

# Community engagement report

## The M74 study: longitudinal follow-up of the health effects of a new urban motorway

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# 1. Executive summary

In 2011, a new five-mile, six-lane section of the M74 motorway was opened, running through predominantly deprived neighbourhoods in south-eastern Glasgow. We conducted a study to assess how this new urban motorway affected travel and activity patterns, road accidents and wellbeing in local communities.

Alongside the study, we conducted a complementary programme of community engagement, brokered by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) and the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC). There were two phases, the first conducted prior to the study, and the second once emerging study findings were available. In the first phase, local community organisations were invited to comment on whether issues associated with the motorway were of concern. The motorway was not a hot topic, but respondents highlighted the role of the motorway in facilitating wider neighbourhood regeneration. The initial engagement gave us a sense of what was important to communities, helped us build relationships, and raised awareness of the study among local stakeholders. It informed the design of the study, particularly the qualitative work, which explored the motorway in the context of wider changes in the physical or social environment.

In the second phase, a series of community events were organised to communicate emerging study findings. Four informal 'pop-up' events were conducted in local spaces including a shopping centre and a community hall. Passers-by were invited to discuss the study with researchers. In addition, a formal stakeholder-focused event was conducted, using interactive methods including a 'talking wall' and 'world café'. Attendees included representatives from government, community groups and local residents. At all community events, researchers and attendees reflected on study findings, worked together to co-produce their interpretation, and discussed wider opportunities and challenges facing local communities.

As well as informing the study design and interpretation of findings, our community engagement was intended to stimulate consideration of how study findings might promote action and change in the interests of communities. The immediate impacts include giving a voice to local residents, including some living in extreme proximity to the motorway; and communicating study findings to stakeholders in policy and practice, including some directly involved in decision-making regarding the new motorway and subsequent major roads.

## 2. Introduction

Community engagement is good research practice from both an ethical and a practical perspective. It can serve a variety of purposes, often as a means to inform study design or feedback to participants or others with an interest in the topic. More widely, community engagement can be used as means to collaborate and co-produce an overall interpretation of findings, to feed into the evidence base that community groups may find useful in advocating for policy change or development priorities, or to stimulate community participation in broader city-wide initiatives.

The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) has been involved in community research for over 15 years. This experience confirms that research can provide the information and understanding that makes action accountable, effective and inclusive. It can also promote understanding and cohesion in communities and contribute to empowerment. The Community Empowerment Act 2015 encourages communities to base action on community needs and opportunities using the participation request route (a formal request to a public service authority to participate in an outcome improvement process). Therefore, the need for research to be focused, available and useful is important.

Some draw distinctions between community action research and academic research, and both approaches can be valuable to communities. In community action research the issue to be researched, the design and conduct of the research, and the use of research results are led by the community. By contrast, academic research is typically external to the community, objective and controlled to ensure that findings are robust. Community engagement in research can be used to combine both approaches, although usually from an academic standpoint rather than a community-led one. In such cases there is a recognition that findings will potentially be of interest and value to the community, and that community perspectives can inform the research in various ways.

The M74 study is an example of this approach. The construction of major new urban motorways is usually controversial, and likely to have some impact on neighbourhoods along the route. Community concerns about noise and air pollution, health, road safety and accessibility are typically raised. These impacts have implications for environmental justice if the motorway is to the detriment of deprived communities while advantaging others from outside the community.

In the M74 study the main elements of community engagement were:

- An initial scoping of community issues and perceptions, to inform the design of the research.
- Contacting, networking and facilitating access to community organisations and networks.
- Communicating preliminary findings to communities for reflection and elaboration.
- Making findings available and accessible to community organisations and networks that may wish to use them to inform their activities.

### 3. Policy context

The evolving policy framework in Scotland in relation to health, regeneration and community empowerment provides an encouraging context for the use of study findings to inform action and improve the quality of community life. Together, this set of policies offer the potential for citizens and communities to contribute to and shape decision-making processes relating to urban planning and infrastructure. Findings from the M74 study, appropriately communicated and set within a broader context, provide an opportunity for local people and stakeholders to interact with findings, reflect on their implications and to use this knowledge to influence plans for the future. The developments to which this is potentially relevant, and which provide a context include:

#### **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act is now in place, and introduces a number of provisions intended to give greater opportunity for communities to take forward action to improve neighbourhood conditions and address problems affecting their interests. The provisions focus on disadvantage and inequality, and include the strengthening of community input on how public services are planned and provided, and extensions in the right to buy or have greater control over land, buildings or other local assets. The most significant provision in relation to the M74 study may be the right to make 'participation requests', enabling communities to identify needs and issues and request action to be taken on these. It is here that robust, research-based evidence will be of particular value to communities.

#### **Health and social care**

The integration of health and social care includes a requirement to base planning and provision around 'localities', which will provide a mechanism for local leadership of service planning, and which 'must have real influence on how resources are spent in their area'. This should also support a proactive approach to capacity building in communities, by forging the connections necessary for participation, and help to foster better integrated working between primary and secondary care. Again, research that provides insights into changes in people's health status and into the nature of local risk factors will be valuable.

#### **Glasgow City Deal**

The Glasgow City Deal is a £1.13 billion agreement between the UK government, the Scottish Government and the eight local authorities across Glasgow and the Clyde Valley. It sets out how the region will create economic growth through:

- setting up a £1.13 billion Glasgow and Clyde Valley Infrastructure Fund to improve transport and regenerate/develop sites
- supporting growth in the life sciences sector
- helping small and medium enterprises to grow and develop
- setting up programmes to support unemployed people
- testing new ways of boosting the incomes of people on low wages.

Findings from the M74 study will aid consideration of the potential health impacts of Infrastructure Fund projects. Alongside other studies and developments, the study will contribute to the evidence base delineating the relationships between health, employment and poverty during economic development or regeneration.

#### **The Place Standard Tool for Scotland**

Launched in December 2015 (<http://www.placestandard.scot/>), the Place Standard Tool provides a framework that can be used collaboratively for assessing the quality of places including factors such as feeling safe, natural spaces, moving around and social interaction.

## 4. Approach to community engagement

The rationale for community engagement in the M74 study was to enable local residents and other stakeholders to (a) help shape the research process (particularly the qualitative sub-study) and (b) respond to relevant emerging findings.

All stages of the community engagement were brokered through SCDC and the GCPH, in collaboration with the research team.

### Initial scoping

During the early stages of the study, Stuart Hashagen from SCDC gathered views from a range of community organisations based adjacent to the route of the new motorway. This initial mapping took place between March and May 2013. The purpose of the engagement was to establish whether there were any areas of concern that the researchers were not aware of, that needed to be built into the design of the study.

Stuart contacted 18 different local organisations, including housing associations, development trusts, community councils, development agencies and other community groups. The overwhelming response from respondents in these organisations/groups was that they felt that the agenda had moved on since completion of the motorway extension. For all but one group, the motorway did not seem to be an issue or concern, although in several cases respondents reported that they were initially opposed to the development or to certain aspects of it. Current issues of concern raised by respondents included the forthcoming 2014 Commonwealth Games and the redevelopment of local brownfield sites.

The exception was the New Gorbals Housing Association, which owns the sheltered housing complex on Devon Street, directly overshadowed by the M74. Here significant problems of noise and air pollution were reported by the organisational representative interviewed, and while some compensation had been received this was said to be inadequate in relation to the inconvenience to local residents and deterioration in neighbourhood quality.

For several of the organisations, the M74 was said to have had a beneficial effect on neighbourhood quality, particularly where it was perceived to have relieved congestion on local roads, acting as a bypass to re-route traffic out of the local area. However, some increases in traffic and congestion were reported by respondents in locations that were previously free of traffic or quiet. In general, there were said to be variations in the location and timing of congestion, rather than overall reduction or increase.

Several of the organisations reported that the M74 had acted as a catalyst for wider regeneration of the area, improving opportunities for local people. Related developments included the Commonwealth Games site, other industrial or commercial developments and some recent housing developments, all of which benefited from their proximity to the new motorway. One organisation, the People's Community Development Trust in Dalmarnock reported that these developments had provided significant employment opportunities for young people. Respondents believed that this had resulted in reductions in violence and substance abuse, and strengthened the communities involved.

In summary, initial engagement suggested that the motorway was no longer a hot topic in nearby communities, despite the considerable protest and controversy occurring pre-build. Respondents recommended considering the impact of other regeneration activities that may be related to the motorway. This engagement work informed the environmental survey and the qualitative sub-study (both of which explored the M74 in the context of wider changes in the physical or social environment), and provided a springboard for recruitment of participants for the key informant interviews.

### **Communication of emerging findings**

Once emerging findings from the study were available in early 2016, a series of community engagement activities were planned. The events were originally envisaged as three structured half-day events based in local community facilities in Rutherglen, Govanhill and Gorbals. The aim of these was to draw together local organisations and groups, as well as study participants and local residents, to consider and discuss the emerging findings of the M74 study. This was intended to facilitate co-production of the overall interpretation of the study by researchers and local community members. In addition, it was intended to stimulate further discussion about opportunities and challenges facing the community, to identify priorities for action, and to consider how local people might best mobilise to shape future decisions and developments.

Targeted invitations were sent to local community representatives and study participants from the qualitative and device sub-studies, and mail drop invitations were issued in local areas. However, due to a lack of response, plans for these structured events were abandoned. Instead, informal 'pop-up' community events were organised at these three locations, held between March and May 2016. These informal events were intended to engage local people in the emerging findings and elicit their views by taking the findings to them rather than expecting them to attend a more formal event.

Several residents from the Devon Street sheltered housing complex expressed interest in attending one of the originally scheduled half-day events. Due to this being one of the most proximal residential sites to the motorway, members of the research team visited the complex and elicited views from several residents.

To complement the informal community events, a structured formal half-day stakeholder-focused event was conducted on May 10th 2016. Attendees included representatives from Glasgow City Council, Transport Scotland, local housing associations and advocacy groups, as well as study participants and local residents. As with the pop-up events, the intention for the stakeholder event was to facilitate co-production of the overall interpretation of the study and feed this into a wider discussion about community needs and priorities.

For all events, the research team worked alongside members of the GCPH and SCDC to develop ways of communicating key findings in an accessible and meaningful way.

## 5. Engagement event 1: Devon Street sheltered housing

This engagement event took place in the common room of the Devon Street sheltered housing complex on the morning of March 3rd 2016 and was attended by Louise Foley, Amy Nimegeer, Jon Olsen, Fiona Crawford and Stuart Hashagen.

Five residents and two members of the New Gorbals Housing Association were present. The kitchen servicing the common room, where tea and coffee were made, looks directly out onto the motorway. The proximity of the motorway to the flats, particularly those facing outward onto Devon Street, was striking. Louise's field notes read: "you can see the motorway out of the kitchen window. Actually, the motorway is the only thing you can see out of the kitchen window." One resident's windows are 19 feet from the motorway and another's are 23 feet away.

The room was set up with a large map of the area on a low coffee table in the centre of the room (Figure 1). Post-its and pens were provided for participants to annotate the map; however, it transpired that it was easier for participants to sit during interactions and for the research team to annotate and make notes according to the discussion.



**Figure 1: Engagement event at Devon Street sheltered housing.**

In general, resident views seemed to be split into two camps: two residents who were vehemently against the motorway (these were the only two residents whose homes face directly on to the M74, also the only two who had lived in the complex before, during and after the motorway build); and those who felt there were local problems with traffic, pollution and noise but were less sure that the motorway was the main cause (homes facing away from motorway, only post-build experience).

### **Consultation and pre-build**

The two residents who had been present prior to the motorway extension did not feel appropriately consulted, although some consultation did occur, including members of the construction company and local political representatives. Residents recalled being told by a local MP that they "wouldn't even know it was there" because the motorway would be raised

high above the cityscape on stilts. This did not transpire to be the case, with the motorway built at window height for some residents living in this multi-storey complex. One resident described being presented with a video that detailed projected impacts along the extension corridor, but did not deal with their area at all despite the fact that it is now, arguably, one of the most affected areas, with one section of the building approximately 19 feet from the completed motorway. The two residents were cynical when describing the consultation and felt that they had taken people at their word, only to be taken advantage of. One resident described feeling like no one at these meetings was on their side, even their locally elected officials. In retrospect, the impression was that these meetings were not a true consultation but rather the communication of what was actually a *fait accompli*. The residents described feeling extremely disempowered by the process. One said “we’re just old people”.

In an interesting contrast, residents discussed that although they had been powerless to affect change, they believed that the reason the final route was so close to them was because Sher Brothers and Arnold Clark (commercial/industrial residents) had campaigned to block a previous route. This route avoided residential areas to a greater extent but would have required the businesses to move premises.

When discussing the period pre-build, residents also discussed the protestors (“eco-warriors”) who created a protest garden in the empty greenspace opposite the housing complex. Although the residents recognised that the protesters were on their side, and were invited to join in with them, they were not inclined to do so.

### **The motorway build**

The build was described as highly unpleasant by those residents who were present during the process. One resident said “we took a beating” and described living with violent and prolonged vibrations. According to the residents, the vibrations were so strong that they cracked another resident’s toilet twice, necessitating its replacement. Residents described particular disruption during pile driving, but a generalised high level of noise, dust and bright light throughout the entire construction period of three years. Residents described difficulty sleeping during this time as construction went on all day and sometimes well into the evening. The final straw, for some, was not being invited to the opening “unlike Prince Charles”.

### **Living with the motorway**

The two residents with homes facing onto the motorway described increases in local traffic and more heavy vehicles using their local roads, which contributed to increased traffic noise. Pollution was a particularly salient problem, with residents constantly having to clean windows and spectacles, having to use eye drops, and being unable to open their windows, even during the heat of the summer. One resident described the motorway as running at window height, blocking out light in an oppressive manner. Additionally residents described light pollution from the motorway at night (from streetlights and passing vehicles), referring to it as so brightly lit it was “like Christmas”. The combination of light pollution and motorway maintenance occurring at night was an ongoing source of sleep disruption.

The other three residents did not have rooms in their flats that faced onto the motorway, and were not living in this housing during the construction period. These residents were either indifferent or positive about the motorway. All residents agreed that traffic noise on local roads was a problem, but residents who were not present prior to the build did not necessarily connect this with the motorway. Another used a car and found the motorway helped her to get around, particularly as she had trouble walking and was therefore restricted in her movements without the car. It would have been interesting to get the opinion of a resident who was present during the construction, but did not have a room that faced on to the motorway.

It is important to note that even the most vociferous critics of the motorway, who bore the burden of noise, air and light pollution, still had positive things to say about its ability to reduce journey times for users. Several residents mentioned that it was now much easier for family to come and visit – with one resident saying the journey duration by car had more than halved from 45 to 20 minutes. However, residents described a lack of car parking around the complex which may mean that visiting friends and relatives encounter other challenges.

When discussing the planting that had been undertaken around the motorway, trees on higher verges were described as just another thing that blocked light. Residents were dismayed that the green space directly in front of their complex had been fenced off and a wall built which prevented them from even seeing into it. It was seen as a missed opportunity to plant flowers and make the area more pleasant. However, the residents agreed that the choice of turquoise paint for the motorway was aesthetically pleasing, and one resident expressed hope that it would not fade or be repainted differently.

Residents described changes to traffic flows due to realigning Devon Street as a feeder road to Eglinton Street (the main arterial route into the city centre from the south). This was perceived as increasing traffic, particularly in the number of buses and ambulances travelling on Devon Street. The bus stop that used to be situated right outside the sheltered housing complex has been moved further away and is now situated directly under the M74; reaching it involves crossing Devon Street and another main road, with no pedestrian crossing in place. In addition, this stop is where buses wait to change driver due to relocation of the bus depot.

The pavement outside the housing complex was described as treacherous to residents with impaired mobility or during frosty weather, making pedestrian journeys to and from the bus stop perilous. Residents also described difficulties with new bus routes that paradoxically made it easier to access remote, rather than local, services (for example, the Govan Asda supermarket rather than the Asda at Toryglen). Residents also described a lack of local shops. The nearest corner shop was at Eglinton Toll and the nearest supermarket in Govanhill – a distance that would require a bus journey for less mobile older people.

When asked about road traffic accidents, residents considered that there had been quite a few around Kilbirnie Street but no one thought that the motorway had any impact on local accident rates. Walking was described as less pleasant now than pre-motorway and general perceptions were that the local area had gone downhill, but no one believed that their actual routes or duration of active travel had been affected. Although most felt their area to be a safe one, it was agreed that they would not walk around at night. For the residents of the Devon Street complex, it seemed that the majority of impacts were felt when residents were in their homes and that, by going out and travelling in almost any direction they were actually leaving the motorway behind.

Finally, there was some discussion how, for many residents, there was now a feeling of resignation about the extreme disruption of the motorway build: “what can you do? It’s up there!”

## 6. Engagement event 2: Rutherglen shopping centre

This engagement event took place in the Mitchell Arcade, Rutherglen Shopping Centre on the morning of March 21st 2016 and was attended by Amy Nimegeer, Jon Olsen, and Stuart Hashagen.

The shopping centre is a busy community hub in Rutherglen, frequented by local people as well as those from surrounding neighbourhoods. In addition to those doing their shopping, it is also used as a cut-through and therefore has a steady stream of foot traffic.

A pop-up stand was set up consisting of a two-metre tall banner, describing the purpose of the study and directing passers-by to the researchers for any further discussion. A large map of the area was set up on a table and annotated using post-its and pens (Figure 2). As with the first event, it transpired that it was easier for the research team to annotate and make notes, rather than people who wanted to express views.



**Figure 2: Engagement event at Rutherglen shopping centre.**

It was noted that attendees would sometimes ‘circle’ a few times, taking in the banner and the research team, before finally plucking up the courage to speak with researchers. This was sometimes limited to a fly-by-type interaction, where attendees expressed an opinion before hurriedly walking off, but other times led to an extended discussion. In total, there were 18 visits to the stand over approximately two hours.

### **Living with the motorway**

The conversation was dominated by discussion of the effects of the motorway on traffic and congestion. Half of those who visited the stand expressed the opinion that the motorway had reduced overall journey times by car, allowing for more convenient access to nearby areas and facilities. However, one resident commented that a motorway junction originally proposed for Glasgow Road did not materialise, which has resulted in increased congestion in the area, and others spoke of high levels of congestion at peak times.

There were conflicting reports over whether traffic had increased or decreased on Rutherglen Main Street; two attendees thought it had decreased, whereas another local resident (who lived on Main Street) thought that traffic had increased drastically to the point that it was having a negative impact on house prices. This person had applied to the council for compensation, but had been unsuccessful.

Other visitors to the stand spoke of negative impacts on other road users, for example cars and lorries infringing on cycle lanes on local roads, and reduced public transport amenity in the area, but it was not clear whether this was directly attributable to the motorway.

As with the previous engagement event on Devon Street, some residents raised issues of environmental blight relating to noise and vibration. One resident described being unable to open her back window because of the noise, and another described cracks forming in houses nearby. However, others felt the reduction in congestion had improved the local environment, and another, who could see the motorway from her house, enjoyed watching the traffic.

Overall, there were positive, negative and neutral views regarding the motorway, though the feedback received was mostly positive. The most consistent view expressed was that the motorway had significantly improved amenity for car users. However, several attendees spoke about experiencing both pros and cons, for example one participant who spoke of decreased traffic on Main Street, but increased noise from the motorway (“I can’t win”).

## 7. Engagement event 3: St Francis Hall, Gorbals

This engagement event took place in St Francis Hall, Gorbals on the morning of March 24th 2016 and was attended by Louise Foley, Amy Nimegeer and Fiona Crawford.

The engagement was staged during a community event called Big Thursday, run by local community organisation Bridging the Gap. The event involved activities for both adults and children and a free lunch.

A pop-up stand was set up consisting of the study banner and a large map of the area on a table. Again, the research team annotated and made notes on the map (Figure 3). During the course of the lunchtime session members of the research team spoke in-depth with nine local people who live and work in the Gorbals.



**Figure 3: Engagement event at St Francis Hall, Gorbals.**

### **Living with the motorway**

On the whole, the feedback from this event was in stark contrast to the previous event in Rutherglen, as the tone was much less positive towards the motorway. In particular, the discussion focused on issues surrounding social justice (with four of the attendees having been involved in protests before the motorway was built) and several attendees describing serious adverse respiratory health effects.

Two attendees mentioned that the public local inquiry had strongly recommended not building the motorway, yet this advice had been disregarded and construction proceeded anyway. The motorway was not built near a “fancy neighbourhood” and instead ran through an area with low car ownership, where people were less likely to benefit from it. The motorway was seen as promoting car use: “if the road is there you will use it”. Indeed, several residents with cars described driving on the motorway frequently. However, another resident felt that the motorway had helped to increase local investment in the Gorbals because it was now an accessible area encircled by roads – whereas Govanhill, on the outside, was languishing.

One attendee mentioned that their child had suffered from asthma and other respiratory complaints after the motorway opened (they lived very near), and described the air as smoggy and stuffy: “it’s in their lungs, it’s in their hair”. The child’s respiratory problems had resolved after they moved away from the motorway. Another attendee’s grandchild suffered



## 8. Engagement event 4: The Lighthouse, Glasgow

This engagement event took place at the Lighthouse, Glasgow city centre on the morning of May 10th 2016 and was attended by Louise Foley, Amy Nimegeer, Jon Olsen, Fiona Crawford and Stuart Hashagen. In addition, study investigators Richard Mitchell and Hilary Thomson were present, as well as Carol Frame, events organiser at the GCPH, and Lizzie Leman (GCPH), Catherine Tabbner (GCPH) and Chris Patterson (University of Glasgow), who acted as scribes.

In total, there were 30 attendees; this included six local residents or study participants, and 24 stakeholders from organisations including Transport Scotland, Glasgow City Council, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, SURF (Scotland's regeneration network), Thenue Housing Association, Free Wheel North, Living Streets and the University of Strathclyde.

The event followed a structured format. Attendees were seated at round tables during an initial plenary session, and were then given the opportunity to attend three interactive stands (Figure 6).

9:30am: Registration and refreshments

10.00am: Welcome from the Chair (Fiona Crawford)

10:10am: The why and how of community engagement (Stuart Hashagen)

10:20: Overview of research findings (Louise Foley)

10:40: Questions from the floor

10:45: Meet the research team: a 'marketplace' format for in-depth discussion about:

- people, communities and regeneration (Amy Nimegeer)
- road traffic accidents (Jon Olsen)
- travel, physical activity and wellbeing (Louise Foley)

12.45: Sum up and comments from the floor

1:00: Lunch and close



Figure 6: Engagement event at The Lighthouse, Glasgow.

## **People, communities and regeneration stand**

In terms of the M74 specifically, attendees described drivers trying to access the motorway by cutting across local streets, circumventing the one-way system and increasing traffic on these streets. Others described traffic management issues relating to how vehicles join and leave the motorway, with the Polmadie junction frequently cited as congested and dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. In some areas, increases in traffic and congestion on local streets were seen as negatively impacting house prices. Traffic issues not seen as directly attributable to the motorway included poor public transport amenity in the Gorbals (an issue also raised by residents of the Devon Street sheltered housing), and traffic calming combined with a loss of (free) car parking on Victoria Road in Govanhill, which was seen as a deterrent to shopping and as precipitating a decline in the quality of shops (an issue also raised at the Victoria Road event).

Several attendees spoke about “dead space” directly beneath the motorway, with the suggestion that this space could be repurposed as skate park (one attendee shared details of a current proposal to use the space in this way) or a community garden. Others commented that some of these spaces appeared to be earmarked for commercial redevelopment, and that spaces that had already been redeveloped were an improvement over the “industrial desert” that existed prior. Additional comments relating to the structure of the motorway included reflections on whether the motorway would have been better as a tunnel rather than raised above the cityscape, favourable opinions about the motorway as a piece of engineering, and mixed opinions on whether the noise barriers and tree planting around the motorway had mitigated noise and air pollution.

Some attendees felt the motorway created a clear psychological barrier between areas, making some areas inaccessible and disrupting local social networks. Conversely, one attendee felt the motorway had opened up views of the cityscape for those driving on it (a sort of ‘reverse severance’). Attendees also raised wider issues relating to social justice and inequalities. The benefits experienced by some were not thought to justify the considerable expense associated with the motorway build. In addition, people of low socioeconomic status or those with mobility issues were seen as experiencing more harms than benefits. Finally, the motorway was seen as bolstering the wider economy (for example, improving accessibility for multi-national corporations) at the expense of the local economy and small businesses, diminishing local control and democracy.

There was also more general discussion about overall decline or regeneration in local communities. Govanhill and Gorbals were both seen as becoming “ghettoised” by a combination of poor, unskilled migrants and absentee landlords, with new estates gradually becoming slums and the social fabric of communities becoming degraded. However, this was seen as problem that pre-dated the M74 motorway by decades. There was also the suggestion that while Gorbals was currently benefiting from active investment and regeneration, Govanhill was languishing, which was an observation made at both the Gorbals and Govanhill events.

After discussion concluded, the study team member leading this stand had a separate conversation with a family of three attending the event. The family live in Tradeston, facing directly onto the M74 from their multi-storey building. Following the overview of research findings, they had queried the study area boundaries, in particular why their area had been excluded from the study. It was explained that this was better to understand the effect of the M74 itself and therefore areas also exposed to the M8 motorway had been excluded. However it was emphasised that this was a scientific decision, not a reflection on the importance of their experience. The family described the new M74 as introducing a drastic change to their lived experience compared with what they had previously experienced living near the M8. Prior to the build, they thought that the new motorway would be further from their home and closer to industrial real estate.

The families' accounts of living in extreme proximity to the M74 were strikingly similar to those described at the Devon Street event. During the motorway build, they described pile driving as causing structural damage to their flat and cracking nearby pavements. Even after construction was completed, the family described constant traffic noise and vibration during the day, which was severe enough to break windows. At night, light pollution and noise from maintenance activities was a constant source of sleep disruption, which had severely impacted their quality of life. The family described breathing difficulties relating to increased air pollution, and being unable to sit outside on their balcony because of the noise and air pollution. In addition, they commented that the build had churned up pollutants from previous heavy industry which had contaminated local land and which was currently the subject of contest by multiple parties. The family described being cut off from their neighbourhood by the volume and speed of traffic on local roads, which had made walking "an extreme sport".

As with the residents at Devon Street, the Tradeston family felt disempowered and voiceless. The family had moved to the area because of the promise of south side regeneration, but felt Tradeston had been forgotten and written off as a commercial area rather than a residential one. Despite being in one of the highest council tax bands in Glasgow, the perception was that Glasgow City Council "don't give a rat's ass".

### **Road traffic injuries stand**

Unsurprisingly, the discussion at this stand centred on traffic and road safety. Local residents of Tradeston (at the western end of the motorway) spoke about aggressive and dangerous driver behaviour while entering or exiting the motorway, including speeding, driving the wrong way on the one-way system and jumping red lights, as well as an increase in the number of heavy goods vehicles. Slip roads were felt to be too short to allow drivers to adjust their speed as they exited the motorway. This had negative impacts on multiple types of road users; residents described being unable to exit their housing development by car because of the speed of oncoming traffic, being unable to walk left out of the housing development or cross the road, and cycle lanes passing beneath the motorway were seen as "not much use". Residents proposed solutions including traffic calming, speed cameras and a protected lane into and out of their housing development.

One Govanhill resident described a similar experience to Tradeston, with cars speeding on local streets when entering or exiting the motorway, and the one-way system making it inconvenient to access local places using local streets. Another Govanhill resident felt the motorway had blocked the view into the city centre, ruining what was once a pleasant walk into town, and introduced a mental barrier between areas of the city that weren't there previously.

Other comments relating to specific areas made by residents (not necessarily attributed to the motorway) included congestion and aggressive driving in Rutherglen, despite the introduction of traffic calming measures, the destruction of a pedestrian bridge in Oatlands, which blocked access to a local green space, and the introduction of a bus lane along Victoria Rd in Govanhill, which had "ripped the heart out of the area" by making the road less accessible to local traffic. More generally, several attendees spoke about tensions between cyclists and other road users, both because of aggressive cyclist behaviour as well as poorly designed cycle lanes on busy roads.

Several attendees reflected on the study finding that the motorway was not associated with either an increase or a decrease in road traffic accidents. Some attendees expressed the opinion that traffic had noticeably increased in areas around the M74 and therefore it was "just luck" that this had not translated into more traffic accidents. However, other attendees felt that there had been little impact on local streets and were therefore unsurprised at no change in the number of traffic accidents. It was suggested that the location of traffic

accidents might have moved due to new road layouts. Finally, it was agreed that the effect of the motorway on road traffic accidents may change in the future if congestion increases. Several methodological aspects of the analysis were queried, including decisions made about the use of traffic counters, examining traffic flow and accidents on the same roads over time, the spatial clustering of road traffic accidents, and analysing pedestrian and cyclist casualties separately.

### **Travel, physical activity and wellbeing stand**

With regards to travel, one attendee queried whether a motorway just transferred traffic congestion from one place to another. This observation was supported by comments from other attendees, who described specific areas in which congestion had increased (for example, Polmadie Road and Tradeston) and others who described reductions in congestion on the M8 motorway and in other areas including Rutherglen and London Road. One resident living near to the new motorway had spoken with council representatives about traffic calming measures on their street, but this had never materialised. The motorway was felt to benefit car users in helping them connect to more remote destinations, including Braehead and Silverburn shopping centres. However, it was perceived this came at the expense of local destinations despite supporters' original insistence that the new motorway would act as a catalyst for local regeneration. In addition, it was suggested that the new motorway reduced the attractiveness of other modes of transport for longer journeys, such as using the train to get to Edinburgh.

Attendees also discussed active travel. For walking specifically, one attendee felt that moving around the local area was now more difficult as a pedestrian who does not drive, though another highlighted improved pedestrian infrastructure crossing over the motorway. For cycling, there was agreement that the infrastructure in general, and particularly around M74 motorway junctions, was inadequate. Attendees gave examples of cars parked in bike lanes, bike lanes that stopped at intersections, leaving cyclists marooned in heavy traffic, and roads that were narrow, in poor condition and busy simply having a bike lane painted on. Attendees highlighted the necessity of planning adequate cycling infrastructure ahead of time, rather than trying to retrofit, and queried why this had not occurred for the M74 build despite the relatively low cost of cycling infrastructure compared with the spend on the motorway itself. Though one attendee pointed out that consultations regarding different types of transport infrastructure were undertaken regularly, local residents felt that the process was inaccessible, opaque and too time consuming to be practical.

With regards to physical activity, one attendee felt the survey findings of a reduction in physical activity participation in the east study area were a "bold claim". This person pointed out other changes going on, including construction work on the M80 in the east study area, and traffic reductions in the north study area, as potential confounders. Another attendee commented that the east study area had a more static population than the other two study areas, which may have also contributed to this finding. Attendees asked for more information about the particular domains of physical activity (e.g. transport, leisure) that had been affected.

With regards to wellbeing, several local residents discussed ongoing disruption because of traffic noise from the motorway, whereas others (also living in close proximity) described it as just another background hum they had eventually become used to. There was a perception that those who built the motorway had focused only on their legal requirements rather than what was actually liveable for local residents. Attendees also spoke about wider community issues, including problems with derelict buildings and eroding community cohesion. As had occurred at other stands, attendees raised issues relating to social justice and inequalities, particularly for those who did not own a car, and one attendee suggested the use of sub-group analysis to explore these inequalities further.

### **Attendee and scribe feedback**

Following the event, attendees were given the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback about the event. In particular, attendees gave positive feedback about the interactive stands, citing their inclusivity, their ability to draw together different types of people (including the research team) and the frank and diverse discussion they enabled. However, some attendees felt the study was too limited in scope and should have explored environmental and economic impacts in more detail.

The scribes (who had taken notes at each of the three interactive stands) provided feedback about how the stands functioned. At two stands, chairs had been brought in to make a circle to enable unstructured group conversation, because the activities at the station had not proven popular. This had the advantage of making it easier for people to see each other and to stimulate participation in the discussion. At the third stand, participants had broken out into smaller clusters of conversational groups. The scribes played an essential role in recording the discussion, as well as facilitating it at times, which allowed the researcher manning the stand to actively listen to the discussion. One challenge the scribes identified was that when new people joined the stand they sometimes struggled to get involved in the discussion already taking place. Having a floating member of the study team who moved between stands and facilitated introductions could be considered for future events. The scribes also suggested that attendees might be introduced by first names only on their name badges at future events (rather than saying what organisation they were from), as some attendees described themselves as “just” a local resident.

## 9. Engagement event 5: Victoria Road, Govanhill

This engagement event took place outside on Victoria Road, Govanhill on the morning of May 13th 2016 and was attended by Louise Foley, Amy Nimegeer and Jon Olsen.

The research team were unable to locate an appropriate indoor venue in Govanhill (which may itself be telling in terms of the local amenities available to residents). Therefore, the stand was set up on Victoria Road, the main shopping street frequented by local people, which has a steady stream of foot traffic. The owners of a shop were approached and permission was gained to set up outside.

The pop-up stand consisted only of the study banner. Unlike the previous events, it was not possible to set up a table or a map, so the research team simply spoke with passers-by (Figure 5).



**Figure 5: Engagement event at Victoria Road, Govanhill.**

The research team were met with more suspicion at this event than at the other events. This might be because charity representatives commonly stand street side asking for money, and passers-by were therefore unwilling to slow down long enough to read the banner. In total, there were seven visits to the stand over approximately two hours.

### **Living with the motorway**

As with the Rutherglen event, the conversation was dominated by discussion of the effects of the motorway on traffic and congestion. Those who had a car and used the motorway felt it had reduced journey times and improved accessibility, with one attendee describing the motorway as “wonderful”. Of four attendees who felt the motorway had facilitated easier and quicker journeys, three described it as causing congestion on local roads because of changes to road configurations (made worse during peak times), but one felt it had no effect on local traffic. Two attendees expressed indifferent views about the motorway, because they either didn’t use it, or used it infrequently. One other resident expressed concerns about the introduction of paid parking on Victoria Road, which had negatively affected the shopping street.

Several attendees expressed the opinion that Govanhill was an area that was steadily going downhill, a result of both in-migration of poor, unskilled migrants, as well as out-migration of wealthier and better educated residents. One attendee described seeing a tourist map produced by the Council for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. On this map, Govanhill had been marked in red as a no-go zone in which safety could not be guaranteed. He felt that the legacy of the Commonwealth Games for Govanhill was only to make residents feel even more excluded.

## 10. Reflections

### **On the process of community engagement**

The research community has in the past been accused (and has been occasionally guilty) of promoting a one-way flow of information from researchers to participants or the public, rather than initiating a true two-way discussion. In this study, guided by the experience of members of the GCPH and SCDC, effort was made to bring researchers and community members together as equal partners to co-produce an overall interpretation of findings. In fact, almost a reversal was seen, in that the flow of information was predominantly from community members to the research team. In total, nearly 70 people participated in one of the five community engagement events, providing opinions about the motorway and insight into life in the local area.

There was a level of interest in the informal pop-up events that contradicted the apparent lack of interest in the originally planned structured events. Passers-by had opinions and information that they were willing to share. Rather than eliciting responses from only those with extreme views, a number of attendees made the effort to attend the stand to express their indifference about the motorway, and others expressed a mixture of positive and negative views. The length of the interaction differed; some attendees were only willing to briefly express an opinion before walking off, but others were willing to engage in more in-depth discussion.

The formal half-day event was an opportunity to provide more detail about the study and focus the discussion more specifically around the study findings. Attendees came from a wide range of backgrounds, from local residents living immediately adjacent to the motorway, to representatives from Glasgow City Council and Transport Scotland. Overall, the event was successful in producing robust discussion encompassing multiple viewpoints, where attendees appeared to feel comfortable debating opposing views. There was greater discussion and critique of the study methods at this event, compared with the pop-up events.

In terms of specific tools that were more or less successful, we found that attendees at both the pop-ups and the formal events mostly preferred unstructured conversation, though we had prepared a number of different activities. These included using laminated quotes from the qualitative research and annotating maps with pens and post-it notes. Annotation of maps proved to be a useful strategy for the research team to identify specific areas being discussed and to retain snippets of conversation that were particularly important. At the pop-up events, the banner worked well to draw people in, giving them a chance to digest the information about the study before deciding whether to approach. At the formal event, an infographic outlining the findings of the road traffic accidents analysis was particularly useful to quickly recap the main findings for attendees to help fuel the discussion.

Though opportunistic, the event at Devon Street among a group of people directly affected by the motorway complemented the pop-up events in the community, giving a range of perspectives about pre- and mid-build, as well as life with the motorway after it was built. This was complemented by the discussion with the Tradeston family at the formal event, where the account of living in extreme proximity to the motorway was strikingly similar to the residents of Devon Street. These narratives allowed us to better understand the actual lived experience of residents living very near to the motorway. In a sense, it allowed us to overcome some of the gaps in our data collection in areas where we had little or no response, or which fell just outside our recruiting boundaries but were nonetheless affected by the new motorway.

Finally, attendees used the engagement events as an opportunity to discuss other changes or wider community issues that were not related to the motorway, but were related to the

general themes of the study. One example is the closing of the Polmadie footbridge over the river Clyde— an event that some residents felt had restricted their active travel.

### **On the consistencies and contrasts with emerging study findings**

An almost unanimous view from the community engagement to date was that the motorway had been a favourable development for car users, allowing for faster and more convenient journeys. This aligns with study findings from the postal survey suggesting that residents' car use increased for those living near the new motorway. It also aligns with assessments conducted by Transport Scotland finding marked reductions in traffic flows and journey times across parts of the motorway network. However, some attendees questioned the "fairness" of this finding, in light of low car ownership in the area.

Other modes of transport, such as active travel and bus use, were less commonly raised. There were mixed opinions on whether amenity had improved or declined, though many felt that local cycle infrastructure was poor. There was also a lack of clarity on whether any changes in amenity were directly attributable to the motorway. For active travel in particular, this is consistent with findings from the postal survey (no overall effect on walking for transport) and the qualitative sub-study (mixed effects on active travel, mainly relating to the quality rather than the quantity of active travel). The community engagement further introduced the theme of tensions between how road users (cars, buses, bicycles and pedestrians) shared the space, particularly on busy roads.

At the pop-up events, there was little discussion of road traffic accidents, which is consistent with the finding from the STATS19 analysis that the motorway was not associated with either an increase or a decrease in local road traffic accidents. When asked directly about local traffic accidents, most attendees could highlight local accident hotspots, but these were never attributed to the motorway. At the formal event, there were mixed opinions on whether local traffic had increased or decreased, and therefore mixed opinions on expectations for how this would impact on road traffic accidents.

The banner used at the pop-up stands, and the introductory presentation at the formal event, mentioned that researchers had been studying the effects of the new motorway on multiple outcomes. However, discussions about travel dominated at the community engagement events. Though strong negative effects on overall wellbeing were found in the postal survey, wellbeing was not directly mentioned by any participant in the community engagement. However, hypothesised contributors to poor health and wellbeing, including visual disturbance, noise, vibration and pollution were often raised, suggesting that these effects were more immediately tangible to community members. Physical activity was not discussed at all at the pop-up events, and only briefly at the formal event, suggesting that this was not an outcome of particular interest to residents or stakeholders.

From the postal survey, individual proximity to the motorway appeared to be a more meaningful exposure than study area in terms of travel and wellbeing in particular. This was borne out in the community engagement. In discussions with local residents at both the pop-up events and the formal event, close proximity to the motorway was important in terms of experiencing noise, vibration, air pollution and visual disturbance. Even among residents at the Devon Street complex who were extremely proximal to the motorway, there seemed to be an indication of a dose-response; those directly facing the motorway experienced more negative effects than those slightly further away and not facing the motorway.

The community engagement reaffirmed the finding from the qualitative sub-study that the motorway acted as a connecting force for car users. However, the engagement also reaffirmed the idea that non-car users may have also benefited in terms of people in their social network connecting to *them* via the motorway (for example, residents of the Devon Street complex who described reduced journey times for visiting family members). Conversely, car users may experience severance if they are not comfortable driving on

motorways, or if they experience motorway-related congestion on local roads. The visual disturbance described by residents of Devon Street and Tradeston is consistent with descriptions of feeling 'hemmed in' made by qualitative participants, and with the wider severance literature. However, these accounts of extreme proximity produced an additional nuance related to severance; for those living very close, it wasn't just their experience of the community that was affected, but their experience in their own home. By leaving their home and moving out in to the community the effects of the motorway lessened, so traditional severance definitions may not apply to them in the same way. The community engagement was the only part of the study where these first-hand narratives of extreme proximity arose, adding to and complementing the qualitative and quantitative data collection.

### **On the virtuous and vicious spirals and overall interpretation**

In general, local residents attending the pop-up events were most concerned with immediate impacts of the motorway on traffic congestion, noise and pollution. However, the lived experience differed between areas, with the Rutherglen event highlighting benefits for car users, the Gorbals event introducing negative impacts on health and wellbeing, and the Govanhill event indicating the motorway was considered less important than the wider social problems occurring in the area. At the formal event, stakeholders working in policy and practice were often concerned with issues of social justice.

It was clear that different areas, different audiences and different individuals had vastly different perspectives about the motorway, illustrating an entire spectrum between positive, neutral and negative. Conflicting opinions on the same issue were often evident – for example, whether traffic on Rutherglen Main Street had increased or decreased. Attendees at the community engagement events also described a mixture of positives and negatives that they themselves had personally experienced, as well as acknowledging that benefits for some were achieved at the cost of burdens to others.

This complexity supports the somewhat mixed quantitative and qualitative study findings. Where no change was found in many quantitative variables, this may belie a complex mixture of effects going on under the surface. This reinforces the idea that while the virtuous and vicious spirals represent two extreme cases, it's somewhat of a false dichotomy. In reality it's likely that some or all of the events that comprise the spirals could have taken place, even within the same individual.

## 11. Future directions

### For research

The community engagement highlighted several outcomes of interest, not assessed in detail in the M74 study, which might be usefully incorporated into future assessments of the impact of new urban roads. From the residents' perspective, measurement of perceptions of noise and air pollution, as well as actual assessment of pollution (for example, noise decibels or levels of particulates) were critical as these factors were the most salient effects of the motorway on their lived experience. Correspondingly, several residents described sleep disruption as a result of increased traffic noise, which may be a useful addition to future evaluations. From the stakeholders' perspective, an economic evaluation was key in order to assess whether the benefits of the motorway outweighed the harms, though this approach de-emphasises health and health behaviour as important in their own right.

At the formal event, there were a number of enquiries about what the next research steps might be, such as further follow-ups. However, it is noted that new data collection may not always be needed. For example, Transport Scotland are already conducting their own evaluation of the M74 motorway, which may complement the current study findings. In addition, routinely available datasets may be useful to understand other effects of the M74 or be of use in future evaluations of new urban roads.

### For community engagement

In previous sections, particular elements of the community engagement that worked (e.g. unstructured conversation), or didn't work (e.g. the originally planned half-day events for local residents) have already been discussed. One further issue highlighted at the formal event was the need to provide clarity on the differences between academic and policy timelines and dissemination strategies, and to manage expectations on these. There were several requests for specific timelines for dissemination of the study findings presented at this event; attendees wanted to know how and when the study would be reported and to whom (for example, in the final report, academic publications, policy briefings or through the media).

Overall, community engagement should ensure that the research question is of direct interest to the community; that community members are collaborating participants in a variety of ways; that the findings will be used to stimulate activity and change in the interests of the community, and that both the community and relevant public bodies are involved. Community engagement research should empower – it should provide insights and information that can underpin the efforts of communities and those that work with them to take action on the needs and issues that the community experiences.

### For practice

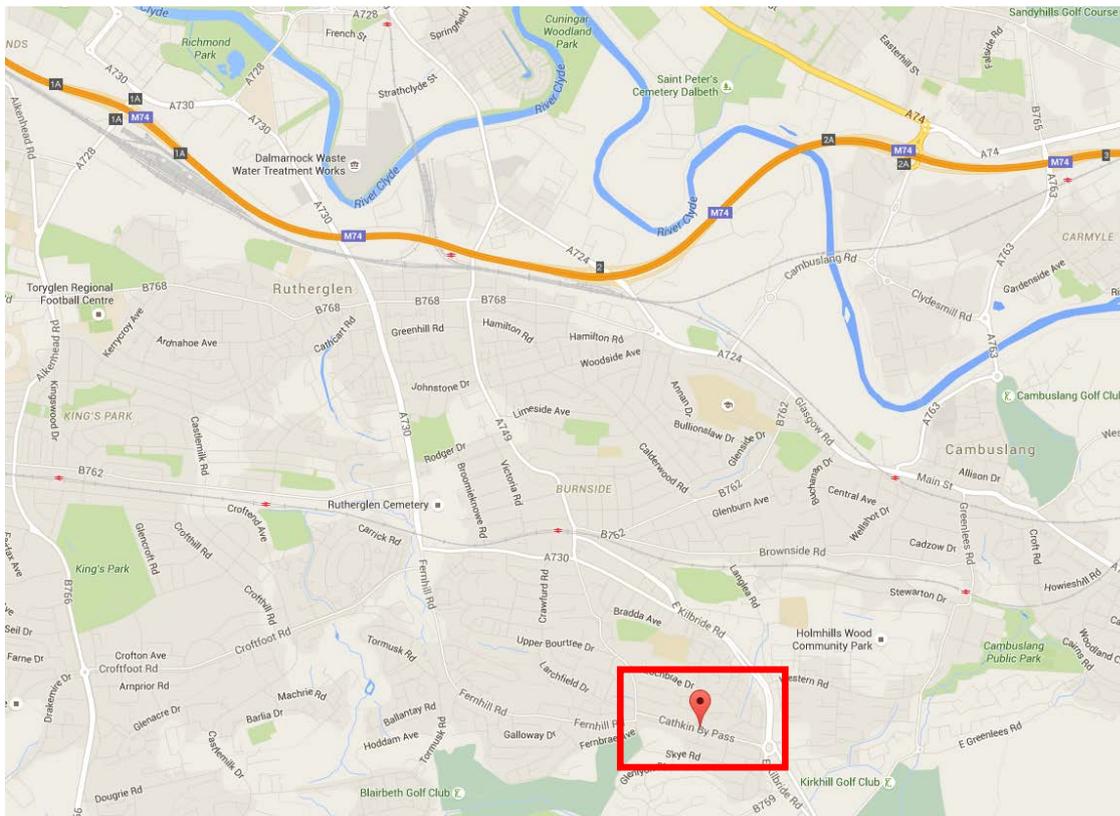
Attendees at the community engagement events were interested in pragmatic solutions for minimising any negative impacts of the motorway on local residents now that it is in place. There was a call for concrete recommendations to improve existing and future motorways. Examples were also given of motorways that had been dismantled and transformed into green belts (such as in Seoul, South Korea).

Finally, it is worth noting that two more major roads are under construction in the area. The Cathkin Bypass (also known as the Cathkin Relief Road; Figure 7) is being constructed in the south side of Glasgow as part of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal, and involves cutting through green space and physically severing existing active transport links. The road is described on the South Lanarkshire website: "The single-carriageway road will run for a mile between Mill Street and Burnside Road and the work will include upgraded junctions at

Cathkin Road/Burnside Road/Fernhill Road and Blairbeth Road/Mill Street/Croftfoot Road/Fernhill Road.” Work started in February 2016.  
[http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/press/article/1477/work\\_to\\_start\\_on\\_cathkin\\_relief\\_road](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/press/article/1477/work_to_start_on_cathkin_relief_road)

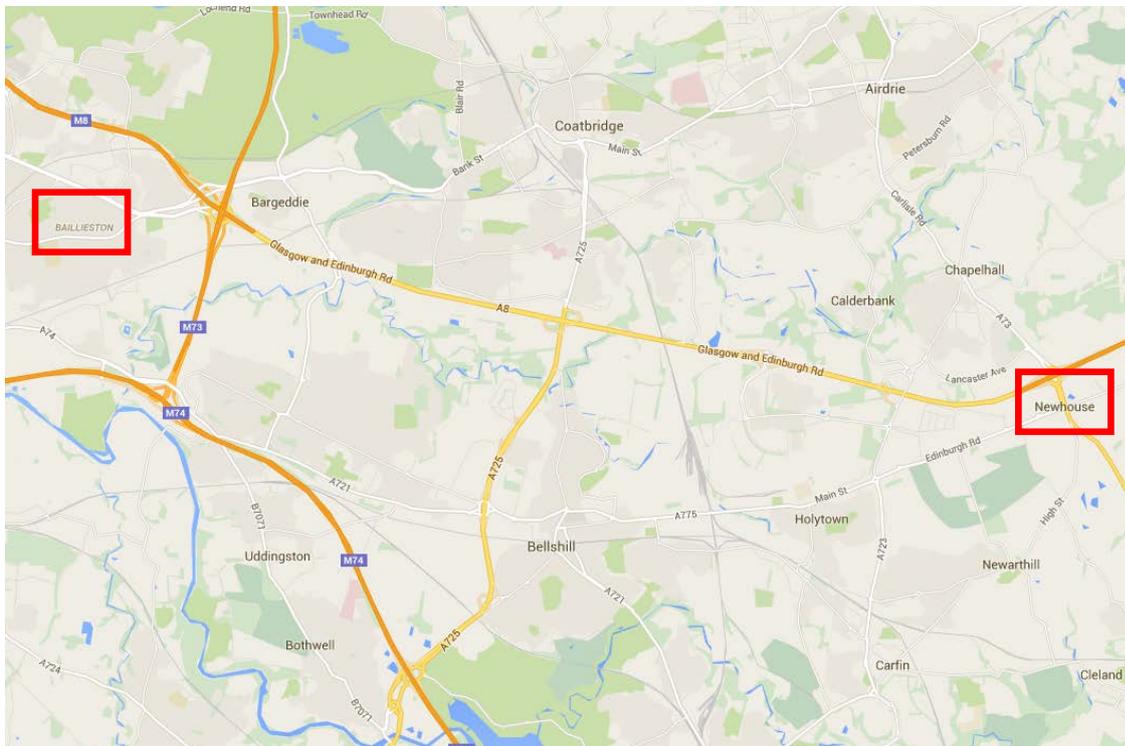
More information about community concerns can be found at <http://www.cathkin-relief-road.org.uk/>.

The proposed road is intended to relieve traffic congestion in Rutherglen. This is an interesting claim in light of similar claims made prior to the M74 build, and the lack of agreement in the qualitative sub-study and the community engagement as to whether the M74 had actually achieved this. At the informal pop-up event in Rutherglen, some participants were confused as to whether we were evaluating the M74 or this new road.



**Figure 7: Location of Cathkin Bypass. Source: Google Maps.**

In addition, major construction work is underway to upgrade and extend the M8, M73 and M74 motorway network and to build a new motorway between Baillieston and Newhouse (Figure 8). More details can be found at <http://www.transport.gov.scot/road/m8m73m74/about-project>



**Figure 8: Baillieston and Newhouse, to be connected by a new motorway. Source: Google Maps.**

Overall, this suggests that research evaluating new transport infrastructure is important, and that community engagement remains a necessary part of such research in order to fuel the political and community conversation about the benefits and harms of such projects.

This report is part of the M74 evaluation which was funded by the National Institute for Health Research. The full research report is available from <https://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/programmes/phr/11300507/#/>. Further information about the study is available at <http://tinyurl.com/m74-study> and on the GCPH website at [http://www.gcph.co.uk/work\\_themes/theme\\_2\\_urban\\_health/active\\_sustainable\\_travel/im\\_pacts\\_of\\_the\\_m74\\_motorway\\_extension](http://www.gcph.co.uk/work_themes/theme_2_urban_health/active_sustainable_travel/im_pacts_of_the_m74_motorway_extension).