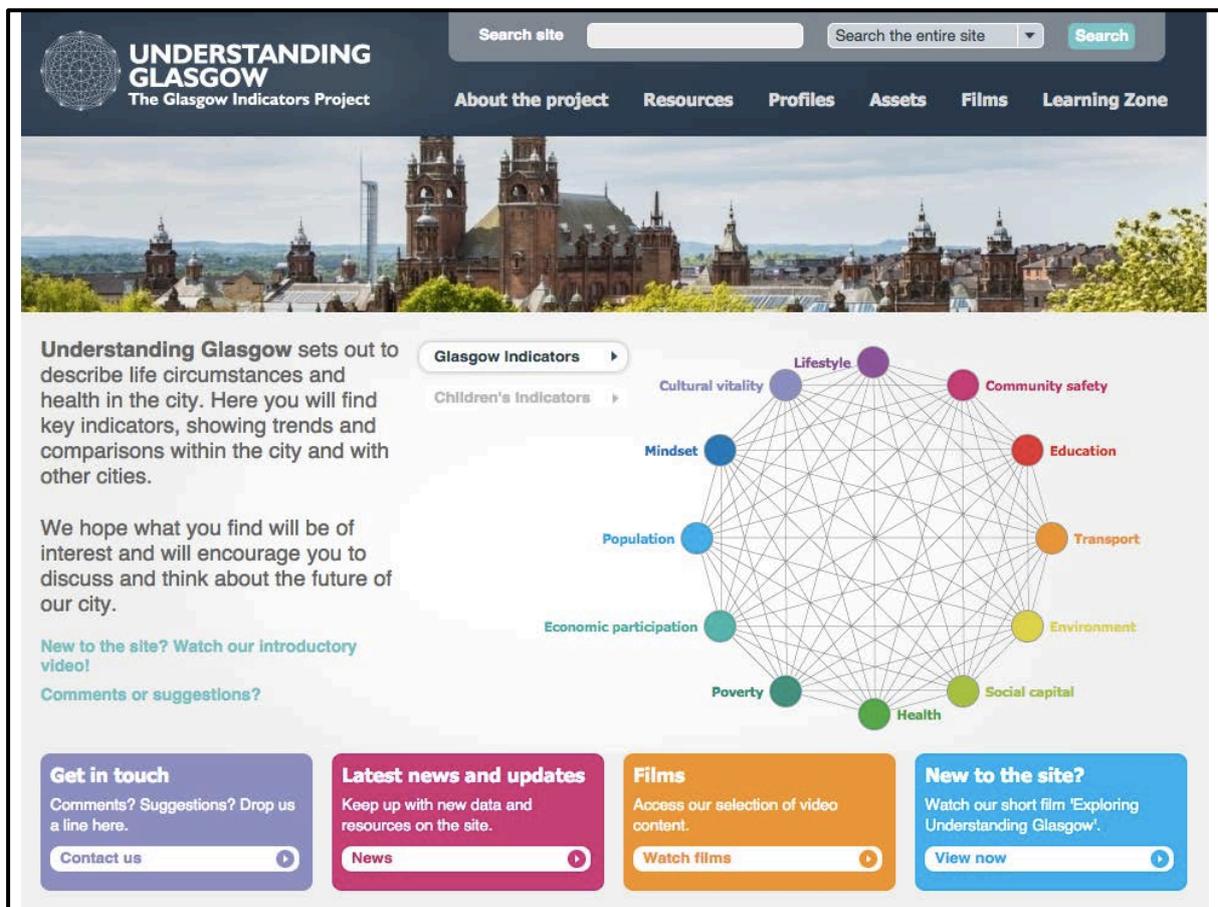


# Understanding Glasgow: Review, evaluation and forward look report



The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'Understanding Glasgow' website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the site logo, a search bar, and menu items: 'About the project', 'Resources', 'Profiles', 'Assets', 'Films', and 'Learning Zone'. Below the navigation bar is a large banner image of the Glasgow skyline. The main content area features a text introduction on the left and a network diagram on the right. The network diagram consists of 12 interconnected nodes, each representing a different indicator: Lifestyle, Community safety, Education, Transport, Environment, Social capital, Health, Poverty, Economic participation, Population, Mindset, and Cultural vitality. Below the network diagram are four colored call-to-action boxes: 'Get in touch' (purple), 'Latest news and updates' (pink), 'Films' (orange), and 'New to the site?' (blue). Each box contains a brief description and a button with a right-pointing arrow.

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1<sup>st</sup> March 2015

## Contents

1 Executive summary .....	2
1.1 Review findings .....	2
1.2 Developing Understanding Glasgow.....	4
1.3 Evaluating Understanding Glasgow .....	6
2 Introduction.....	7
3 Methodology .....	8
3.1 Limitations .....	9
4 Review findings .....	9
4.1 Uses of Understanding Glasgow.....	9
4.1.1 Barriers to use .....	11
4.2 Content.....	12
4.3 Layout.....	15
4.4 ‘Additional’ sections.....	16
4.4.1 ‘Assets’ .....	17
4.4.2 ‘Films’.....	17
4.5 Contributing to Understanding Glasgow.....	18
4.6 The Glasgow Game .....	20
4.6.1 The Glasgow Game as an educational tool.....	20
4.6.2 The Glasgow Game as a discussion tool .....	21
5 Looking forward .....	23
5.1. Developing Understanding Glasgow.....	23
5.1.1 Awareness of Understanding Glasgow.....	23
5.1.2 Uses of Understanding Glasgow .....	24
5.1.3 Content .....	27
5.1.4 Layout .....	30
5.1.5 ‘Additional’ sections .....	31
5.1.6 Contributing to Understanding Glasgow.....	34
5.1.7 The Glasgow Game.....	36
5.1.8 Other developments for Understanding Glasgow.....	38
5.2 A synthesis of Understanding Glasgow? .....	39
6 Evaluating Understanding Glasgow .....	41
6.1 Accessibility of Understanding Glasgow .....	42
6.2 Breadth of the audience for Understanding Glasgow.....	43
6.3 Covering a range of domains.....	44
6.4 Ability to monitor trends.....	46
6.5 Encouraging civic engagement.....	46
7 Conclusion.....	50
8 References .....	51
9 Appendix 1.....	52

# **1 Executive summary**

This review was undertaken to gather feedback on the Understanding Glasgow (UG) project, which seeks to provide evidence of the wellbeing of the population of Glasgow, and to stimulate discussion about how to improve it. The review consisted in the main of 26 semi-structured interviews with users of, and contributors to, the site. Interviews focused on the uses of UG, the content and layout of the website, the contribution process, the Glasgow Game, and the possibility of a piece of work synthesising the findings into a coherent narrative.

## **1.1 Review findings**

There were a number of main uses of UG described. Most common was for individual, or occasionally multiple, statistical enquiries. School and university students are also directed to it on a number of courses. There is some evidence of UG being used in strategic planning, both at a city-wide level, and at a local level through the Community Profiles resource. This has included use by local community groups.

The main barrier to use was awareness of the resource, or forgetting that it existed. A number of interviewees did not use the statistics on UG as they had access to the original datasets, whilst some statistical queries are too specific to be answered by UG. There are also some specific barriers to greater use of UG on the Masters in Public Health course at the University of Glasgow

The content of UG was regarded positively, and the resource was seen to provide a good overview of wellbeing in Glasgow. The inclusion of concepts such as 'Social Capital' and 'Mindset' were complimented, due to the difficulties in measuring them and the ease with which they can be disregarded. The commentary on the statistics was seen to add nuance to the site. The statistics were generally seen as being pitched at an appropriate level, although the negative portrayal of the city through the statistics was raised as a concern. How up-to-date indicators were was a constant concern

of interviewees, though the feedback was generally still positive on this aspect. Some specific areas of weakness were noted.

Comments on the layout were generally positive, and the use of infographics and headline statistics on 'Overview' pages were seen as a very useful addition. UG was compared favourably to other statistical websites. Some interviewees were concerned that some headings may not provide sufficient clarity. Other negative comments were minor.

The 'Assets' section of the website had received minimal use, on two courses at Glasgow Caledonian University, and for reference by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC). The 'Films' section was much more widely accessed. This was seen as a good addition to the resource, adding a 'human element' to the statistical information. This could be used to challenge preconceived ideas and stereotypes. These had been used in a number of educational settings, and to stimulate discussion in meetings. One suggested weakness of the films was their separation from the statistics, and it felt that the two should be more closely integrated in future.

Contributing to UG was a positive experience for some, and a negative one for others. Some felt it was a reciprocal arrangement, as they also used the resource. Others enjoyed the creative aspect of the work. The main difficulties in contributing to UG were a lack of resources, and a need to adapt data for submission. It was felt that if the contribution process could be aligned with normal work programmes, this was ideal.

The Glasgow Game was generally viewed positively. It had been used in a number of educational settings, and was well-received. Flexibility and preparation were noted to be two key aspects in ensuring the success of the Game with students. Facilitation was also noted to be an issue, with the importance of watching a skilled facilitator for the first Game emphasised by all.

The Game had also been used as a discussion tool with professionals, on which there was mixed feedback. It was viewed as enjoyable and often interesting, though some participants questioned whether it was generating any new thinking. The make-up of the group was seen as important by all interviewees, though they differed in their ideal groups. The outcomes of the Games were seen as an important area of focus, and there was differing feedback from interviewees depending on the particular Games in which they had been involved.

## ***1.2 Developing Understanding Glasgow***

There were a number of areas for development noted by interviewees. Awareness was one of the most prominent, to increase the use of UG. Increased use of social media was seen as important, as was emphasising the relevance of UG to news stories and the news agenda. Generating awareness of the ways UG could be useful might increase the benefit to its audience.

Increased uptake in schools was the major idea from interviewees on increasing the use of UG. It was also suggested that use and awareness in the voluntary sector could be increased. A number of potentially synergistic projects in Glasgow were discussed. A desire was also expressed to see the example of UG spread to other council areas in Greater Glasgow and the Clyde Valley and beyond.

Comments on improving the content and the layout were generally to respond to the perceived weaknesses noted above. Other ideas included the inclusion of a 'SHANARRI' infographic, to relate the information more clearly to Children's Services, and the increased use of Geographical Information Systems.

Development of the 'Assets' section was seen as important, especially by interviewees from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH). Further

linkages with the ongoing work at the GCPH and the SCDC may be relevant to this improvement.

Improvements to the 'Films' section were generally to address those perceived deficits noted above. Ideas for further uses included showing the films to senior managers and elected officials, and incorporating them into more undergraduate university programmes. Ideas for themes of future films included gender, ethnicity and race, and childhood transitions. The use of qualitative research to add a broader exploration of the human experience was also discussed.

With regards to the Glasgow Game, it will be important to consider the issue of facilitation moving forward: the instructions contained within the "Glasgow Game in a box" will be crucial in this. Considering the make-up of the group involved will form a key part of setting up an event, and interviewees were keen to see more efforts to ensure that the Games led to concrete actions.

Other developments for UG included developing and maintaining the cross-organisational input. This is important both from a contribution and discussion point of view. It was suggested that greater representation from the private sector may also be valuable. Another suggestion was to develop or increase links with other indicator projects and umbrella organisations.

The prospect of a piece of work synthesising the knowledge contained within UG was warmly received by interviewees. Most would prefer that this not be a report or paper, or if it were to be so, that there were interactive events and engagements around it. There was discussion over whether the contents of this report would be purely descriptive, or would provide some opinion on the underlying reasons behind the statistics. Communication was seen as vital, both in avoiding duplicating other pieces of work, and in generating interest around the synthesis.

### ***1.3 Evaluating Understanding Glasgow***

An evaluation of UG's performance according to its stated aims found it generally performing well against measure of: accessibility; reaching a wide audience; covering a range of domains of wellbeing; monitoring progress, and; encouraging civic engagement. Suggested areas of improvement or notes for caution included access for individuals without internet access, and some indicator areas.

Overall, UG appears to be a very useful project, with a number of positive outcomes. A significant amount of feedback has been received from users and contributors, often reinforcing the value of the work. Certain areas for improvement have been identified in content, use, and in the process of maintaining and developing the resource. These merit consideration and discussion, and should stimulate a conversation about how to ensure UG progresses in the future.

## **2 Introduction**

Understanding Glasgow (UG) is a project that has been developed by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) with support from a range of partners, including Glasgow City Council, Glasgow's Community Planning Team, Community Safety Glasgow, Glasgow Life, the University of Glasgow, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and the International Futures Forum. The purpose of the resource has been to provide evidence of the health, social and environmental circumstances of the population of Glasgow, and to provide an accessible data resource for 'new thinking' about the city.

The purpose of this review was to gather feedback on Understanding Glasgow in its current guise, and to consider developments that may improve the resource in the future. Five main areas will be reviewed, and ideas for developments of those areas proposed. These are: the uses of Understanding Glasgow; the content & layout of the site; the 'additional' sections of the site; the process of contributing data to UG, and; the Glasgow Game. In addition, the possibility of a project to synthesise the information on UG will be discussed.

This paper will consist of three main aspects. The first will comprise a review of the current state of Understanding Glasgow. This will be based primarily on interviews conducted with users and stakeholders of UG.

The second section will contain discussion of some ideas for development of Understanding Glasgow, and an exploration of the possibility of synthesis work arising from the information in the resource. Bringing together findings and evidence into a coherent narrative is one of the GCPH's current areas of focus. In the case of UG, it has been proposed that this could take the form of a biennial report, in a similar vein to those produced by the Boston Indicators project.

The final aspect of the paper will consist of a brief evaluation of the performance of Understanding Glasgow, according to its stated aims and objectives.

### **3 Methodology**

The information forming the basis of this review and forward look is drawn from a number of sources.

A significant proportion of the evidence in this paper was gathered through a series of 26 semi-structured interviews. These were undertaken with individuals from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, Glasgow City Council, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Community Safety Glasgow, Glasgow Life, Clydeplan (formerly Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Development Planning Authority Joint Committee), the Scottish Community Development Centre, Volunteer Glasgow, University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University and Hamilton College. These findings are complemented by feedback received via email from the Dumbarton Road Corridor Environmental Trust. Individuals were participating on a personal level, and their views should not be taken to be representative of the views of their organisation.

An outline of the questions asked in these interviews can be found in Appendix 1. It should be noted that, depending on the course of the interviewee's answers, there may have been significant deviations in the line of questioning. As a result, these questions are included only to provide a broad outline of the subjects covered.

Further information was gathered through an online survey regarding the series of films produced for Understanding Glasgow. The Centre uses Google Analytics software to monitor aspects of use of the website, and this information was also valuable in the report.

### **3.1 Limitations**

There are a number of limitations to the methodology of this paper. Choosing interviewees was an iterative process: an initial list of possible interviewees was drawn up, and this was added to throughout the review process, as relevant individuals and organisations became apparent. This was clearly not a systematic process, and may have led to the inadvertent exclusion of relevant interviewees. Interviews with some parties were not possible to arrange during the timescale of this review, imposing another limitation on the breadth of interviewees.

Unfortunately, the response to the online survey concerning the Understanding Glasgow films was very poor, and limited feedback was garnered from this source. As a result, the review of the film section is largely composed of feedback from interviewees.

Finally, the researcher conducting this review has been working at the GCPH for an 8-week period, under the supervision of the Project Manager for UG. It is possible that, as a result, interviewees were less willing to share negative feedback, for fear of causing offence. It also inevitably raises the possibility of bias affecting the evaluation and recommendations contained within this report. That the review has been undertaken by a single individual may exacerbate this risk.

## **4 Review findings**

### **4.1 Uses of Understanding Glasgow**

From interview feedback, the most common use of Understanding Glasgow was for answering specific statistical queries. These took a number of forms: personal queries; background statistics for work projects or reports; responding to requests for statistics, and; responding to Freedom of Information requests. A variety of individuals and organisations used the resource in this way, including employees of NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

(GGC), Community Safety Glasgow (CSG), Glasgow Life, individuals involved in strategic and community development, voluntary and charity organisations (local and national) and those involved in education. The Glasgow City Council team working on building resilience in Glasgow, with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, had found the statistics on the website particularly useful to answer many of their queries. They suggested that if the resource did not already exist, one of the main recommendations of their work would have been that it be developed.

Within educational settings, students were often 'signposted' to UG as a useful resource for their studies. UG has been used in this way with a variety of groups, including school students, undergraduate and postgraduate students at two different universities, and as part of continuing professional education within the NHS.

Some organisations have made use of UG as a resource to inform strategic planning and assessment. It has been used within CSG as a starting point in the development of strategic assessments. An interviewee from CSG noted that the information on UG could be particularly useful for examining trends and for 'horizon scanning'. Understanding Glasgow has also influenced the contents of the Strategic Development Plan 2, particularly through a Glasgow Game event (see Section 4.6.2).

A number of organisations have made use of the Community Profiles in their work. Glasgow Life encourages its venues to use these in their local planning, though they are aware that there will be variations in the uptake of this. This has allowed venues to examine how their 'target audience' relates to the local population as a whole, and to use this information to influence service delivery. The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) have also made use of the Community Profiles in planning their community engagement work. They were delighted with how much easier it was to find information on neighbourhoods in Glasgow than elsewhere in the country, as a result of UG. The SCDC also noted that the provision of local-level data to the community was often useful in generating discussion. It should be noted, however, that

these discussions were often provoked by the community disagreeing with the image of their neighbourhood presented in the data, and this is discussed further below (see Section 6.5). The information within the Community Profiles has also been used by a community development group, the Dumbarton Road Corridor Environmental Trust, to provide background information for reports and funding applications.

#### **4.1.1 Barriers to use**

The most commonly cited reason why UG was not used more by interviewees and others was awareness. Interviewees felt that even when individuals were aware of UG, there was a tendency for it to be forgotten, and thus not accessed when searching for information. Several users, who were very positive about the resource, admitted that they had only remembered that the resource was available as a result of a prompt or reminder.

Another commonly noted reason for not making more use of UG was the interviewee's access to original data. A number of interviewees were responsible for data in a particular area of monitoring or service delivery, and thus were more likely to access original datasets to answer queries, than to seek out answers from UG. This may be a result of the make-up of the group of interviewees, rather than indicative of the broader user group of UG.

With regards to the use of UG as a source of answers to individual statistical queries, the main barrier to use noted from interviews was the specificity of the information sought. As requests came from a wide variety of sources, it was seen as inevitable that the specifics of requests for statistics would vary, and that it was not feasible for UG to cater for every different request. An example from the NHS was given with regards to statistics on breastfeeding. Whilst there are statistics related to breastfeeding on UG, different requests for different purposes may require slightly different statistics, not all of which will be covered by the data available on UG. Another example came from Education Services. Education data is collected on a school-by-school basis, and this is often the format in which requests for statistics are received.

However, UG is structured to contain information for Glasgow as a whole, for the three sectors it can be divided into, and for the 56 neighbourhoods at a further level of division. Thus education requests may not find information at the appropriate level on UG.

One barrier to use of UG in the Masters in Public Health course at the University of Glasgow was the feedback the university received on the course as a whole. It was noted that the most common piece of negative feedback received about the course, though received relatively infrequently, was that it did not have a sufficient coverage of international issues. As UG by definition refers to Glasgow-specific issues, this would clearly be at odds with any attempts to respond to this feedback through alterations in course material.

## **4.2 Content**

Comments regarding the content of the indicators on UG was generally positive. Interviewees felt that the information contained within the site was fairly comprehensive, and gave a reasonable overview of wellbeing in Glasgow.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data on the website was noted to be a strength of UG by some interviewees. It was felt that the use of survey data to provide information about some “difficult to measure” aspects of wellbeing, such as ‘Social Capital’ and ‘Mindset’, was something that separated UG from other resources. Interviewees also felt that this provided a more holistic view of wellbeing than is often available through statistics, in keeping with the objectives of UG.

There was a general consensus that the information was generally portrayed at an appropriate level. UG aims to cater for a wide audience of users, and thus a careful balancing act between providing sufficient detail and ensuring broad accessibility is required. A majority of interviewees felt that this was generally achieved. The summary statistics on the ‘Overview’ page of each indicator was generally noted to be positive for increasing the accessibility of

the information, as were the infographics present on those same pages. It was also noted by a number of interviewees that the links provided to further information and original data sources was important to facilitate the use of the site by those whose work may require more detail on the statistics, or the methodology used to collect them.

The level of interpretation on the site was complimented, though this was a subject on which there was a great deal of discussion. Interviewees noted that the interpretation available for some of the areas that are difficult to measure (as discussed above) was one of the strengths of UG, as it added a degree of “nuance”. The interpretation was seen as important to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the data, which may have been more likely if it were presented in isolation. In this regard, two interviewees compared UG favourably with other ‘open data’ platforms that do not incorporate explanatory information alongside the statistics. Other interviewees also noted that, while it offered a degree of interpretation, this did not extend beyond the boundaries of objectivity, which they felt was crucial to the position and purpose of UG. This view was not, however, shared by all interviewees, some of whom would prefer to see more explanations of the trends available on the state, to add to the description already present. These differing views are discussed further below, in the context of future work on synthesis (see Section 5.2).

One of the aspects of the content that was most remarked upon was how up-to-date it was. This was mentioned in both a positive and a negative light, depending on the interviewee, and the particular indicator(s) that they were referring to. Most interviewees felt this was one of the most important aspects of maintaining and improving the site, whilst also acknowledging the difficulties it poses.

Some interviewees noted particular areas that they felt were important, and not adequately covered in the current set of indicators. Two interviewees commented that they felt that the economic indicators were not as strong as they could be. They felt that some more ‘conventional’ economic indicators

may improve the usefulness of the site, and may portray a more complete image of the economic status of Glasgow.

Another group of interviewees suggested that indicators regarding climate change would be beneficial, including statistics on emissions levels, and on efforts towards mitigation and adaptation.

Several interviewees were involved in the development and contribution of the Children's Indicators, and had thoughts on how the content of those indicators could be developed. In particular, it was felt that the statistics on childhood mental health, and childhood disability could be improved. In the case of the former, the collection of data using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was felt to be likely to improve this section over time (1). With regards to childhood disability, adequate data was not felt to be available, though work is in progress to correct this. It was felt that it was important to have a Childhood Disability page on UG, despite the lack of data, to demonstrate its importance, and to provide a space to explain the lack of statistics.

Three interviewees raised concerns about the perceived negativity of the information contained on the site. These were not necessarily concerns held by the interviewees themselves, but were thoughts and feelings expressed to them by others. In one case, an individual had commented that the indicators did not reflect their experience of growing up in a particular area of Glasgow, and their view of that area was significantly different to the image portrayed by the statistics on UG. In another, an individual had complained about the regularity with which attention was drawn to the negative aspect of their neighbourhood. They felt that this meant that everyone from that community was seen to be reflective of some of the more unpleasant indicators, such as the levels of drug and alcohol abuse. Ultimately, they felt that this was potentially hindering their opportunities, particularly when applying for employment, as they suggested they may be discriminated against as a result of the negative reputation of their neighbourhood. Whilst these thoughts are reported second-hand, they nevertheless merit pause for thought.

### **4.3 Layout**

A majority of interviewees were complimentary about the current layout of UG. Generally it was seen as relatively easy to navigate, and most interviewees found they were able to locate the information they were looking for quickly. UG was compared favourably with other statistical websites, such as the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website, for ease of use. One interviewee did comment, however, that it was sometimes difficult to remember where a piece of information was held, and that they sometimes found themselves “going in circles” trying to re-locate a particular indicator. This was not identified as a problem by other interviewees.

As noted above (Section 4.2), several interviewees commented positively on the presence of summary statistics and infographics on the ‘Overview’ page for each indicator. These were generally seen as a good way to display the significant, ‘headline’ statistics, and to make the information more accessible to individuals that do not encounter data and statistics on a day-to-day basis.

It was noted by several interviewees, directly and indirectly, that some of the headings on the UG website may not provide sufficient clarity. Direct references to this mostly focused on the headings on the Home Page. It was felt that the heading ‘Assets’ did not necessarily make it clear what lay behind that heading. While the terms ‘assets’ and ‘asset-based community development’ have become an integral part of the public health lexicon, it was questioned whether there is a wider understanding of what this means. It was also suggested that the headings ‘Resources’ and ‘Learning Zone’ could equally make sense if they were reversed, and thus there may be confusion as to what may be found behind each heading.

Indirect references to the lack of clarity in headings was inferred from interviewees’ suggestions for indicators that could be added to the website. A number of interviewees mentioned that statistics on “loneliness” or “isolation” would be useful to have. This information is in fact available on the site, but is

contained under the heading “Social support and social networks”. This heading also contains a sub-section entitled “Household access to the internet”, another area identified by interviewees as ‘missing’. Interestingly, data pertaining to “positive perception of social support” is not contained under the heading “Social support and social networks”, but under “Social participation”. A review of section headings may be required to ensure the greatest possible clarity for visitors to the site. However, given the somewhat amorphous nature of some of the indicators, and the qualitative nature of much of the data, it may be that a change in headings would merely shift misplaced searches from one term to another.

Other negative comments pertaining to the layout of the site were generally minor, concerning inconsistency of colour scheme across indicators, absence of infographics and/or summary statistics on certain indicators, and inconsistent use of bold text on summary statistics. One interviewee commented that the ‘Urban Land Use Maps’ available in the ‘Environment’ section looked like they might contain interesting information, but that even when expanded, it was not possible to read the descriptions. Even when the attached PDF files are accessed, the text is still very small, particularly in the map legend.

#### **4.4 ‘Additional’ sections**

The ‘additional’ sections of the site comprise the UG films, and the ‘Assets’ page. The former are a series of films produced to reflect the experiences of people living and working in Glasgow, to add a human element to the data. The latter contains a series of case-studies of ‘assets-based approaches’ to community wellbeing and development, drawn from a GCPH report entitled *Assets in Action: Illustrating asset based approaches for health improvement* (2).

#### 4.4.1 'Assets'

The 'Assets' page was not widely used by the interviewees. Both lecturers from Glasgow Caledonian University used this page to illustrate their teaching on 'assets-based approaches'. Both had found the case-studies useful to help their students understand what this approach meant, and how it translated into practice. The page had also been of interest for the SCDC, who had explored the case studies, and were very complimentary about the quality and detail present. They noted that similar, though less detailed, examples were available through the 'Communities Channel Scotland' website, developed to support community development groups.

No other interviewees had made use of this page.

#### 4.4.2 'Films'

There was a much greater awareness of the UG films. These were almost universally seen as a positive aspect of the website, with interviewees repeatedly emphasising the value of the exploration of the 'human element' of life in Glasgow. A number of interviewees thought that several of the films were useful for challenging stereotypes or prejudices about certain population groups. It was also felt that some of the films, specifically the *Miniature Glasgow* and *Miniature Cities: Glasgow and Gothenburg* films, were useful as an alternative way of displaying some of the statistical information. The *Miniature Cities: Glasgow and Gothenburg* film is actually found off-site (at <http://www.europeinminiature.com/>). Several interviewees also commented positively on the newest film, *Exploring Understanding Glasgow*, especially as a way of understanding how to navigate the website.

The films had been used in several different ways by interviewees. Those in education, at Hamilton College and at Glasgow Caledonian University, had used the films both to challenge their students' preconceived notions, and as an adjunct to their teaching on related subjects. This use was not mirrored on the Masters in Public Health course at the University of Glasgow, where the films were felt to be of less relevance. This perception was due to the make-

up of the student population on the course: it was felt to be less relevant, and difficult to relate to, for the significant cohort of international students, whilst many of the UK-based students had previous public service experience, and were felt to be unlikely to learn anything new from viewing the films. It was also suggested that the film content may be less relevant or useful because the course lacked an “affective component”: a commitment to changing values, or the development of a “particular professional ethos or ethic”. It was suggested that the development of academic literacy and proficiency was more important than “changing people’s hearts and value systems”.

Two other interviewees mentioned that they had used the *Miniature Glasgow* film in various meetings. It was shown to stimulate discussion about some of the population statistics contained within the film, and it was felt to have been very successful in this. It was also suggested that the films were beneficial to staff working in related areas, be they geographical areas, or with particular population groups.

One weakness of the films, that was noted by several interviewees, was their perceived separation from the statistical content of the UG website. This pertained less to *Miniature Glasgow* and *Miniature Cities*, and was more concerned with those films exploring individuals’ experiences. A number of ideas were suggested to alleviate this issue, and these are discussed below (see Section 5.1.5).

Despite the positive feedback on *Miniature Glasgow*, some interviewees did note that the statistics are now a little old, and that the film would merit updating. Another felt that the accompanying music on the film could be improved to be more uplifting, as it felt quite downbeat.

#### **4.5 Contributing to Understanding Glasgow**

A number of positive aspects of contributing to UG were identified. Several interviewees commented that they felt it was a “reciprocal” arrangement: they were happy to contribute to the project, as it offered them utility in return.

It was also noted that it was gratifying to contribute to a piece of work that may be seen and used by a broad audience, rather than to produce work to satisfy a process. In this way, several interviewees felt that contributing to UG was a useful way of disseminating their work more widely: this applied to both statistical data, and to strategy or policy documents. In addition, one interviewee felt that it had allowed some “creativity”, that they were often not able to utilise in their day-to-day use of the statistical information. The same interviewee also commented on the creative process in the Project Group, in the development of the Children’s Indicators, as a related positive aspect.

One interviewee noted the importance of aligning their contribution of data to UG with their annual strategic planning process. They felt that ensuring their contribution was incorporated into their work programme, rather than being included as a separate entity, was the only way they were able to provide a sufficient contribution. They were strongly in favour of this across the board, and were sceptical about the long-term viability of relying on the production of bespoke data, given the duplication of effort and resources that this was likely to entail.

Indeed, the two most commonly cited difficulties with contributing to UG were resources (in the form of time, and person-hours) and the need to adapt datasets for the specific needs of UG. This was particularly acute for the contributors of education statistics. Data on education is largely collected on a school-by-school basis, which contrasts to the broader focus of UG on geographical areas. This requires datasets to be altered before they can be submitted to UG, which complicates this process. There has been an ongoing dialogue between GCPH and the Education Services department at Glasgow City Council, and a process is now being put in place to incorporate school-level data into UG.

## **4.6 The Glasgow Game**

Interviewees that had participated in a Glasgow Game (“the Game”) were generally positive about the experience. It was seen as a good way to break down complex issues, and to begin to bring together aspects of the vast amount of information available on the UG website. One interviewee remarked that it allowed participants to “get in amongst the data”, which made both the issue and the available data less intimidating, especially to groups that were not so experienced in utilising similar data sources.

### **4.6.1 The Glasgow Game as an educational tool**

The Glasgow Game has been used in undergraduate teaching at Glasgow Caledonian University, in Higher Modern Studies teaching at Hamilton College, and with a group of S3 pupils from five schools on the subject of the ‘food environment’. The feedback from the professionals and facilitators involved in these Games was universally positive, and it was felt to be a very effective way to engage young people in complex issues and statistics.

A number of interviewees mentioned the importance of flexibility in the Game structure when playing with students. Adapting the length of time spent on each section of the Game, or even removing the second stage altogether, was felt to be a particularly useful adjustment, as it shortened the Game and made it easier to hold the students’ interest.

The preparation for playing the Game was noted to be important, and required an appreciation of the level of knowledge of the student group. It was generally felt that some development of prior knowledge, and priming on the information on UG, was useful in improving the quality of discussions within the Game. In some university courses at Glasgow Caledonian University, this meant including the Glasgow Game event towards the end of certain modules, so that some relevant topics had already been covered. Within the school environment, it was noted to be helpful to have used the website prior to the Game, to ensure that the students had a reasonable level of familiarity with the resource.

Facilitation of the Game was also noted to be an issue. All interviewees that had used the Game in an educational setting felt that it was crucial to have been able to watch and/or participate in a game led by a skilled facilitator. It was suggested that this allowed them to develop an understanding of exactly how the Game would work, and to consider ways in which they could adapt the Game to better suit their student group.

#### **4.6.2 The Glasgow Game as a discussion tool**

The Glasgow Games played by professionals were mostly seen as interesting, and a number of interviewees remarked that there was a good or positive atmosphere. However, others questioned whether anything new was being discussed, or whether all of the discussions were simply people re-iterating their “normal” positions.

All interviewees felt that the make-up of the group was important to the success of the Game, but they differed in their ways on what this would mean. Some felt that it was important to have professionals with experience of public health, and of working in the public sector, to be able to make the most of the Game, and to feel most comfortable with the data. Others agreed with this, remarking that it had been quite difficult to persuade participants with no “obvious” link to work in health that this was relevant to them.

Other interviewees, however, felt that the familiarity and homogeneity of groups like this lead to “blindingly obvious conclusions”, as people were just saying the “same old”. It was felt that there is often a danger of participants falling into their organisational “roles”, becoming defensive, thus stifling any prospect of linking indicators together, or “thinking outside the box”. Indeed, another interviewee recalled the importance of a diverse group of participants, with an example of a Game in which a participant from a social enterprise company felt the need to say: “I’m not council or health board or any of that, and your views aren’t taking account of...”. This dissenting voice was seen as important in generating ‘new discussion’. One interviewee wondered whether

more emphasis was required to show that the Game was a “safe environment” and that “nothing is right, nothing is wrong, nothing is personal, everything is valid”, to encourage participants to offer alternative perspectives. Another interviewee was more sceptical about this prospect, suggesting that “if you perform a 180 degree turn at one meeting, people would be at a loss”, and that the best way of bringing new perspectives to a topic was to bring in new participants with different experiences or backgrounds.

Some interviewees felt that the most important attribute for participants to have was their confidence in the role-playing aspect of the Game, and their ability to think broadly about the subject, beyond the indicators available on the site. Others disagreed, and felt that the Game could be a vehicle to give a voice to a greater number of participants, rather than being dominated by a few individuals in the way many meetings are. A number of interviewees also commented that the Game could be useful for bringing different individuals and perspectives into discussions, which might be difficult to incorporate otherwise.

Two interviewees felt that they were maybe not the “intended audience”. Both were responsible for data and statistics in their work, and felt that the discussions in the Game were not necessarily relevant to their roles. They suggested that the Game felt that it was more relevant to those in analytical or policy-related disciplines. Another interviewee, however, even suggested that the preponderance of “analytical people” in the Games they had attended was a hindrance in the development of actions, and that it was important to have participants that were involved in policy and planning to allow the discussions to lead to a concrete outcome.

A number of interviewees discussed the outcomes of the Glasgow Games that they had been involved in, and their perspectives on this varied. Those that were involved in the Game used to explore the question 'How can the second Strategic Development Plan (SDP2) appropriately address health issues?' were very positive about the outcomes. They felt that the ‘statements of intent’ announced in the ‘Wisdom Circle’ at the end of the event were very

important in stimulating thinking on how to generate action on the recommendations produced through the Game. A follow-up meeting with GCPH and IFF staff to discuss how to take the learning from the Game forward, and how to use it to adapt the SDP2, was described as “very useful”, and seen as a good way to consolidate the thinking drawn from the Game. It was also felt that the thinking and language in the SDP2, with regards to health, were influenced by the Game.

Other interviewees who had been involved in different Glasgow Game events were less convinced about the levels of action taken as a result of the event. One interviewee felt that some actions had been discussed, but there had been little clarity on who was responsible for taking which action, and this lack of accountability resulted in minimal action being taken. Others felt that they had not felt a sense of purpose in taking any discussed actions forward. One interviewee suggested that at the end of the Game, the sense was more of “ta-da, you’ve all had fun” than of a real push to put the actions they had discussed into practice.

## **5 Looking forward**

### ***5.1 Developing Understanding Glasgow***

#### **5.1.1 Awareness of Understanding Glasgow**

Many interviewees were keen to see more promotion of UG, in order to raise the general awareness of the resource. This stemmed from the tendency for users to forget about the resource. It was suggested that there was a need for continuing efforts at regular, small promotions of the site and its content, which might help keep the resource in people’s thoughts. One example was an increase in the dissemination of statistics on social media. There is currently a plan to put an ‘Indicator of the week’ on Twitter, to generate some attention around the site. One note of caution on the use of Twitter to promote UG, is that it is largely undertaken through the GCPH Twitter account. This may continue to reinforce the perception that UG is a GCPH project, rather

than a collaborative effort. If it were possible to engage the partner organisations, and encourage them to contribute to awareness raising through social media, this may be useful in countering this perception.

Another suggestion by an interviewee was to “piggy-back” news stories, again through social media, by providing relevant links and statistics. This may also be an opportunity to disseminate potential uses of UG: for example, a story about constrained budgets in a particular area could be used as an anchor to suggest that the information on UG be used for funding applications, or to inform decisions about where to devote scarce resources.

Discussion of raising awareness in schools and in the voluntary sector, through increased use, is discussed below (see Section 5.1.2).

### **5.1.2 Uses of Understanding Glasgow**

There were a number of potential uses, or increased uses, suggested by interviewees. The most common was greater use in schools. A number of interviewees commented on its apparent relevance to Modern Studies teaching, which corresponded with the experience of the Modern Studies teacher interviewed. This teacher was also keen to increase the awareness of UG as a teaching resource. She suggested incorporating a version of the Glasgow Game into the Scottish Modern Studies Teachers’ Conference, and contacting revision resources such as BBC Bitesize and BrightRed books, to explore the possibilities for further use. Another interviewee also commented on the potential for using elements of UG in other subjects, for example geography and mathematics. This interviewee felt that a number of subjects and skills that the children would have been learning could be exemplified or demonstrated through the use of UG and the information contained within it.

It was suggested by several interviewees that use and awareness within the voluntary or third sector could be improved. This feedback came both from within and outside the sector. The increasing presence and role of voluntary organisations in communities was noted by a number of interviewees, and the

sector was seen as an important stakeholder group for UG. Several interviewees felt the resource already had the potential to be very useful to voluntary groups, working at a community or Glasgow-wide level, especially to provide statistics for reports or funding applications. There was also some feedback from those within the sector on aspects of the site that could be improved to aid their use, which are discussed below (See section 5.1.3).

Several interviewees commented on the apparent synergies between UG and some other current pieces of work and areas of focus in Glasgow. These included, but were not limited to, the work of Glasgow City Council, with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, on building resilience, the OpenGlasgow project, and the City Observatory project developing in conjunction with the University of Strathclyde. An interview was undertaken with three members of the team working on resilience at Glasgow City Council, who were very positive about UG, and had made significant use of the information in their work thus far. They were interested in making further use of the resource, both for statistical information, and possibly in the use of a Glasgow Game. It was felt that this may aid their understanding of the interaction of the various aspects of wellbeing and resilience, and allow them to draw together the statistical information to inform their strategy.

Attempts were made to arrange interviews with representatives of the OpenGlasgow project and the City Observatory, but unfortunately this did not prove to be feasible. Efforts have been made in the past to reach out to, and collaborate with, the OpenGlasgow project, which have not yet yielded tangible results. Nevertheless, both OpenGlasgow and the City Observatory appear to have areas of work with distinct similarities to UG, and it will be important to ensure that work is not needlessly duplicated, at the cost of valuable resources.

One interviewee commented on the creation of the Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) as an opportunity for UG to become embedded in planning and decision-making processes. It was noted that the broad range of data contained within UG should offer synergies with the

integration of health and social care, and that the HSCP is likely to require good sources of data to make the case for their work, which could be provided by UG. This could potentially be a reciprocal arrangement, as this governance structure will presumably produce data in some form, along with their use.

Several interviewees mentioned their desire to see some form of analysis or synthesis of the information contained within UG. They felt this would aid understanding of the interactions between the indicators, rather than users continuing to view and use them in isolation. This is discussed further below (see Section 5.2).

Other interviewees expressed their hopes that UG could serve as a model for other areas, or that the project could be expanded. Interviewees from NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, and from Clydeplan commented on how useful it would be to have a similar resource for all council areas across the region. They also noted that a portion of that data is already available on UG, as a source of comparison between the regions. The interviewee from the SCDC also noted how much more laborious the process of gathering information about communities was in other areas, due to the lack of a comparable data repository. They were acutely aware of the significant increase in resources that would entail, and the vast amount of collaboration that would be required, and had no expectations that such an expansion would take place. Nevertheless, they did hope it would be considered in the future.

Given the strong links throughout the region, and the artificiality of the 'borders' between the council areas, a greater level of collaboration across the area would seem like a worthy exercise. Individuals in the region are not only affected by the area in which they live, but also the surrounding areas, the areas in which they work, in which they spend their leisure time, and which they travel through. Focus on individual areas may miss influences on wellbeing from elsewhere. Nevertheless, one interviewee cautioned that with increasing local devolution, there may be an increased demand for local autonomy, rather than regional collaboration.

A number of interviewees expressed a wish to see a greater push for action on the basis of the information contained within UG. Whilst this appears to be beyond the remit of UG itself, it will be explored further within the context of the Glasgow Game below (see Section 5.1.7).

### **5.1.3 Content**

A number of suggestions for the development of the content of UG were received throughout the interview process.

The most important thing for many interviewees was keeping the resource up-to-date. This was seen as important for the resource to be as useful as possible, and for it to be able to inform policy and practice. It was recognised, however, that this is heavily reliant on data contribution. This is discussed further below (see Section 5.1.6).

The areas of content weakness highlighted above (see Section 4.2) offer other avenues of development. These included economic indicators, evidence on aspects of climate change, and some of the indicators of children's health. It should be noted that the interviewees that suggested climate change as an area of weakness were willing and able to provide relevant data, and this contribution process is now underway. The Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress recommend the use of statistics of household income, consumption and wealth to give a good indications of the material living standards of the citizens of an area, and to allow discussion of the sustainability of those standards (3). The indicator recommendations from this Commission are discussed further below (see Section 6.3) They also recommend giving prominence to the distribution of these resources across the population. UG has good data on a number of different aspects of poverty, but does not necessarily cover the whole population using indicators such as household income. This may lead to an incomplete picture of the living standards of the population of Glasgow.

Those requesting development of the children's health indicators were generally those involved in their creation and data contribution. As a result, they were aware of the areas that were lacking, and were putting processes in place to gather the required data. Some of this information, such as on 'childhood obesity' and 'oral health', is beginning to filter through to the site. Other areas, such as 'disability', are still devoid of a suitable data source. One interviewee did raise the possibility of moving forward with the best available data sets in these areas. It was suggested that by presenting the available data, with its limitations clearly stated and in the public domain, it may strengthen the case for improving it. The interviewee proposed that "holding back until we have "some perfect dataset" might in fact be detrimental, as the case for improving the information remains peripheral.

It will be important to address the feedback that the information on the website may be overly negative, noted above (see Section 4.2). It can be debated whether this is the case, given UG's role as an unbiased, non-interpretative collection of information: the information may be negative, but realistically so. Nevertheless, these concerns should merit a discussion about how UG is perceived to portray life in Glasgow. Considerations may include the layout or ordering of the indicators. For example, what is the impact of having 'Benefits' as the first sub-indicator under 'Economic Participation'? Another consideration may be in the choice of indicators: do those currently chosen reflect all aspects and experiences of life in Glasgow, or are they biased towards the negative? For instance, the use of 'poverty' as an indicator mean (or simply imply) that the economic circumstances of the significant proportion of the population not living in poverty are not adequately described.

On a related note, one of the interviewees described their frustration with the "focus on barriers", not in UG specifically, but in public service research and delivery more generally. They felt that more examples of "positive deviance", of the ways people can succeed, might lead to a more constructive atmosphere and dialogue.

Another possible way of reducing the perception of negativity around UG is to actively engage communities with the data. The interviewee from the Scottish Community Development Centre described some such engagements as leading to disagreements over negative portrayal. However, it subsequently led to further discussions on whether the data was inaccurate or out-of-date, or whether maybe individuals' perception of their community was skewed. It also appeared to clarify some of the priorities of the community, and crystallise actions that they wanted to take. In this way, the information seemed to become less of an imposition on a community from outside, and more something that could be taken control of, and acted upon. This kind of community engagement is at the core of the aim of UG. However, it has to be done in the correct manner, and one of the best ways to achieve it would seem to be to involve and utilise community engagement specialists. This would provide the expertise required to give the best chance of success, but also hopefully reduce the perception that such engagement was tokenistic, or an outside imposition.

An interesting suggestion from some interviewees was the creation of a page containing examples of how UG can be, and has been, used. It was suggested this could take the form of written testimonials, short 'voxpop' interviews, or very brief case-studies. The interviewees thought this might encourage greater use of UG, by demonstrating to a wide audience how the information on the site might be useful to them. It would be important to include a range of uses to make such a section useful to the greatest number of individuals and organisations. An example noted by two interviewees was the website for 'Ketso', a creative engagement kit. The website includes a page of case-studies and examples of uses of the kit, and a page of 'how-to' videos. This may be something that could be considered for UG.

Several interviewees emphasised the importance of having good links beyond the site to further sources of data. This was seen as a crucial part of making UG useful to the widest possible audience, as it allowed those wanting to explore the data further, or to understand the methodology in more detail, to explore this information. Providing these links was also seen as a way of

avoiding the site becoming laden with statistics and statistical jargon, which might overwhelm and alienate many people. However, it is important for the purpose of UG that it does not become a mere signposting device, pointing users in the direction of other sources, but does itself contain information.

#### **5.1.4 Layout**

Some interviewees offered suggestions on improvements that could be made to the layout of the site. These generally focused on the presentation of the data. There was positive feedback on the infographics as a method of portraying the information, and these were a device that a number of interviewees were keen to see more of. Likewise, the summary statistics presented on 'Overview' pages were positively received, with several interviewees commenting on the importance of succinct, headlines or 'Twitter-style' pieces of information. One interviewee suggested a greater use of animations or visualisations of data may be useful. They felt that these were a good way of communicating complicated concepts in an understandable way, and cited the example of a number of American think-tanks, such as the Brookings Institution, that make good use of such visualisations.

Two interviewees were enthusiastic about the potential of Geographical Information Systems (GIS). They felt that, in a similar manner to the infographics and visualisations, this could be a useful way of encouraging interaction with data. It was suggested that the production of GIS maps would allow users to more easily explore issues affecting their local area, as well as across the city as a whole.

There were two suggestions about the layout of the overall site. Two interviewees suggested the possibility of creating a 'Favourites' section for users, or a personalised 'dashboard' with the most used indicators displayed more prominently. This would, however, presumably require a function to be added to the website to allow users to 'Log in'. It may also detract from the aim of UG in providing a range of interlinked domains, by encouraging users to continue to concentrate on their obvious areas of expertise.

One interviewee, who had been involved in the development of the Children's Indicators, discussed the choice of the indicator domains. She noted that discussions had taken place during the development phase over whether the domains should reflect the 'SHANARRI' indicators (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included) that form the basis of the 'Getting It Right For Every Child' initiative. Ultimately, it was decided that the domains would be slightly different, but she suggested that it would be important to revisit this issue with users and stakeholders, to assess how this might affect their use of the resource.

It will also be important to address some of the smaller comments on the layout to the site. Ensuring the consistency of the colour scheme across each indicator is useful in providing clarity, by emphasising the grouping visually. The 'Community Profiles' page would likely benefit from an explanation, at the top of the page, of what this resource is, and what it can show.

#### **5.1.5 'Additional' sections**

As there was not widespread use of the 'Assets' page, there was limited feedback from external interviews on ways to develop this page. The Scottish Community Development Centre did mention the case-studies and resources available on the 'Communities Channel Scotland' website, and suggested that links could be made between the two. If there were examples of successful assets-based development projects that had made use of UG, to better understand their constituency or to complete funding applications, this might be particularly interesting. This might demonstrate to other community projects how the resource may be useful in their work.

Within GCPH, there was an appetite for developing this area of the website to make it more user-friendly. It was suggested that greater clarity was required on what exactly 'assets-based approaches' involve. It was proposed that a short explanation be displayed when the computer pointer hovered over the link on the home page, in a similar manner to that currently employed for the

indicators on the mandala. It may also facilitate quicker understanding if the explanation 'assets-based approaches' were moved above the picture on the 'Assets' page – this may be a minor change, but would put the description immediately in the eye-line of visitors to the page. Alternatively, a small expansion of the second half of the second sentence of the first paragraph on the page could provide a rough description.

Finally, an infographic exists on the GCPH 'Animating Assets' page that explains assets-based approaches. This could be added to the page on UG to facilitate visitors understanding of the contents of the page.

There was also a suggestion that the 'Animating Assets' work of the GCPH may also have some synergies with UG. This may offer an opportunity to develop the content of the 'Assets' section of UG, through new case-studies, 'digital stories', and land-use mapping. Given the nature of this work programme as a collaboration between the GCPH, the SCDC and local communities, it may also offer an opportunity for new relationships to be developed, and to connect directly with members of the public. Finally, the information provided by UG may be of use to those undertaking these community development projects, and this may in turn provide further examples and exemplars of how UG can be used to encourage and strengthen civic engagement.

There was good feedback over the course of the interview process on how the 'Films' section might be developed. This could be divided into thoughts on how the films might be used, and thoughts on what any new films could look like.

One suggestion from interviewees was to have the 'Introduction to Understanding Glasgow' film playing at the start of events, such as the GCPH Seminar Series, as the audience are taking their seats. This would require minimal resources, and may serve to raise awareness of the website as a whole.

Other interviewees had particular groups that they felt would benefit from seeing the films. One group of interviewees suggested that showing senior managers and elected officials the films would provide them with some evidence of the human experience behind the statistics that they may be used to dealing with. Others suggested that undergraduate university students would benefit from watching the films, as it might encourage a different way of thinking, and challenge their preconceived ideas, stereotypes, and even prejudices. The films could be relevant across a spectrum of courses, including Medicine, Nursing, Public Policy, and Urban Studies to name a few. Speaking from personal experience, medical students, particularly younger undergraduates, could learn huge amounts from watching these films, and this learning would almost certainly be beneficial in their future interactions with patients. School students were mentioned repeatedly as an important target audience, as discussed above (see Section 5.1.2).

With regards to future films, there was some discussion of the potential content and design of these. Two interviewees suggested that films exploring issues of race, and/or the experiences of people from ethnic minorities living in Glasgow would be interesting and useful. On this subject, it was suggested that it would be interesting to explore how this interacted with other aspects of wellbeing, such as poverty. Another suggested discussing the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in the city would be very relevant across the public and voluntary sectors. Childhood experiences of living in a 'deprived area', or the experiences of children transitioning from primary to secondary school, or from school to work/college/university were mentioned as possible subjects for a future film, as it was felt these could be useful to those working in the education system. Finally, one interviewee suggested that some exploration of issues around gender and gender inequality may be of interest.

With regards to film design, while feedback was very complimentary on the style of the available, some interviewees suggested that it may be interesting to engage with a different film-maker. This might result in a film that may engage people in a different way, or provide a different perspective on the issues. It was suggested that if the films continued to be produced by the

same film-maker, there was a danger that future films would be too similar to those already available, and interest may wane.

As discussed above, some interviewees felt that the films were too divorced from the statistics available on the site, and that future films should try to address this disconnect. One interviewee suggested interspersing brief statistical pop-ups throughout the film, to link the experiences of the film participants with the relevant issue across the population of Glasgow. This could be in the form of text, or could be through a voiceover. One suggestion to improve the integration of the current films would be to have links from certain relevant indicators to particular films. This may allow users to read the statistics, and then link to an exploration of the human experience behind the population level statistics. A similar idea may also encourage more users to visit the case-studies of assets-based approaches.

One interviewee suggested that, rather than using more films to emphasise the human experience of living in Glasgow, there should be an attempt to occupy the 'middle-ground' between quantitative population level statistics, and individual experiences as portrayed in the current films. This interviewee felt that aggregated qualitative data would achieve this, by offering a broader range of experiences, while still maintaining that intimate connection to people's lives. Representative quotations could then be used to as an adjunct to the statistics on certain indicator pages.

### **5.1.6 Contributing to Understanding Glasgow**

The subject of how to improve the contribution process was discussed with those interviewees currently involved in providing data for UG. There was a general consensus that ways to streamline the process were important, to make it as easy as possible for contributors to fulfil their role. Unfortunately, there was less consensus on how to go about this. One interviewee was positive about the growing influence of technology, and hopeful of greater integration of data systems across public sector organisations. It was felt that this might allow the process to be developed to allow a significant portion of

the website to be updated in near real-time as the data became available, whilst reducing the time required by the individual contributors. However, it was recognised that this does not appear to be feasible currently.

Different contributors structured their contributions differently, with some attempting to pass on relevant data as it became available, while others would collect their data and submit it annually. This diversity of contribution processes may be an inevitable consequence of differing data sources, content requirements, and other commitments, and a standardised process may not be feasible. Nevertheless, it would seem sensible for contributors to discuss their processes with each other, which may generate new ideas, and encourage a greater sense of collaboration and involvement in the project. The Community of Interest group may be a good forum for such discussions, although it should be noted that the last of these was very poorly attended.

On this subject, it was seen as important, particularly within GCPH, that UG remains a collaborative process between the partner organisations, and does not drift into becoming solely a GCPH responsibility. The collaborative process was seen as one of the great positives of the design of UG, and is critical to the intangible outcomes from the project, as discussed below (see Section 6.5). It is also crucial for the contribution process, both to allow fast and easy access to the most relevant and up to date data sources, and to spread the workload of contribution. This second aspect is particularly important for keeping the resource up-to-date, especially with such significant pressures on resources in the current climate.

In order to encourage continued engagement with UG, it will be important to build and maintain buy-in to the project. This may be developed through the reciprocity of the resource for some contributors, who both submit and use data. However, for those contributors who use the resource less frequently, a different approach will be required. One possibility may be to include examples of how the information is being used, which may give contributors clarity on the value of their submissions to others. Another may be to emphasise the value of the Community of Interest meetings, and to ensure

that participants feel that they are receiving something in return for their input, even if that is simply the opportunity to develop or maintain professional relationships to improve collaboration in other areas of work. Moving forward, it will be critical to consider why people contribute to UG, and what might encourage them to increase their contributions. Relying on altruism as a motivation does not seem likely to be a sustainable model long-term.

### **5.1.7 The Glasgow Game**

Comments from interviewees on potential developments for the Glasgow Game can be divided into changes to the Game itself, and ideas for its use in different settings.

With regards to the structure of the Game itself, one point returned to by a number of interviewees was the importance of flexibility and adaptability. This was seen as especially important in Games in an educational setting, as it allowed the Game to be shortened to fit into timetables, and to keep the Game moving along to avoid students becoming bored and disengaged. One interviewee felt that the timings had been too prescriptive the first time she had played the Game, and so adapted these when facilitating a session with her students. She felt that this had improved the flow of the game, and maintained student interest. Another interviewee described the removal of the second 'Act', when using the Game with a group of younger school pupils. This reduced the length of the event, and again served to keep the students engaged and interested in the process.

In order to encourage wider uptake of the Glasgow Game, it will be important to address the issue of facilitation. This was discussed above (see Section 4.6.1), as those who had facilitated the game in an educational setting felt that they could not have done so without watching or taking part in a game first. The development of the 'Glasgow Game in a Box' is intended to negate this requirement through the inclusion of an instructions booklet, but feedback will be required from facilitators on the sufficiency of this in explaining the Game. If possible, encouraging a network of facilitators to develop may help, allowing

knowledge of how the game is played and used to spread. This may allow new users to contact someone with more experience to facilitate their first game, before they put the game into use themselves. Dissemination of the film clips of games, such as the 'Connected City' event, may also be useful for this purpose. A further film offering a clear outline of how the game works, and emphasising the important points may also be beneficial.

With regards to new settings in which to play the Game, this feedback was often related to the discussions on who was involved in the Games, and what the outcomes were (see Section 4.6.2). As noted above, there were differing views on who would be involved in the 'ideal' group of participants, and this is something that will need to be addressed. Some interviewees valued the incorporation of different voices to offer differing perspectives, which may stimulate new discussions and encourage participants to alter their view of the subject. Others felt that it was important that participants were well-versed in related work, in order to facilitate their engagement with the data and the Game as a whole. Neither perspective is necessarily right or wrong, and it is beyond the remit of this paper to make a definitive decision one way or the other. It is something that must be borne in mind for future Games, and the desired atmosphere and function of the Game should be considered carefully in the event planning phase.

Interviewees offered some thoughts on how to increase the number of actions taken as a result of the Game. Some felt that this was related to the roles of the participants, as discussed in the previous paragraph, and that involving those in strategic planning and policy roles was crucial. In a similar vein, it was also suggested that the Game could be used by strategic planning groups, such as the Community Planning Partnership, which might encourage concrete outcomes.

Other interviewees felt that the facilitator or organiser could take the lead on generating outcomes. One suggested that it was important to ensure that at the end of the Game, it was made clear who was going to take responsibility for certain actions, and this process could be driven by the facilitator.

Interviewees from Clydeplan felt that a follow-up meeting with Bruce Whyte and Andrew Lyon after the Game had helped clarify the thinking that had been generated, and turn that into recommendations and actions. This facilitation of conversations following a Game event was also proposed by another interviewee, and was seen as a way to build on relationships and potential collaborations that may develop during the event. Finally, one interviewee suggested that it was important to be clear at the outset about the purpose of the Game being to generate actions, to add a sense of focus.

### **5.1.8 Other developments for Understanding Glasgow**

A hugely important area for development and maintenance of Understanding Glasgow is the cross-organisational input and ownership. In many of the interviews conducted, there was a very strong sense that Understanding Glasgow was seen as a 'GCPH project'. Strengthening the buy-in to the contribution process should help to increase the number of organisations who feel they have a stake in the project (see Section 5.1.6). However, there are a number of current and potential partner organisations who may not contribute data, but may be integral users of the resource, and may also offer useful feedback on how to maintain and develop it. These organisations are still crucial to the success of Understanding Glasgow, and it will be important to consider how best to encourage and incentivise them to engage with the project. It would be interesting to attempt to engage private sector organisations or representatives, such as the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce or Invest Glasgow, in the Community of Interest group. This may provide an alternative perspective to the discussions, stimulate debate around relevant issues, and encourage the sharing of their experience, insight and perspective.

One possible development, using UG, rather than of the content itself, might be to develop stronger links with other indicator projects. Contact was made with the Boston Indicators project during the initial development process, and positive feedback was received from beyond Scotland. Organisations such as the Community Indicators Consortium and the National Neighbourhood

Indicators Partnership (based in the United States), the European Institute for Comparative Urban Research and the European Community Health Indicators Transition Network, and the UK Healthy Cities Network all appear to have a range of interesting and potentially useful resources available. Membership of such an organisation may also allow conversations and relationships to develop with other projects, and allow the sharing and dissemination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and ideas for development. Another resource that may be worthy of further exploration is the Open Indicators Consortium, based at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell, which develops data management and visualisation tools. This may be useful in developing both the display of content on UG, and also in streamlining the contribution of data.

## **5.2 A synthesis of Understanding Glasgow?**

With the current 10-year anniversary of the GCPH, one of the Centre's current areas of focus has been to synthesise the findings of the previous ten years of research into a coherent narrative. In October 2014, a synthesis report, *'Ten years of the Glasgow Centre for Population Health: the evidence and implications'*, was published. This has received significant online interest, and was the third most accessed report on the GCPH website, despite its publication late in the year. The prospect of a similar piece of integrative work for UG was discussed with interviewees. The Boston Indicators Project, which produces biennial reports, was also noted as an example of what such a report might comprise.

Feedback on the prospect of a synthesis report for UG was mixed. Some interviewees were positive about the suggestion, noting that it may offer an opportunity to bring together some of the learning and information from across the indicators. This was felt to be quite difficult for users to achieve, and that the provision of a framework on how the indicators interacted may be of benefit. Others were less enthusiastic, with an interviewee from the University of Glasgow suggesting that it would likely be of "peripheral interest" to the students on the Masters in Public Health course. Caution was also expressed

about the opportunity cost of producing such a report, when resources are already stretched: where would the resource to carry out such a piece of work come from, and could they be better used on another project?

The majority of feedback could be classified as cautious, qualified positivity. As noted in the previous paragraph, an overview of the information contained within UG was seen by many interviewees to be a good idea. Some interviewees, however, wanted to see a report go further than a descriptive overview. A number were interested in discussion not just about *what* wellbeing was like in Glasgow, but *why* it was like that. They felt that some academic commentary and opinion on reasons behind the statistics would be interesting. Others wanted to see specific recommendations contained within such a report, suggesting that it could be used as a “call to action”. These views were not shared by all interviewees, however. Many felt that this type of commentary and conjecture was outwith the remit of UG, and that by offering opinions on the reasons behind the figures and trends, UG might lose its reputation as an unbiased source of information. They felt that if any such commentary was to be offered, it would have to be firmly grounded in evidence. Another interviewee cautioned that developing proposals or recommendations might constitute “over-reach”, and that communities and practitioners should be encouraged to develop, and take ownership of, their own ideas for action.

Many interviewees were interested in the idea of some form of synthesis, but suggested that a report was not the best form for this to take. A number commented on the number of reports that are produced and circulated, and the infrequency with which people are able to thoroughly read and digest the contents. The idea of synthesis seminars, workshops or interactive events were suggested, as a more engaging way of discussing the learning from UG. One group of interviewees, who were particularly against the idea of commentary or opinion in a synthesis, suggested that any synthesis work should really be “part of the conversation”, rather than a “definitive document”.

Others emphasised that if a report were to be produced, the important thing would be the events organised around it. These would serve to generate interest in, and discussion of, the report, and develop an impetus for the use of the knowledge contained within it. People were noted to like having the opportunity “to have a presentation, to see it [the report], to discuss it”.

One interviewee suggested that the GCPH “does tend to do things differently”, and that a report would not be that different from many other outputs. This of course emphasised the creeping perception that UG is synonymous with the GCPH, which is a point that must be countered. It does, however, suggest an alternative way of producing a report that may leave the unbiased reputation of UG intact: have the report produced by the GCPH, not UG. While the distinction may appear to be small, and slightly artificial, it may serve to satisfy both viewpoints on the inclusion of opinion and commentary noted above.

Finally, a number of interviewees stressed the importance of communication with partners if a report were to be produced, in order to avoid duplication. Several mentioned the Director of Public Health’s biennial report as a particularly relevant piece of work. Some interviewees felt that there was room for both documents, and indeed they may be able to work synergistically, but that there was a need for close communication to avoid needless overlap.

## **6 Evaluating Understanding Glasgow**

The UG website states:

“With this website we aim to create an accessible resource that informs a wide audience about the wellbeing of Glasgow’s population across a range of domains (e.g. health, poverty, education, environment), allows progress to be monitored and encourages civic engagement in the cross-cutting issues that face the city.” (4)

This statement of aims contains five main areas of importance for the project:

- Good accessibility
- Reaching a wide audience
- Covering a range of domains of wellbeing
- The ability to monitor progress
- Encouraging civic engagement

## **6.1 Accessibility of Understanding Glasgow**

UG demonstrates a good level of accessibility. The fact that it is an open-access website, and not an intranet page, was complimented by one interviewee, as this had allowed her to disseminate it much more widely. However, the existence of UG as a solely online platform may also hinder accessibility. According to the Scottish Household Survey 2013, only 70% of households in Glasgow have access to the internet (5). At the national level, it is known that home internet access is correlated with household income and deprivation (as calculated by the Scottish Index of Multiple deprivation), and that Glasgow has an outside proportion of its population in the most deprived groups (6). This may lead to an inequality in access to information, and therefore in a small way contribute to perpetuating existing inequalities.

From the website statistics provided by Google Analytics, in the 90 days to Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2015, 74% of the visitors to the site had come via search engines. This suggests that the site can be accessed relatively easily by those not looking for it specifically. This is reinforced by the search terms used by visitors arriving via search engines. The top term is “understanding glasgow”, suggesting users searching for this site in particular. However, the next nine most popular terms are terms relating to aspects of life in Glasgow, such as poverty, population, crime and unemployment. This suggests that UG is readily available as a source of statistics for queries concerning Glasgow. It is also in contrast to the main GCPH website, for which the most popular search terms suggest a good prior knowledge of the Centre’s work.

In 2014, around 24% of visits to UG were from mobile or tablet users, up from 16% in 2013. This also demonstrates good accessibility, whilst reinforcing the

need to ensure the website reads well on smaller screens. Access via mobile devices may also help to broaden access, as the use of mobile networks may reduce the dependence on home internet access, and may ameliorate some of the related concerns noted above.

## **6.2 Breadth of the audience for Understanding Glasgow**

Evaluating the breadth of the audience for UG is more difficult, but certain inferences can be made. Google Analytics statistics show that the number of unique visits to the website grew from 21,800 in 2013 to 31,700 in 2014, a 46% increase. This in itself suggests an increased interest in the site. Combined with data showing that 75% of visits to UG are made by new visitors (as opposed to returning visitors), this suggests that the audience for UG has indeed become significantly larger over the past year.

Statistics from Google Analytics also suggest that there may be a greater number of 'casual' users of the website, who visit looking for specific pieces of information, rather than visiting to explore the site itself. This inference is drawn from evidence that in 2014, the average time spent on the site dropped (from 3:59 in 2013 to 3:08), as did the average number of pages viewed per visit (from 4 in 2013 to 3.5). This increased proportion of 'casual' visitors may suggest that UG is finding a broader audience, beyond those with a specific interest in the site itself, or with a research or service background in wellbeing and associated subjects.

Google Analytics can also provide some information regarding the location of visitors to the site. Unsurprisingly, Glasgow supplies the highest percentage of users accessing the website, followed by Edinburgh and London. It is interesting to note, however, that the percentage of users identified as being located in Glasgow has increased from 33% in 2013 to 39% in 2014. Given the concurrent 46% increase in unique visits over the same period, this suggests a significant increase in visits from within Glasgow, suggesting that UG is reaching a larger group within the city than had previously been the case. Some evidence is also provided on the location of users by

organisational network, though this information is less reliable. It shows the main organisational users being, in descending order: Glasgow City Council; the NHS; Glasgow Caledonian University; University of Glasgow, and; University of Strathclyde. This suggests that there is a reasonable level of awareness and use of UG amongst partner organisations.

Individual reports of the way UG has been utilised also contribute to the evidence for the breadth of the audience. However, these are collected on an *ad hoc* basis, and often require pre-existing relationships to be in place, or rely on pure coincidental discussions, in order for those involved in the project to be made aware. Nevertheless, those uses that are known about do provide some information, and have been discussed above (see Section ).

### **6.3 Covering a range of domains**

UG appears to be very successful in meeting the aim of covering a range of domains. UG covers 19 indicator groups (12 adult indicators, 7 children's indicators), each containing a number of individual indicators related to wellbeing. Interviewees for this review generally felt that the indicators provided a reasonably comprehensive overview of wellbeing in Glasgow, though there were some areas of weakness noted (see Section 4.2). One particular limitation in this regard is data availability and suitability. This may mean that some indicators are not the 'ideal' representation of a particular aspect of wellbeing, but are the closest practical approximation. With regular review of the available data, this should remain a relatively minor drawback.

One source of recommendations for dimensions of wellbeing is the 'Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress', by Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi (2009). This report was commissioned by the President of France, as a result of frustration with the inadequacy of available statistics on wellbeing. It contains numerous recommendations to improve the measurement and understanding of population wellbeing, and serves to highlight some of the strengths and weaknesses of UG. It should be noted that the indicators on UG were chosen with Glasgow specifically in

mind, and are designed to reflect the particular characteristics of life in the city (7). The recommendations within the Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi report are not a comprehensive list of wellbeing dimensions, nor are they a list of absolute requirements – they simply provide an academic perspective of what could be considered (3).

The report identifies eight dimensions that should be simultaneously considered when describing wellbeing:

- Material living standards (income, consumption and wealth);
- Health;
- Education;
- Personal activities including work;
- Political voice and governance;
- Social connections and relationships;
- Environment (present and future conditions);
- Insecurity, of an economic as well as a physical nature (3).

From this list of dimensions, UG contains excellent levels of information on: health, education, personal activities (under 'Cultural vitality) and work ('Economic participation), political voice ('Civic engagement'), social connections and relationships ('Social capital'), present environment, and aspects of insecurity (multiple indicator groups, including 'Economic participation', 'Social capital', 'Community safety' and 'Mindset'). In addition, UG contains a wealth of further information, including statistics on the population, transport, and lifestyle.

Content appears less strong on political governance, future environmental conditions, and certain aspects of material living standards. The latter two areas were highlighted by interviewees in the course of this review (see Section 4.2), and processes are already being put in place to improve the information available on future environmental conditions and developments. Suggestions for development of the content of UG can be found above (see Section 5.1.3).

## **6.4 Ability to monitor trends**

UG appears to be well designed to monitor trends in the indicators it contains. Many of the indicators already contain trends drawn from available statistics, providing a greater sense of perspective than could be given by a snapshot in time. This facility should be enhanced with the passage of time, as the resource becomes more established, more data becomes available. The ability to keep UG up-to-date with the latest statistics will be vital in continuing to achieve this aim. The demonstration of trends is of little use if data for the most recent years is not available.

## **6.5 Encouraging civic engagement**

The success of UG in encouraging civic engagement is difficult to assess objectively. This stems partly from the amorphous nature of 'civic engagement', and partly from the informal and *ad hoc* feedback mechanisms on the use of UG as a resource. Nevertheless, a commentary on the available evidence is offered.

Civic engagement has been defined as:

"... working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes." (8)

This definition of civic engagement appears to correspond well to the aims of UG, as stated both on the website, and in the book chapter written describing its genesis (4,7). UG clearly aims to develop the knowledge of the communities of Glasgow, through the provision of easily accessible local data. It also plays a certain part in promoting values, by its emphasis on the holistic nature of wellbeing, and the range of dimensions of quality of life that it measures. Development of skills and motivation may be difficult through the website itself, but the Glasgow Game may serve as a useful vehicle for this

purpose. Having made data available to a wide audience, and ensured that it is both physically and intellectually accessible will serve to encourage a plurality of processes, political and non-political, to engage with the resource. In these regards, UG appears to be well-designed and well placed to encourage civic engagement.

This definition, however, also serves to emphasize the difficulty in objective measurement of civic engagement. Measurement of the level of knowledge and skills in a particular community or population may be very difficult. Values and motivation, while abstract concepts, can be measured to an extent through thoughtful use of survey questions, as in the Glasgow and Scottish Household Surveys. Many relevant indicators, such as 'feeling of involvement in local community', 'voter turnout in elections' and 'perception of influence over local authority decisions', to name a few, are already present on UG, and offer an insight into the landscape and trends of civic engagement in Glasgow.

Influence over political and non-political processes can again be difficult to measure, in part as a result of the imperfect method of gathering information on the uses of UG. To an extent, this is exacerbated by the apparent likelihood that UG itself would not be cited in reports and documents. This is an unfortunate consequence of the excellent references and links to the original datasets. These are clearly crucial to the validity and reliability of the site, but also seem likely to ensure that it is the original source of the data that will be cited, rather than UG. This removes a potential measure of UG's influence, namely gathering information on citations.

There are, however, other ways of inferring the civic influence of community indicator projects. It has been suggested that there are three categories of outcomes from indicator projects: intangible; concrete, and; measurable (9).

Intangible outcomes are regarded as consisting of the generation of '*social and organizational capital*', through the development of new relationships, increasing awareness, shifting values, and encouraging and facilitating discussions and conversations (9) UG demonstrates some encouraging

progress in this area, and appears to be well structured to facilitate further intangible outcomes.

The collaborative nature of the process of developing Understanding Glasgow created the first opportunity for intangible outcomes (7). Discussions with over 40 local partners from the public and voluntary sector were central to the development of the resource, as were conversations with external organisations with relevant experience, such as the London Health Commission and the Boston Indicators Project (7). This provided a forum for discussing the important dimensions of wellbeing that were required to produce a comprehensive resource. It also provided a forum for new conversations and professional relationships to develop. This has continued, on a smaller scale, with the meeting of a Community of Interest group.

Another related process that has facilitated intangible outcomes has been the commitment to cross-organisational input. It has been made very clear from the outset that UG is not solely a GCPH project, and the partner organisations are just that: partners. Their input is crucial in a number of ways: contributing data; steering the direction of the resource; expanding its use, and many others. This also seems likely to have facilitated improved inter-organisational relationships, and may serve to increase collaboration in future work. One interviewee commented on how interesting they had found this aspect of their involvement, as it had given them an insight into the work of others that they might otherwise not have had. However, there is a sense that UG is becoming more and more synonymous with the GCPH, as discussed above (see Section 5.1.8)

Glasgow Games have also proven to be a valuable forum for discussion and new conversations, allowing the connection of disparate individuals and organisations, and encouraging everyone to have a voice (see Section 4.6).

There is also evidence of the provision of the information itself acting as a stimulant to discussion. An employee of the SCDC described occasions in which community members felt the information provided about their area was

not reflective of their experience of living there, and this disconnect was used as a basis for discussions around local priorities and needs.

Shift in values is more difficult to discern, and there is evidence that a shift in values towards a broader appreciation of wellbeing was already underway as UG was being developed. Indeed, one such shift, the commitment to research a range of indicators of wellbeing in the City Strategy Action Plan has been noted to be key in generating the initial impetus for UG (7).

Concrete outcomes are related to actions, and may include influencing a change in perspective or focus in behaviours, decisions, agendas and programmes, the incorporation of provided knowledge and models into planning processes, and even inducing a shift in resource provision (9). As discussed above, with regards to the City Strategy Action Plan, there was already a shifting focus towards the importance of a holistic view of wellbeing at the time UG came into being. Some concrete outcomes from UG are demonstrable, with the incorporation of information in planning at a strategic and community level. In strategic planning, UG has been used in the development of the Strategic Development Report 2 (SDP2) by Clydeplan, in annual strategic planning by Community Safety Glasgow, and in forming a basis for Glasgow City Council work on building resilience. Glasgow Life has used the Community Profiles on UG at an in-between level, allowing strategic planning of delivery of services within the local community of their venues. The Scottish Community Development Centre and the Dumbarton Road Environmental Corridor Trust have made use of the Community Profiles at a local level to plan and assess community initiatives. These examples demonstrate the value of UG as an adjunct to planning for a wide range of groups, and suggest that further concrete outcomes should be achievable.

Finally, measureable outcomes may often be seen as the ultimate goal of indicators projects. These outcomes constitute change: progress in the indicators or measurements included in the resource, suggesting a positive impact of the project on its underlying concern (9). Increasing the wellbeing of the population of Glasgow is not, however, one of the stated aims of UG. It

aims to inform debate on wellbeing, to provide relevant information, and to engage the population in decisions that impact wellbeing, but it does not aim to produce increased wellbeing itself.

If this was to become an aim of UG in the future, consideration would be required as to the measurement of such progress. With the wealth of indicators on UG, and the multi-dimensional nature of wellbeing, demonstrating an empirical increase for the population of Glasgow may be difficult.

One possibility may arise through work on synthesis of the information within the indicators, which is discussed below (see Section 5.2). Such a project may provide evidence of whether wellbeing in Glasgow is increasing. Alternatively, relevant indicators could be chosen as 'Key Performance Indicators' for UG itself. Choosing such indicators would be fraught with difficulty, and require discussion and debate as to the most appropriate choices. Many available indicators measure *means* to the *end* of increasing wellbeing, rather than measuring wellbeing itself: unless a strong causal link can be proven between that means and wellbeing, there is a danger of measuring the wrong outcome.

## **7 Conclusion**

Understanding Glasgow is widely viewed as a good resource, providing a broad overview of wellbeing and life circumstances in Glasgow. The resource is generally well-used, and the content and layout is widely complimented.

The Glasgow Game has proven a highly valuable adjunct to the online indicators, and should have many further applications in the future. There are areas for improvement and development of the resource, notably the 'assets' section, some indicator sections and in the process for contributing data.

Wider use of UG appears attainable, and indeed interview feedback suggests an as-yet unmet demand for the resource. Looking forward it will be important to engage stakeholders in a discussion over this feedback, and to consider how best to develop UG for the future.

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## 9 Appendix 1

### Questions

- **Have you used Understanding Glasgow? If so, what for?**
  - How did you find the website?
  - Did it provide the information you were looking for?
  - Are there any issues or indicators that you feel are missing, or could be developed?
- **Did you access any of the 'additional' sections of the site? (Films, Assets, Profiles, Learning Zone)**
  - If so, what for?
  - What did you like about these sections?
  - Are there any ways you feel these areas could be developed?
- **Have you been involved in any Glasgow Games?**
  - What was your experience of this?
  - Do you think it generated new ideas about wellbeing?
- **Do you have any thoughts on how the awareness and use of Understanding Glasgow could be increased?**
  - Are there any individuals or organisations you feel would particularly benefit from the resource?
- **Are you involved in contributing data to Understanding Glasgow?**
  - How have you found this process?
  - Are there ways you think the contribution process could be improved?
- **Would you be interested in a piece of work that aimed to bring together or synthesise some of the information on Understanding Glasgow? E.g. a biennial report?**