*

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## Why have a Civic Conversation?

The motivation for this report stems from the situation Glasgow currently finds itself in. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw consistent and repeated attempts to harness learning and progress for the good of the City and its citizens, yet we find ourselves today in a situation of stubborn and persistent health inequalities.

Not only are we failing to make sufficient progress in tackling the City's ingrained health problems, other similar regions are pulling ahead of us in tackling theirs. Further, a changed set of circumstances is producing a new set of challenges for which the established ways of tackling population health issues do not appear appropriate. Just as we get to grips with the acute causes of illness and death and the complex interplay of factors which support or undermine health, a new and more pronounced pattern of chronic ill health is emerging. Elements of this new patterning are that over half of Scotland's citizens are overweight, longer life expectancy has not been accompanied by an increase in healthy lifespan and increasing expenditure on healthcare has not yielded significant improvements in population health. Despite fifty years of rising GDP (gross domestic product) we seem no more fulfilled or content as citizens than we were during the decade following the end of the Second World War. Indeed the figures for male suicides, that indicate the tip of an iceberg for population level mental health, have also risen over the same timeframe<sup>1</sup>. Inequalities in health seem impervious to our repeated efforts to eradicate them.

What we know how to do does not seem to work for our current predicament; a growth in diseases of affluence, the burdens of which weigh disproportionately greater on those with less. Yet, this changing context presents us with an opportunity to look afresh at our health challenges and how we approach population health. What might these changing circumstances make possible? How do we develop a public health approach which can more comfortably serve the mobile, rapidly changing, uncertain and 'liquid' world in which we find ourselves? To explore the potential for this, we began a Civic Conversation for Glasgow.

Such a task should not however be of interest only to those involved in public health. In November 2004, the philosopher Anthony Grayling presented the opening lecture of the Glasgow Centre for Population Health's Seminar Series. He introduced the idea of a civic conversation through the concept of the 'polis'; a more or less integrated, self-aware community of people identifiable at least in part by its shared ethos and values. The public health challenge for the times we live in is to make the promotion of health integral to the ethos of our city. This not only calls for multiple perspectives to contribute, but also for a recognition that all have a role in maintaining an ethos in which health for all can flourish.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures for obesity and male suicide from *Let Glasgow Flourish* (2006) Hanlon, Walsh and Whyte. Fig 7.21, page 204 and Fig 11.24, page 299

Following from this, the questions we posed for the Civic Conversation were:

- What is our current ethos and where does health fit within it?
- If we have health as part of the ethos of the City, then what policies and actions ought we develop to make this apparent and explicit?
- What might a new, future orientated public health look like and what would be its guiding principles?
- What set of values would create coherence between public health and other spheres of endeavour and progress, such as the economy and culture?

The Civic Conversation explores both the aspirations and the possibilities of living, and what is worth doing, to ensure that both Glasgow and Glaswegians flourish. The basic premise underlying this process is that the way a community talks to itself, how it forms its values, beliefs and policies ultimately influences how it behaves. It offers those with a stake in the future of the City an additional way to meet and discuss issues of strategic importance and how these might be effectively addressed. Some of these are based upon existing knowledge and concerns; others emerge through the conversation as it develops.

The process by which we conducted the Civic Conversation is documented in the Appendix of this report. For purposes of reading on now, you may only need to know that we facilitated a number of discussions and engagements with different aspects of Glasgow's 'polis' to explore the nature and scope of the values and ethos within the City. This took place via three set piece events over 2006-7 and via more focussed discussion and engagement with groups less likely to feel comfortable at a set piece event (such as young people)<sup>2</sup>. What follows, represents our synthesis of the information that came from this engagement followed by our understanding of what this tells us about how the ethos of the City can be shaped to be resilient in face of the health challenges that are presented to us now and in the future.

### **Three Horizons**

As we suggested above, we are currently living through a period of unusual change, of the kind that only comes along every few hundred years. In the space of a relatively few years the ideas which guide our efforts, the actions in which we are engaged, our view of the world, of health and wellbeing and all that goes with it can change beyond recognition. And yet in such times it is still necessary to take effective action. This need is compounded as the pace of change, complexity and uncertainty increases.

For these reasons the International Futures Forum (IFF), has developed a method which encompasses *three horizons*, each representing a different orientation towards action. We have utilised this method in analysing and reporting the information we collected for this report.

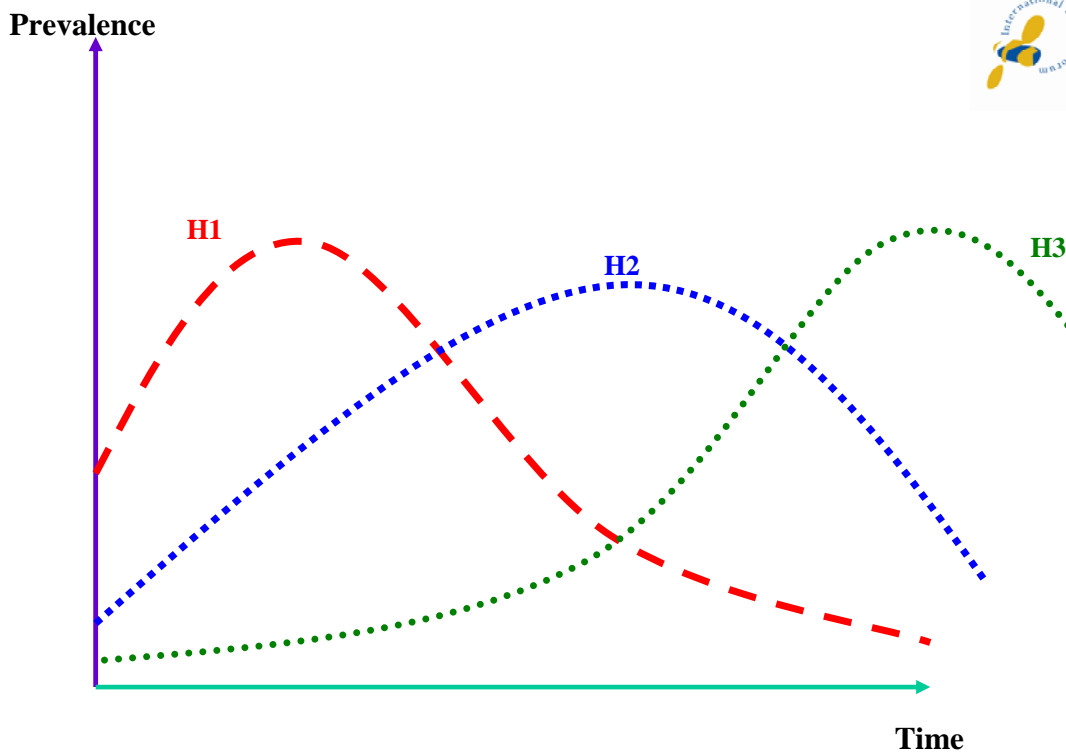
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<sup>2</sup> For further information on the methodology of the Civic Conversation see Appendix 1

The method developed by the IFF charts prevalence of ‘approaches’ against ‘time’. The first horizon (H1), is the space in which we keep extant systems and ways of doing things ticking over. In this horizon, we address today’s issues with today’s best ideas and practice with a focus on efficiency and value for money. Identifying, understanding, disseminating and improving current approaches are examples of such work.

Meanwhile, in the second horizon (H2), our current way of addressing challenges begins to feel less effective and no longer fit for purpose, often due to the persistence of certain problems. New ideas and approaches begin to emerge, which hold the promise of more effective action. In this horizon, research and development functions help to realise the full power of new understanding for policy and action and have a key role to play alongside transitional actions which begin to move us from existing to new frameworks. The impetus for action in the second horizon is often the inadequacy of horizon one ways of doing things and that ideas themselves have flowed from activity and thought on the third horizon.

Diagram 1: The Three Horizons



In the third horizon perspective (H3) we focus on the consequences our actions have in the longer term. It is from this horizon, based on fundamentally different premises, that radical innovation and change can come. Often the activities taking place from this horizon, and the modes of thought underpinning them, appear ‘flaky’ and not relevant to our current concerns. They are often the behaviours of those on the margins and outside of the

mainstream. We need to keep this horizon in mind however, as here is more about the exploration of predicament, the nature of our challenge, new thinking, fresh ideas and different perspectives which keep possibilities for the future open.

Each of these horizons are concurrently present and relevant. Keeping all three in view enables thinking to be useful for the actions required to be taken today (H1), while placing this in a larger framework which suggests today's approaches for stubborn problems (H2), and also makes space for emergent thinking and action (H3), the absence of which may fatally limit our options for effective action in future. Operating in each horizon we need different mindsets and use different skills and perspectives.

This is an important point to note since it helps us to understand the different emphasis which each perspective brings and how each views the other. The H2 perspective for example can often see the first horizon view as a drag on progress but may see the third horizon view as inspirational. Likewise the first horizon view might see the second horizon as idealistic and the third horizon as completely irrelevant. A viable system needs all three perspectives.

### **The components of the whole: concerns, aspirations and actions**

From the information we gathered in the Civic Conversation process we were able to identify three qualitatively different forms of statement made by participants; **concerns**, **aspirations**, and **actions** which represent different points in our perspectives and understandings of how things work in the real world.

#### *Concerns*

These were the issues that people brought with them into the Civic Conversation process – their 'starting positions'. These were sometimes current worries for Glasgow and often from professional perspectives but also often personal and grounded in individual experiences.

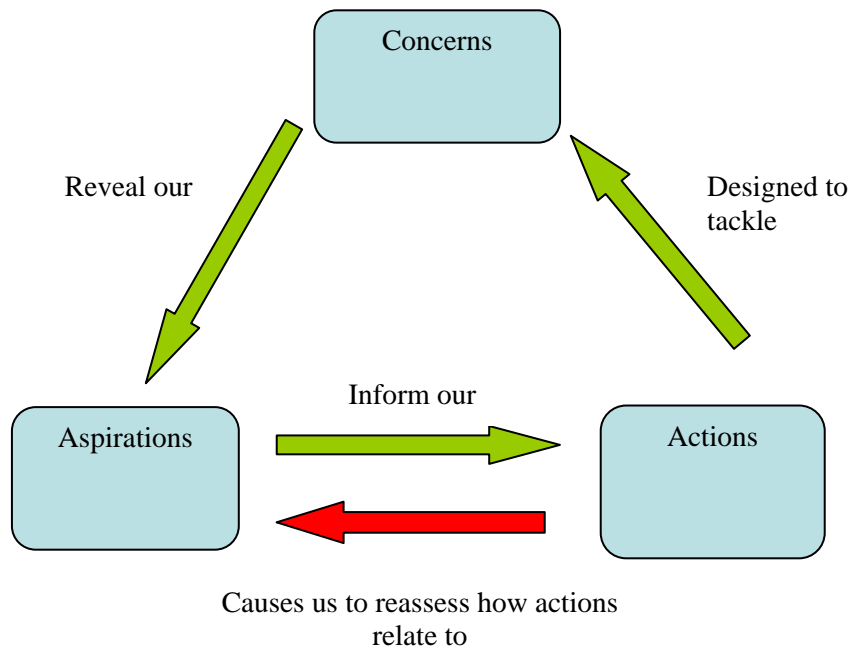
#### *Aspirations*

Aspirations reveal the kind of city people hope to see. In some instances, during our Conversation they could be read-off from the concerns people had – a concern being a barrier to an aspiration. In other instances they could be spoken of more as dream or hope, requiring a necessary change of direction. This was at its most compelling when it was recognised that our actions no longer related to the achievement of aspirations but had mutated along the way to become dissociated from the original intention of the action. It was in these that creative futures began to emerge as people thought about transformative actions needed to re-attune systems to original intentions.

#### *Actions*

Throughout, participants also referred to actions. These could be actions that currently occupied public and private sector workers in the city or actions, it was felt, still needed to be taken if aspirations were to be achieved.

Diagram 2: Concerns, Aspirations and Actions



In our synthesis we made the distinction between *extant* and *emergent* concerns, aspirations and actions. Extant versions refer to current and predominant stories about the city and often come from those who already have an influential voice and who are part of the policy process underway to achieve them. Emergent concerns on the other hand refer to the components that are not so centrally part of this story of the city because they come from groups who have little voice or are not part of the mainstream narrative.

As one might expect of emergent concerns, these ideas are often muted and not capable of being fully expressed. Indeed, the language often needed to express them has not fully developed where as the language of extant concerns had more respectability. While they are barely on the radar, emergent components are important as they may contain the kernel of future resilience as new challenges also emerge. In short, these may represent a wealth of third horizon thinking.

Focussing on concerns can lead to discussion about the potential threats to the city's wellbeing in the future. From here we can discuss both how our actions might need to change, but also more challengingly, whether our aspirations and actions still match up.

## **Concerns**

In synthesising the data in the sections that follow we do not generally accredit the sources of ideas and statements as they are a product of the conversation as much as the property of individual speakers. Occasionally we refer to particular groups within the conversation in



general terms – when we feel this group was key in getting a particular issue into the airspace of the conversation and that its origins are vital to understanding it.

Additionally we have steered away from using verbatim quotes or displaying artefacts produced in the Civic Conversation in this report. This is on account of this report being intended as our analytical overview of what happened and also of the sheer size, variety and amount of data generated. We believe that the categories into which we have grouped data still retain enough credibility, familiarity and surprise to demonstrate fidelity to the original data in which they are grounded, without resort to lengthy display. Also produced was a visual resource, called ‘Equal Exposure’<sup>3</sup> and a short film titled Miniature Glasgow<sup>4</sup>.

We have strived to stay faithful to the original conversations. When the substantive themes were distilled from the data, we did not ask whether we agreed with what was being said but used the themes as a means of unearthing aspirations for the City. We hope that readers will therefore not be put off by encountering views that they may not personally hold or that they feel are untrue, but that they will rather reflect with us on what the issues and views reveal about the current state of aspiration in the City, its ethos and values and explore ways forward.

Figure 1: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Concerns for Glasgow

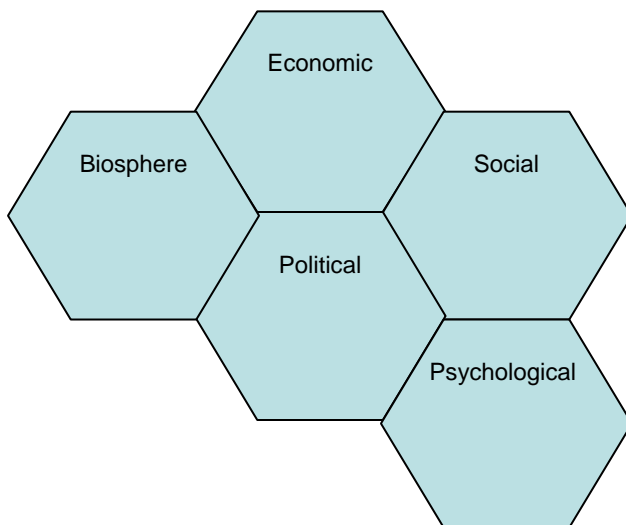


Figure 1 shows how we categorised the realms of *extant* concern that the conversations produced. They show five realms of influence and reality that can be focussed on at one time. These represent our portals into deeper exploration of the terrain of the conversation whilst recognising the integrity of the whole.

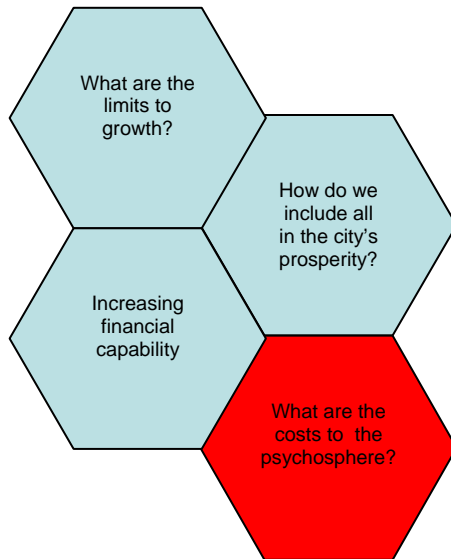
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<sup>3</sup> A copy of this document is available from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health

<sup>4</sup> [www.miniatureglasgow.com](http://www.miniatureglasgow.com)

## Economic concerns

Figure 2: Concerns relating to the economic realms



We start with the economic realm of concern. This was an *extant* concern among participants and loomed large, particularly in the early stages of the process.

The economic concerns could be unpacked into the following elements:

- How to link with those currently excluded from the city's economic development and its current prosperity? This referred to the persistent problem of worklessness and underemployment in Glasgow.
- How to avoid limits and threats to economic growth? This came from a fear that we had all our eggs in too few baskets and that the decline of heavy manufacturing in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century provided a lesson we were failing to heed about the fluid nature of the global division of labour and our reliance on favourable economic winds.<sup>5</sup>
- How to increase the financial capacity and capability of those on the margins to avoid debt? There was concern about the problem of debt in the City and that individuals did not have the capability to operate in a sustainable manner in an economy in which there was an abundance of consumer credit.<sup>6</sup>
- What are the costs of the economy for the 'psychosphere'?<sup>7</sup> A concern here was that the economy encourages ways of relating to ourselves, others and society that was pathological.

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<sup>5</sup> In relation to these, the financial crisis of 2008 shows how quickly change can be upon us

<sup>6</sup> Ditto!

<sup>7</sup> The 'psychosphere' was a working term we used to describe the psychological environment in the City that provides the given ways of relating to each other, in understanding ourselves and framing our aspirations. If the biosphere and physical and service infrastructure of the city are considered hardware, the psychosphere is the collective software we run to create the lived city. It resides in the internal realm of mind but is made external in shaping how we interact with one another. Through our beliefs and ways of relating we recreate the psychosphere by giving it legitimacy and currency, but it is rarely of our own sole creation. The component parts of the psychosphere are explored in the relational realms discussed subsequently; the psychological, social and political.

These concerns represent *extant* stories about Glasgow, currently within the economic realm. The predominant view of the City was as an engine of economic growth that creates the jobs, opportunity and the wealth to enable redistributive policies. These represent first horizon issues (keeping the economy going) with a significant degree of second horizon innovation (how to keep it going in the face of potential threats and how to include more people).

However, an emergent component in the third horizon also came from discussion of the economy; the cost of these first and second horizon approaches on the 'psychosphere' of the City and how we engage with one another. Concerns about the effects of an economic frame of reference on the psychosphere and our interactions with one another emerged throughout the discussion and appeared in the psychological, social and political realms. As an *emergent* concern it is indicated by a red hexagon.

### Psychological concerns

Figure 3: Concerns relating to the psychological realm of the city

*Extant*, first or second horizon concerns and understandings are shown as blue hexagons and emergent concerns as red.



We also identified a clutch of expressed concerns as belonging to a psychological realm of city experience. Again, some of these were expressed in terms of extant concerns in Glasgow, of developing *confidence* in its citizens, of the need to promote *happiness* and dealing with *mental health*. These conversations could only be taken so far, however, when

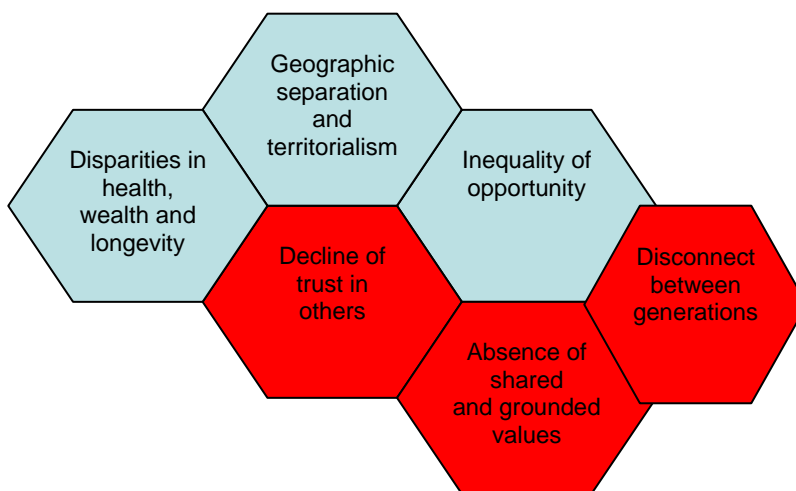
using such extant terminology, meaning is often taken for granted and concepts regarded as self-evident (where people have stopped contesting meaning). Subsequently, conversation about action is often foreclosed, partly because actions are already underway and partly because they have relocated into the realm of experts. By contrast, the more emergent concerns allowed new ways to explore these concepts and freed up the conversations to allow non-experts an entry point. These emergent concerns were as follows:

- Anxiety linked to the social premium put on achievement in areas of material consumption, academic and career success
- How to make personal responsibility and autonomy an option for all in the city
- Despite our collective and individual material betterment, we feel no closer to finding happiness
- Consumerism and overly economic ways of seeing the world are obstructing the achievement of fulfilment and wellbeing for many individuals
- Technology and pace of change have been given the power to stress and exclude as well as liberate.

The distinctive voice of these emergent concerns lay in how they related to the subjective experience of the economy rather than an objective conception of it. These concerns tell us about how it feels to live in a city where the economy, as presently conceived, has primacy. The emergence of such concerns invigorated the Civic Conversation in identifying problems that existing ways of working did not appear to have the capacity to solve. Indeed existing ways of working often aggravated and maintained the problem.

## Social concerns

Figure 4: Concerns pertaining to the social realm



Many concerns revealed a social dimension and were categorised as belonging to the social realm. These were:

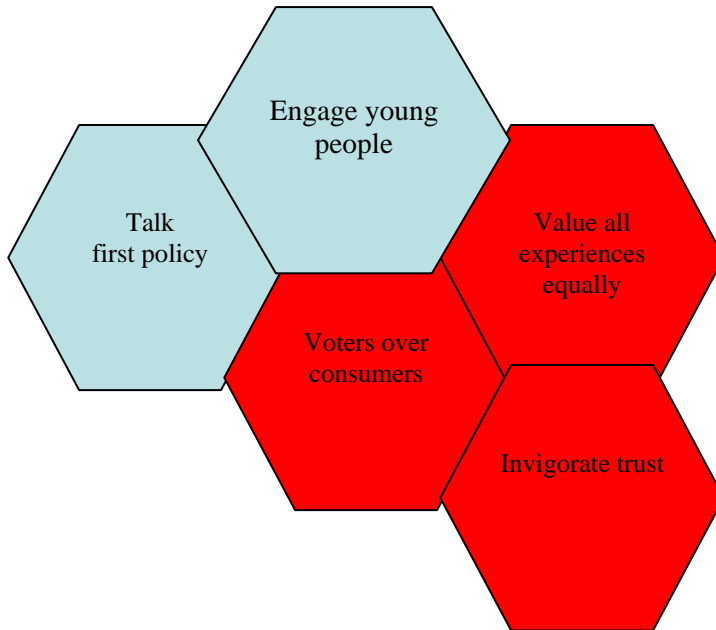
- The need to heal the 'divided city' – that Glasgow is a city characterised by socio-economic and geographic separation
- That we currently undervalue the experiences of elders and young people with an accompanying loss of connection across generations
- The nature of our relationships with others is increasingly shaped by materialism
- The manner by which we provide help for others is increasingly shaped by the priority given to economic growth (e.g. employability), evidence and cost effectiveness
- Profit has become more important than quality of people's lives
- There is an absence of compassion in our collective value base
- There has been an erosion of interpersonal trust
- There is a perceived deficit in parenting, especially in disadvantaged communities that needs to be addressed.

Concerns categorised in the social realm are closely related to the concerns found in the psychological. Similar issues can have particular corresponding features depending on the focus of the speaker at the time, whether they are focussed on the inner world of individuals (psychological) or the 'inter' world of relationships (social). The common thread linking many of the concerns raised in the psychological and social realms led us to use the term 'relatedness' to describe key elements of both areas in the data.

As with the economy, a distinction was evident between the 'social' as objectively understood and the 'social' as subjectively experienced. This difference also etched on to the distinction between extant and emergent (extant- objective, emergent- subjective). Objective concerns were voiced in the conversation through rehearsing evidence that pointed to gaps in wealth, health and educational achievement (the 'divided city'). The subjective components allowed exploration of some of the consequences of the 'divided city' but also potentially nascent understandings of why some of these problems persist, grounded in the experience and perceptions of the participants through references to trust, compassion and the increasingly materialist feel of how we relate to each other as citizens.

## Political concerns

Figure 5: Concerns in the political realm

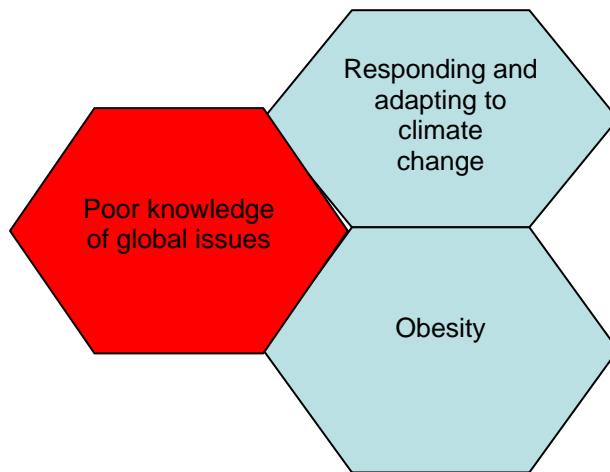


A surprising element of the Civic Conversation was the absence of concerns grounded in traditional party politics or even the balance of power and influence between Westminster, Holyrood or the City Chambers. Instead, that which we have termed 'political' here relates more properly to political *participation* and raised concerns about the current disenchantment felt with political structures and the available means of shaping them. Many of the concerns have the feel of being participation analogues of concerns raised in the other realms, of marginalisation, atomisation, anomie and the social and interpersonal consequences of *extant* ways of perceiving and dealing with problems. Entering this portal we found the component issues:

- The need to better engage with young people
- The need to make better use of the experiences and wisdom of elders
- That certain experiences are undervalued (e.g. the young, economically inactive)
- How to invigorate trust and participation for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century context?
- How currently the role of consumer, or home-owner carries more participative potential than that of a voter
- How to bring meaningful engagement to the start of strategy and policy development- a 'communicate and talk first' approach.

## Concerns related to the biosphere

Figure 6: Concerns relating to the biosphere



The final category is a range of concerns which we are naming 'biosphere'. This refers to those concerns that locate individuals as part of the global ecosystem. This was also the space in which we could locate the only identifiable physical health concern that emerged – obesity – as its origins lie significantly in an obesogenic environment (although some might wish to locate it in the psychological realm). By and large, however, when individuals focussed on aspects that could relate to the biosphere it related to the challenge of climate-change and carbon dependency:

- Obesity
- Climate change
- Need to develop strategy/ buy-in to tackle climate change
- Lack of knowledge of global issues, particularly young people.

An emergent concern was how little we know about others in our biosphere, particularly beyond our national borders.

In organising the concerns in this way, we are able to discuss how underlying forces play out in different contexts. The realms are spaces in which an emergent problem was thought to surface. They therefore often originate in a negative frame of reference. However, we can use these concerns as the basis for a more constructive dialogue about the key values in use in the city and which areas of civic life are falling short of aspirations. From this base, we can begin an investigation of values, aspirations and associated actions that will shape our relationship with the future.

Finally in this section, it is worth noting the absence of health as a category of concern. That it does not emerge as a category on its own reflects the understanding that health is created or damaged in everyday life. This is not a new insight, but it does emphasise that it is the ethos, values, associated policies and actions that create the experience of life in the

city that generates health. This reframes health not only as a consequence of wide ranging conditions in the city but crucially as a consequence of developing an ethos that is congruent with the aspirations of those who live in the city, and their understandings of what makes a good life.

## ***Aspirations***

### **Where do we want to be in the future?**

Aspirations take us from the concerns of the present to a set of possibilities for the future. We often identified aspirations for the future by reading them off from accounts of what participants thought we *should* be doing now. Following this, the model we produced earlier, of the city's component realms, begins to appear even more interconnected and less compartmentalised. We see the emergence of holism in the wishes of participants, their aspirations often joined across categories and suggestive of an underlying ethos.

We recognise a desire for holism in the often heard pleas for professionals to cease 'thinking in silos' (often voiced by the professionals themselves). The possibility of an emergent, underlying and unifying ethos for Glasgow lies within this. It was therefore heartening that aspirations themselves were not easily contained within particular realms or silos, but would join across concerns and challenge us in our initial separation of realms.

### **Aspirations: the economic sphere**

Take, for example, aspirations we originally specified as relating to the economy:

- Develop resilience for unanticipated economic events
- Grow a greater number of employment clusters
- Maintain space for families and relationships
- Integrate all into a participative/economic city
- Achieve financial capability for all
- Find a better balance between work and life
- To consume not for consumption's sake - what we need rather than desire.

Clearly some of these aspirations refer directly to *extant* concerns within the current conception of the economy particularly, it appears, from the need to develop resilience for unanticipated (but historically inevitable) economic shocks. Approaches may include, but not be limited to, such actions as improving the number of employment clusters in the city and achieving financial capability for all. However, others in the list above, although suggesting aspirations for activity in the economic sphere, reveal the interconnectedness of parts and begin to bring to the fore the holistic manner in which people understand the city and their life within it.



Take, for example, “integrate all into participative/economic city” – this phrase refers to a collection of aspirations across the Civic Conversation and here has been distilled into a core message. It is not a concern that pertains only to the economic realm or silo and its ramifications for productivity in the city are already an *extant* concern. The introduction of the participative element displays it also has a social justice ramification. Such connections are also a concern in current policy, but, participants felt that current actions did not fully address the scale and nature of the interconnections and had become attenuated by many years of economically driven policy.

Within the Civic Conversation, interconnectedness was evident across the social, psychological and political realms. For this reason we collapsed the psychological, social and political city realms into the realm of ‘relatedness’: the three realms indicating different takes on a unifying category of ‘how we relate to one another’; the *inner* experience of it (psychological), the *inter* of relationships (social); and the ability to *enter* this process on terms of reference we have a say over (political participation). It needs to be emphasised here that this perspective applies to policies, institutions and infrastructure as much as individuals.

## **Relatedness**

Aspirations that fell into this realm of relatedness also included:

- Develop compassion as a guiding principle
- Recognise multiple forms of knowledge and success
- Return trust to communities and how we interact with one another
- Better engage with young people
- Maintain space for families and relationships.

Evident in the aspirations is the idea that many seek a change in the manner by which we relate to one another in the city. In terms of the relationship between policy planners and their end users, this is expressed as *developing compassion as a guiding principle for policy development*. As an aspiration this is particularly challenging to our current ways of working in the city, suggesting that, perhaps contrary to the beliefs of many in the city whose professional life is spent developing policy, compassion is absent from this endeavour. The question may be put less challengingly, why does it currently appear that compassion is not at the heart of policy development?

We may also wish to ask why it does not appear at the heart of our relationships to ourselves and with others. Reflections from the conversation suggest that it is a consequence of the preponderance of using abstractions as measures of success (both in social policy and our personal and interpersonal lives). These abstractions (e.g. an over reliance on numbers, reduction of complex issues to single measures) tend to become guides for the city in the policy realm, but are somewhat disconnected from the lived experiences for which they are intended as a short-hand. The aspiration to ‘*recognise*

*multiple forms of knowledge*' is a possible antidote to this and emerged from the concern that only a limited range of knowledge was seen as valid and of use.

One group expressing this view were the elderly volunteers who felt that the current narrow focus of education (relating to either academic success or employment) pushed the older generation out of a useful role they might otherwise have, in passing, on learning and knowledge. The theme of 'recognising different forms of knowledge' emerged from their concern that success (the reward for knowledge that 'counts') was limited to academic achievement, personal wealth or, a more recent development, celebrity ('celebrity' being discussed by the group as the 'thinnest form of respect'). This shallowness, seen as a pervasive feature of contemporary culture, was believed to disconnect people from what is important in personal growth, (inter) relationships and the building blocks of community. As abstractions of personal development, educational qualifications, wealth and fame come to dominate our personal measurements of our own and others' success. The inner qualities needed for flourishing and resilience are left out.

A key inner quality that the older group felt was absent in the current situation was that of deferred gratification. It is all but absent from the 'buy now, pay later' consumerism of the economy and from the trend for celebrity where best-selling biographies can be written by people in their twenties. This (they felt) sent a message to young people that hard work and determination can be replaced by luck and by being in the right place at the right time. They suggested that this was the only strategy left for those who could not achieve by the narrow academic criteria measured in schools.

It is also worth noting that our work prior to the Civic Conversation with young people in two schools in Glasgow led to the emergence of similar conclusions by pupils.

The absence of trust is revealed in current concerns around social capital. In a more real world context it shows up in concerns about anti-social behaviour and how we deal with strangers and unknown situations, where risk aversion tends to trump all. An emergent version of this concern in the Civic Conversation was the perception that current fears around crime and anti-social behaviour in our communities makes us mistrustful of others. The burden of this mistrust falls disproportionately on young people who felt demonised. This was recognised by adult conversationalists too. For the older group this decline in trust is integral to why, for example, the closure of local Post Offices matters; an economically determined measure that leads to the removal of a space where they could enact and keep alive bonds of community and trust. Routines such as collecting pensions create a space to encounter others and, crucially they notice their absence. Participants asked where the spaces to replace this 'looking out for others' were. Young people may have their versions of it through text messaging and social networking websites, but elderly people felt out of place here.

The lack of trust young people felt from adult society (often as a response to concerns about anti-social behaviour) was identified as a key reason that there is difficulty in engaging young people in the political process. There were concerns about the manner in which we currently work and about the fear that we lose sight of each individual's circumstances and qualities. This manner of engagement is often defined by motivations

and interpretations driven by abstracted concerns such as the economy or the need to measure the success of our institutions and organisations. Thus young people in schools come to see themselves as 'failing', or perhaps no more helpfully, 'exceptional'. Adults too, come to see themselves as defined in relation to their place in the jobs market, which can be damaging for those who find themselves on the outside at the insecure, low paid, low prestige end of it, as well as, the well-paid prestigious end. Its ultimate harm stems from the process by which roles that are difficult to put economic value on become undervalued or have to find ways to express value through costs/benefits to society in monetary terms.

Another aspect of decline in trust that was discussed referred to a sense of diminishing trust of individuals themselves by our organisations, and the increasing use of professionally defined practice over lay competences. This is in no small part a result of the risk-averse times we live in when fears such as child abuse, or institutions being open to criticism and litigation, cause defensive positioning. It is also reinforced by attempts to isolate *what works* and define the appropriate steps to remedy social and personal problems. This approach produces the 'evidence base' for actions across the multiplicity of life-realms we operate in, producing professional 'silos' between practitioners as areas of life once thought to be covered by common knowledge, cease to be so. Personal competence is undermined through such processes. Much is lost through this approach, and the cost can be particularly high for social projects and ways of interrelating that are effective but that we do not currently know how to measure, or which do not lend themselves well to measurement.

There was resistance to the growth of professionalized forms of knowledge replacing more indigenous and organic one. This was especially the case regarding the perceived overemphasis on forms of knowledge transmitted through formal education and the current limited markers of success for our schools e.g. how many young people get into Higher Education.

Additionally, the decline of trade and craft skills, particularly those that related to our own health and wellbeing (such as food preparation) was seen as a loss that we could not afford. However, a contrary element that emerged related to the perceived loss of parenting skills, particularly in disadvantaged communities. This view suggested that parenting was no longer something one could know intuitively or pick up informally, but something that increasingly needed to be taught.

## ***Actions***

### **Finding new aspirations in the Third Horizon**

Following the spirit of the three horizons methodology, we sought to identify existing or possible innovations from the conversationalists that would allow us to further develop an understanding of what ethos could produce resilience for the City.

Identifying third horizon innovations can be difficult as it requires us to know what we want, state what we want, and say what actions we want to take in pursuit of our dreams (rather than what we want to do to address current concerns). This requires us to step outside existing frameworks and to imagine alternatives which may have little or no trace in the present. Imagination and creativity together with the ability to listen to the dreams of others may seem fey but they are necessary if we are to develop resilience enough to deal with the unknown first horizon concerns of tomorrow. If we cannot imagine it, we cannot have it.

A key to enhancing resilience is to encourage as many alternative perspectives to flourish in the third horizon space for as long as possible so that if and when they are needed, they are well nourished and formed and crucially create a context in which people are likely to participate, since the vision which they co-created is recognisable and one they can relate to positively.

### **Sustaining or transformative actions?**

We identified the following actions within the Civic Conversation data. They came by asking participants to focus on what they saw as the sources of resilience in the City and the current actions they felt met their aspirations:

- Employability strategies
- Finding space for work/life balance
- Eco schools/Eco homes
- Financial capability interventions
- To not consume for consumptions sake
- Value non-work identities more highly
- Volunteering
- Develop more employment clusters
- Less travel.

Some of these have already been introduced above as aspirations or concerns but they can also be understood as innovations if in some parts of the city individuals or groups of people are already developing activities based around them. In this sense too, the future is already here. However not all innovations will be third horizon innovations and not all will be, by virtue of the activity itself, easily categorised as belonging in the second or third horizon space. This problem of matching innovations with horizons led us to reflect upon the distinction between *sustaining* and *transformative* innovations.

*Sustaining* actions tackle a problem within a system and often have the effect of continuing the system which created the problem in the first instance. *Transformative* innovations change the frame of reference so that the problem is outgrown and disappears as the system is reframed. The difference can arise from the activity itself, but just as often it resides in the *spirit* with which a particular set of actions are enacted. For example, counting refugees so that one can fully engage with and support this group, is different from counting them so that they can be more readily deported.

## Finding H3 in the present

This difference in meaning is illustrated by the example of innovation in employability strategies, a hot topic in the conversation.

**Diagram 3: Plotting current actions in employability on a three horizons model**

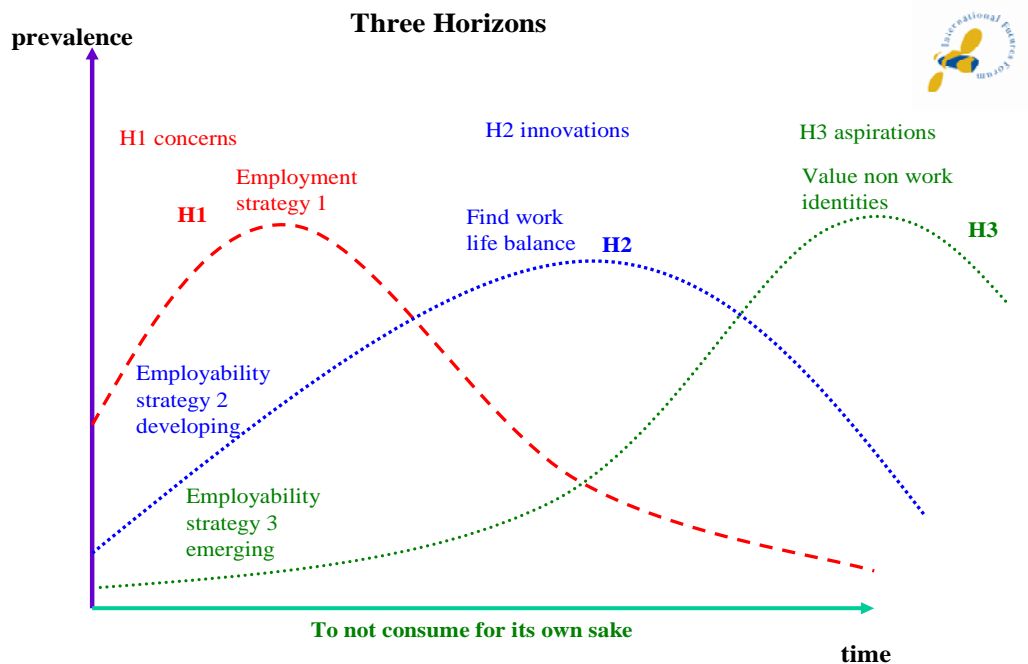


Diagram 3 shows that employability strategies can exist in all three timeframes or mindsets as discussed in the conversation. In the first horizon, 'Employability strategy 1' is envisaged as those actions that have responded to the first horizon concern of worklessness by recognising that something additional needs to be done over and above the provision and advertising of achievable vacancies to get people into work. The first horizon response is to stimulate jobs growth on the assumption that vacancies will be filled through the operation of the employment market; the limit to employment rates being the number of jobs available or the characteristics of the unemployed people themselves. Vacancies are thought to be filled by the smooth operation of the labour market with minimal amounts of frictional unemployment as people move between jobs. In this framework, worklessness is viewed as a phenomenon which arises from the characteristics of the workless themselves.

Employability strategies in the first horizon therefore begin to identify ways of working with the workless to address *their* deficits which are perceived as barriers to employment. As stated then, the first horizon employability strategies are a sustaining action, they do not change the system of employment or our understandings of useful economic activity. They seek to better shape potential workers to integrate within the existing circumstances. Our understanding of the system remains unchanged in any fundamental manner, and for many, the problem of labour market marginalisation remains an intractable problem.

In Glasgow, this approach is fading as the assumptions upon which it is based are undermined by experience, represented by the downturn of the first horizon curve. The approach has not disappeared completely, but has become less prevalent as the realisation emerges that it is insufficient to tackle either the scale or the nature of the problem.

As this perspective has been waning in plausibility, authority and power, a second perspective has been emerging into the second horizon space. This perspective has as its starting point, that the assumptions of the first horizon are at best incomplete and at worst mistaken. The second horizon approach underpins more transformative innovations to employability which, rather than attempting to better match individuals to specific vacancies or improve their preparedness for work, attempt to create enabling conditions for individuals to find strengths and interests that can lead to personal fulfilment and improved wellbeing.

Sometimes this may lead to paid employment but often it will not. Its *extant*, external justification is that improved health and wellbeing reduces reliance on the state and voluntary sector services. It also however has an *emergent* justification of increasing the wellbeing and existential circumstances of those involved. Operating in this spirit, such employability strategies are second horizon innovations as they do not take the first horizon concern of worklessness *per se* as the problem, but view worklessness as part of a package of problems stemming from an historically specific and limited understanding of the fulfilled and productive individual.

A similar distinction can be made for the suggested innovations of “finding work-life balance” and ‘value non-work identities’. They can both be seen as responses to the all pervading sway of work over our lives in contemporary society. However, ‘finding work-life balance’ as a response to the problem is more sustaining of the status quo (first horizon), an extension of the horizon two strategies outlined above. Work might need to change around the edges but it will not be challenged as a central meaning giving and organising force in our lives. This perhaps best describes where Glasgow finds itself now.

‘Valuing non-work identities’ is a more transformative concept and was central to the concerns which participants in the conversations raised. Raising the possibility that the value of non-work identity might be increased at all leads to searching questions about how we currently value individuals and their roles. Many of the important roles in life fall outside of the work remit (friend, partner, parent, sibling, neighbour, citizen). The undervaluing of such roles is a fundamental feature of many of the emergent and extant concerns raised in the Civic Conversation.

While all of this horizon two activity has been going on, a third perspective, based on the experience and shortcomings of the first and second horizons has been growing. Weak as yet, it questions the assumptions of the second horizon that fulfilment can be found in work. Building on the second horizon quest for work life balance, it raises the possibility that in the development of a robust and fulfilling city, we need to pay more attention to non work roles. A third horizon response requires us not only to tackle worklessness in the first

horizon and access to work in the second horizon but also the question in the third horizon of how work fits with our overall aspirations for a rewarding life in a just society.

Another aspiration we have identified as a third horizon innovation is ‘to consume not for its own sake’. We recognise it is difficult to conceive such an innovation gaining support within the current direction of the City as a place of consumption. Glasgow’s response to the decline of its manufacturing base (its former economic *raison d’être*) has been to recast itself as a city where goods, services and experiences are consumed. In such circumstances, more and not less consumption is better. However, a tension has arisen around current concerns of obesity and binge drinking, where the drive to consume produces adverse health consequences. This can be seen as failure of first horizon responses to health, where the provision of information for living healthy lifestyles hold sway, to counteract harm produced by the first horizon orthodoxy in the economic sphere. As in the first horizon, the above perspectives described for worklessness, both have failed to adequately address emergent problems.

We could add to this another second horizon aspiration to focus on forms of consumption that are considered high value in the current market such as cultural tourism. ‘To *not* consume for consumption’s sake’ however remains a challenge to the current economic aims of the city. In a more transformative (third horizon) vein, those taking this perspective ask that economic aims around consumption are not used to establish the City’s primary relationship with the future.

Other actions or innovations raised in the Civic Conversation are shown in Table 1. These have not been put on the three horizons diagram in order to retain its visual clarity. However, their relationships with the Three Horizons merit some discussion and Table 1 is intended to help this discussion find focus by using a few examples.

Take volunteering as an example emergent from the Civic Conversation where it was described as a means of achieving the aspiration of bridging the divide between generations (both an aspiration, and in the absence of cohesion, a current concern). In its transformative capacity it provides a means of moving away from life stories based around fame or celebrity to an alternative way to describe what makes for a successful life. Of course, volunteering could also be seen as a third horizon or second horizon innovation, increasing the employability of individuals both near to and distant from the labour market. The spirit in which it was presented in the Civic Conversation moves beyond this to a value base for a fulfilling life based on positive relationships with and service towards others. First horizon and second horizon versions of it are sustaining, the third horizon is transformative.

Similarly, the aspiration for ‘more varied employment clusters’ can enable greater recognition of other forms of knowledge, skill and capacity, opening up more opportunities for inclusion (third horizon). On the other hand, if viewed in narrow economic terms it could simply mitigate against a decline in a certain section of the current economy (second horizon), squandering transformative capacity through lack of imagination.

Perhaps if an aspiration allows both possibilities this is an advantage and is represented by a transitional point between the second and third horizon. It could also help us focus on what kind of roles we would currently value in the City and in the future and what the balance among these is. It is also worth remembering that there is third horizon activity in the City now. There are small groups of people working on ideas, actions and policies, taking authentic action for the common good in fields which motivate them. These actions and quiet voices are unlikely to be prevalent in what we consider the mainstream of city life. They cannot be readily quantified or reduced to an entry on a table. A vibrant city would do well to make space for them.

**Table 1: Plotting potential actions on the Three Horizons**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>First Horizon (H1)</b>	<b>Second Horizon (H2)</b>	<b>Third Horizon (H3)</b>
<b>Volunteering</b>	Increase employability	Provide meaning not necessarily associated with paid work	Bridge divide between generations, fulfilling lives
<b>Employability strategies</b>	Stimulate jobs growth  Address employee deficits	Help potential employees find what they want from life	Recognise a broader range of activities as valuable
<b>Promoting work life balance</b>	Living wage	Employer flexibility	Vocational forms of work  Removing alienation of self from work
<b>Financial capability interventions</b>	Provision of information, debt awareness	Credit Unions	Cultural shift away from value of consumption for its own sake
<b>Thoughtful consumption</b>	Consumer advice and information e.g. <i>Which?</i> reports	Becoming selective about areas of consumption to be indulged taking account of societal costs	Consumption based on need rather than desire
<b>Varying employment clusters</b>	Increase number of employment sectors to mitigate sectoral downturns	Concentrate on building high value/ high quality employment sectors	Work clusters defined by reflection of human and cultural needs rather than economy
<b>Approaches to climate change</b>	Technological fixes such as fuel efficiency	Less need for travel, through new configurations of infrastructure and technology	Unknown



## Where now?

At the beginning of this paper we identified some questions that we hoped the Civic Conversation would answer. These were:

- What is our current ethos in the City and where does health fit within it?
- If we have health as part of the ethos of the City, then what policies and actions ought we develop to make this apparent and explicit?
- What might a new, future orientated public health look like and what would be its guiding principles?
- What set of values would create coherence between public health and other spheres of endeavour and progress, such as the economy and culture?

### *Our current ethos and policies*

In answering the first question, conversationalists identified an *extant* ethos in which health was viewed as both a consequence and precursor of economic growth. It could be argued that the City's pursuit of economic growth as its primary guiding ethos puts the maintenance of population health in the realm of mitigation; a necessity for 'business as usual' to be protected through identifying where and how health is poor and taking actions to remedy it. This can lead us, if we are not careful, to begin to view health not as a good for and of itself but one that is seen as a prerequisite to a larger good – continued economic buoyancy.

If we were to have health as a *central* part of the ethos of the city, and not as a prerequisite toward something else, different policies and actions would flow. Early glimpses of what this might look like have been visible in this report. The issues that have been raised congregate around recognition that the qualities of relationships are central to wellbeing. Our actions as policy-makers and service designers have the power to create or destroy these relationships. The ethos of the City, which is in all of our hands to change, needs to have the promotion of positive relationships at its core.

### *A future orientated public health?*

An important message we discovered in participants' concerns is that the formal structured relationships, such as the relationships we enter into as service providers and clients, as workers or as consumers *matter*. These influence our intimate relationships with friends, families and neighbours and they are important creators of the *psychosphere*, that we all share as City dwellers. Getting the more formal relationships right is therefore a necessity in improving the experience of relationships elsewhere, not just with others, but with ourselves. This appears to be a potential way forward in addressing the inequalities of health challenges that currently faces us and which is likely to become increasingly important. As our current framework becomes less relevant in changed circumstances – it becomes less useful.

A refrain in the Civic Conversation has been that the ways in which we currently act and perceive the City leads to a devaluing of numerous experiences and a thinning of the multiple perspectives and aspirations in the population. This is unlikely to allow the

flowering of nascent talents, skills and possibilities. A future orientated public health would recognise that the *extant* concerns of today may not be tomorrow's concerns and sources of current and future resilience in citizens may be extinguished if we do not heed this.

*A set of markers that would indicate we are headed in the right direction*

We have developed a set of loose markers that could be used by those, including ourselves, making decisions around policy, interventions or strategies in the City. They are based on the premise that we can influence the psychosphere of the city; that decisions go further than the immediate concerns of their realm (economic, psychological, social) but in aggregate create the means through which we relate to one another in informal realms too.

These markers are:

- Rather than asking what is wrong, ask what is missing? When facing current difficulties, plans, ideas and actions, our critique often starts by asking what is wrong. This can quickly turn into negativity and guardedness as people seek to defend their own ideas, plans and actions and attack those of others. Asking what is missing from a situation which is giving rise to difficulty, or what is missing from a plan, idea or action is more generative
- Be willing and able to hold several perspectives simultaneously and create something new from them which does not currently exist. The holding of different perspectives for as long as possible helps to ensure solutions have incorporated concerns and hopes of multiple perspectives
- Make room for dreams. This suggestion came from young people in the Civic Conversation. It has become a platitude to note that young people are the future and this is often given as a vague, if undeniable, justification for involving them. If we understand young people's dreams and aspirations as third horizon aspirations then we begin to recognise dream and dreamer as potential sources of resilience in the City. Consequently, engagement is less likely to appear superficial and tokenistic
- Ask 'is what is proposed a sustaining or transformative innovation?' In times of relative calm and stability, this is not really a concern. In such times, the world changes slowly, in predictable ways and our ways of taking coherent action work well. In times of rapid change and uncertain development, this is not so straightforward. Sustaining innovation may well be necessary to mitigate decline, but without the realisation of transformative potential it simply prolongs decline.
- Ask 'what horizon am I operating in?' 'How does it relate to other horizons?' 'Are all horizons covered?' 'What can I do to improve relationships among these different horizons?'

## **Conclusion**

The model which we started with for the Civic Conversation process (see Appendix 1) suggests the following as a starting point: if Glasgow is to make its way in a world of change, complexity and uncertainty we need some clarity about where we want to go. To develop clarity we need to get beyond sacred cows, platitudes, unquestioned and taken for

granted perspectives on what the City is doing and what it needs. To do this we need a conversation about our aspirations. To avoid being stuck in a Utopia trap we need to be able to suggest how to reframe existing resources to meet these aspirations, rather than some other set of outcomes. When we do this successfully, we in the city must be able to learn from this so that we improve life for our citizens in an ever changing world through a continuous cycle of exploration, learning and improvement.

This report synthesises key aspects of the first stage of the conversation and it is reasonable to say that we have reached first base. We have begun a conversation about some of our sacred cows and defined some aspirations that will enable us to outgrow them. Continuing the cycle is a collective task and we encourage readers to use the guidelines, models and conceptual tools presented here in any manner that fits their work-based or personal concerns. We will be happy to help.

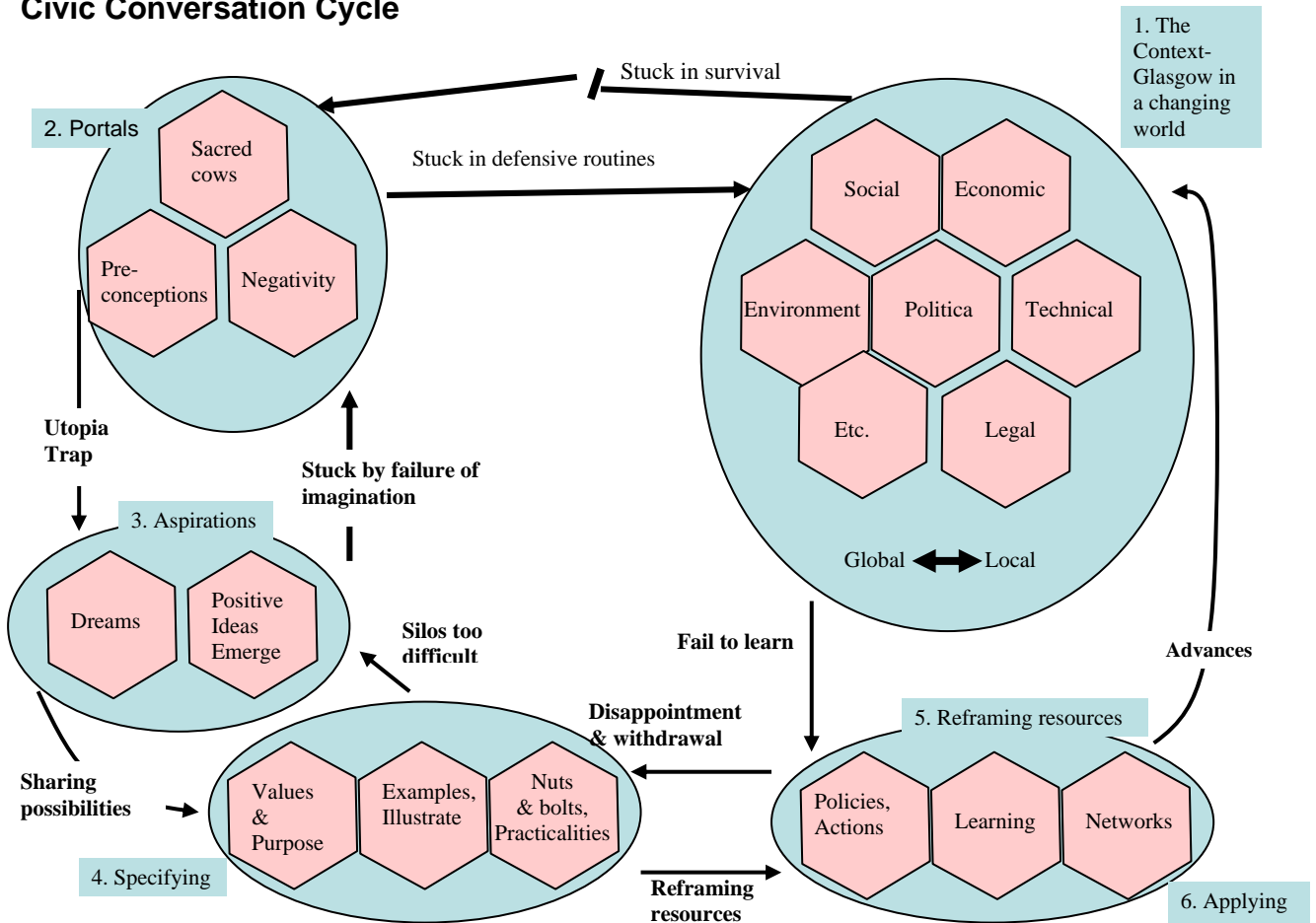
For us, phase two of the Civic Conversation may well include a focus on identifying and exploring sources of third horizon innovations in the City and we welcome direction about where these may lie.

# Appendix 1

## Methodology

Start with the context in which Glasgow exists. It is easy to see that Glasgow exists in a changing world with issue, geographical and time based elements which need to be adequately understood if the City is to thrive. The City has a standard way of doing this which keeps us locked into business as usual. To get beyond this requires us to express our aspirations. It is then necessary to look at the possibilities for action which help us to meet these. Next we need to specify actions which help to realise the desired possibilities. From this we learn what works and what does not and develop a capacity in the City for dealing with complexity and uncertainty guided by a set of values which are expansive, inclusive and generative and advance the cause of Glasgow in a changing world.

### Civic Conversation Cycle



In the process of the Civic Conversation so far we have managed to take the discussion to the fourth stage (of specifying value and purpose) with further stages, (of examples and illustrations, nuts, bolts

and practicalities) still to be developed. The remainder of this cycle will inform future work we intend to do, but others are encouraged to engage in their own processes too.

### **How we hosted the Civic Conversation**

The conversation, although by no means a complete process, existed in the form reported here between summer 2006 and spring 2008. The conversationalists were civic leaders, decision and policy makers in the city, community members and representatives of the voluntary sector. Whereas some of the individuals entered the conversation in their work-based capacities others entered purely as Glaswegians. All wanted to explore the possibilities for developing a set of guiding principles for Glasgow through the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In August 2006, three 'proversations', or pilots took place to assess the spirit in which the conversation could be heard and engaged with. These took place with potential participants and afforded an early glimpse of some of the substantive areas that energised people about the city, its challenges and opportunities in uncertain times. Subsequently, February, June and October of 2007 saw three half day conversations (Civic Conversation events), with those being involved increasing in number and scope as the year progressed. We distinguish the individual civic conversations from the on-going process in this report by making the on-going process a proper noun: the Civic Conversation. In the later stages of the conversation process we began to develop means of accessing voices and opinions that were not attracted to an offer of a half day session in a large room, using recommendations from the conversationalists present and reflection on which voices were absent and how they might be accessed.

These included developing a web-based discussion forum hosted by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, scenario planning sessions with council workers, practitioners in the mental health field and older volunteers, photovoice methods to engage with young people and discussions with representatives of faith-based groups and employers in the city. Learning from the Centre's on-going community engagement work and qualitative programme was also fed into the Civic Conversation to identify the emergent picture of concerns, opportunities and hopes.

### **Synthesising the Civic Conversation**

The strategies used to involve people in the Civic Conversation produced a breadth of data resources in the form of transcripts, diagrams, cartoons, artwork, graphical representations, notes and photographs (available from authors). In analysing the data we attempted to remain true to the terrain of the conversation by asking ourselves: 'would the conversationalists recognise our representation of their views and discussions?' We were also participants in the conversation ourselves and our experiences and shifting understandings inevitably became fore-grounded in the process. However, throughout the conversation process we listened, remained open to differing perspectives, tried them on for ourselves and when challenging, did so in the spirit of recognising and encouraging multiple view points.

The account is an interpretative account and has much of our own learning from the process within it. We have tried throughout to remain both open about our purpose and faithful to the material which emerged from the conversation. Others may have taken away different interpretations and learning. This is a welcome dimension of the nature of conversation itself.

The spirit of our synthesis however remained singular; a commitment to capturing the emergent concerns and aspirations of the participants, allowing space for their exploration and cross-pollination with other perspectives and avoiding foreclosure for as long as possible.

### **Who took part?**

A total of 97 people were engaged to create the primary data of the Civic Conversation through the main events and focussed community engagements. These break down into 31 young people, 17 people from the statutory health sector, 12 from other public sector roles, eight from the business community, two academic, 19 from the voluntary sector and eight older volunteers.