

# Delivering More Homes and Better Places in Scotland

## Case Study 4: Commonwealth Games Village

### Introduction

The Glasgow Commonwealth Games Village is one of five case studies featured in the report [\*Delivering More Homes and Better Places: lessons from policy and practice\*](#), which is jointly published by the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE) and the Scottish Land Commission. The Commonwealth Games Village demonstrates how a public interest led development approach and wider regenerational activities can shape a new market and place where none existed before. This case also demonstrates the importance of an active land policy and masterplanned approach. The main report is part a series of reports that make up the Commission’s Review on Land for Housing & Development, which will report later this year.

### Project description and background

The Commonwealth Games Village is a 38 hectare (94 acre) urban brownfield regeneration site. The development was a joint promotion between Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government for the purposes of constructing an athletes’ village for the 20<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Games, which took place in Glasgow from 23<sup>rd</sup> July to 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2014.

Glasgow was awarded the Commonwealth Games in 2007 following a successful bid linked to a programme of wider regeneration and

community development in the East End of the City, led by Clyde Gateway Urban Regeneration Company (URC).

Following the Games, the athletes’ accommodation was adapted and expanded to form 700 new homes – 300 for sale and 400 for social and affordable rent – the majority of which are family homes arranged in terraces with some flatted accommodation alongside the River Clyde. The first residents moved in at the beginning of 2015, just a few months after the Games concluded.



Figure 1: Glasgow Commonwealth Games Village, Phase 2 (Courtesy of Stewart Stevenson Architects)

The Games Village is located in Dalmarnock in the East End of Glasgow. The River Clyde forms a natural boundary which loops around its southern and eastern edges. The East End Regeneration Route (EERR) runs along the north-western edge connecting the Village to the road infrastructure in and around Glasgow. The site is also bounded to the east and north by existing low rise housing.

### Project promoter

The development of the Games Village was a joint promotion between the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council working together at various stages with Clyde Gateway, South Lanarkshire Council, and others. The project is an example of a public interest led development which had the primary goal of delivering the 20<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Games.

The Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council provided £425m towards the overall cost of the Commonwealth Games, including the development of the athletes' accommodation. The Council led on a programme of major capital projects for the sporting venues and the Village. Both the Government and the Council also had long-term legacy plans which included leveraging the Games to meet the city's housing strategy.

Transport improvements amounted to £1bn of Games-related road and rail upgrades, including the M74 extension and the refurbishment of Dalmarnock Railway Station. The latter was built by Network Rail and funded by Transport Scotland, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, Clyde Gateway, the Council, and the European Regional Development Fund.

Clyde Gateway URC also played a crucial role in driving forward the bid commitment that the Games would be a catalyst for regeneration in the East End of Glasgow. Alongside their partners, Clyde Gateway continue to deliver a wide ranging programme of regeneration across the East End, with major investment in roads, infrastructure, business and office

space, community buildings, as well as enabling works for housing development. This programme of work is expected to continue until at least 2027.

### Land assembly

There were significant land assembly challenges in this case, which is typical of an inner-city regeneration site. Land assembly for the Village and other Games-related development therefore began well in advance of Glasgow being awarded the Games. While the Council had significant land holdings of its own, there were a number of other interests which meant that they had to also acquire some derelict land and call upon their CPO powers. There were a number of owner occupiers whose properties were obtained by the Council through CPO, who were then assisted in finding new homes. There was also a large Scottish Power site on the development which had also to be acquired.



*Figure 2: Excavation of the Glasgow Water Works early pump house (Courtesy of CFA Archaeology Ltd.)*

As a post-industrial Scottish city, Glasgow has a legacy of large vacant sites with complex ground conditions. The Games Village site was heavily contaminated and had therefore to undergo extensive remediation works to make way for new construction. This included the archaeological excavation of the old dye works and water pump house (see Figures 2). As one senior planning official with the Council explained, land remediation was a lengthy process which involved “innovative soil hospitals” to decontaminate 38 hectares of

land and provide the developers with a “clean site”.

### Planning and design

In 2005, the Council commissioned RMJM Architects to produce a masterplan for the development comprising 700 dwellings and related accommodation to cater for up to 7,000 athletes and officials during the Commonwealth Games. Stewart Stevenson Architects was later commissioned to design the post-Games transformation from temporary accommodation to homes for permanent habitation, as well as the Phase 2 expansion.

The masterplan included a new local authority care home with a 120-bed capacity (Figure 3) and a purpose built Energy Centre with Combined Heat and Power (CHP) system that supplies heating and hot water to all 700 homes, the care homes and adjacent sports venues.

In 2009, City Legacy, a consortium of Glasgow-based companies comprising of CCG (Scotland) Ltd., Cruden Estates, Mactaggart & Mickel, and WH Malcolm, was appointed to construct the Village, following a developer competition. Remediation works took place between August 2009 and October 2010, running in parallel with planning applications. Detailed planning permission for the Village was granted in September 2010.

CCG (Scotland) Ltd. utilised offsite manufacturing and MMC to produce the new homes using their iQ timber frame system, while Cruden and Mactaggart & Mickel used traditional build systems.

### Development commentary

The post-Games transformation delivered a mix of private for-sale, social and affordable homes, which helped to meet the needs of the community in the East End of Glasgow.

The homes for social and affordable rent include a mix of 2 and 3-storey family homes arranged in terraces, while the owner occupied

properties are comprised of 2, 3 and 4-storey family homes and 2 bedroomed flatted accommodation in 7-storey blocks along the riverside. The development also delivered a new local authority care homes with a 120-bed capacity, which opened in September 2017.

The 400 homes for social and affordable rent have all been transferred to, and are now managed by, three housing associations – Glasgow Housing Association (98 homes), West of Scotland Housing Association (102 homes) and Thenu Housing Association (200 homes).

According to one interviewee, who was a key partner in the City Legacy consortium, all 300 private market homes sold within a period of 18 months. Selling 300 homes over 18 months in an area with a largely unproven market demonstrates that development at the right scale, with the right promotion and wider regenerational influences can create consumer confidence and reshape a market where it has previously failed.

The Games Village is also well-connected and permeable, with primary pedestrian routes aligning with existing streets and reconnecting local communities with the River Clyde. A new footbridge over the Clyde connects the Village to the Cuningar Loop Woodland Park, which provides access to 2.5km of good quality paths and open spaces for people to meet and socialise. Both the bridge and “the Loop” were developed by Robertson Group for the Forestry Commission in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council and Clyde Gateway.

Lastly, the Village is a demonstration in innovation in both design and sustainability. The new homes were rated ‘excellent’ under both the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Management (BREEAM) Code for Sustainable Homes and its UK domestic equivalent environmental rating scheme, EcoHomes.

The CHP scheme has further capacity to accommodate additional connections and,

according to one interviewee, is up to 40% more efficient and less carbon intensive than conventional heating systems.

While the Commonwealth Games Village performs well when measured against the

characteristics of “successful places” presented in Figure 2.2., the landscaping does appear to be struggling, perhaps due to poor management.



*Figure 3: Glasgow Commonwealth Games Care Home (Courtesy of Stewart Stevenson Architects)*

**About the Authors:**

Dr Gareth D. James, Knowledge Exchange Associate, CaCHE ([gareth.james@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:gareth.james@glasgow.ac.uk))

Steven Tolson, former Chairman of the RICS Scotland Board and Chair of the RICS Scotland Regeneration and Education Forums.



**UK COLLABORATIVE  
CENTRE FOR  
HOUSING EVIDENCE**



**SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION**  
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA