

**Village life:
the early experience of living in the
Commonwealth Games Athletes' Village
development, Glasgow**

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Executive summary

The Athletes' Village development in Dalmarnock was intended as part of the legacy from the 2014 Commonwealth Games and a contribution towards the regeneration of the east end of Glasgow. Comprising 700 dwellings (400 social rented and 300 owner occupied), the Village has been occupied since 2015. This study took place after two years of residency when it might be reasonably expected that people had settled into their new homes. It must also be recognised at the time of the study, while some related developments in the area had also been completed, other planned developments in the vicinity of the Village had yet to be completed or commenced.

The primary aim of the study was to explore the likelihood of the Village meeting its sustainability goals, namely that: owner-occupiers and social renters live harmoniously together; it is a place where people want to live and remain in the future; the development is of high quality in terms of design and construction and environmentally friendly and sustainable in an ecological sense. This qualitative research study comprised in-depth interviews with 20 householders conducted in summer 2017, and divided equally between the two housing tenure groups. The findings are organised into seven themes as follows.

Moving to the Village: Residents had few or no regrets about moving to the Village and many would recommend it to their friends and family. Owners were particularly attracted to the Village by pull factors such as its environmental quality, accessible location, and the value for money of the properties. Push factors featured more prominently in social renters' account of why they moved to the Village, including getting away from crime or antisocial behaviour in their previous neighbourhood, and having housing reasons for moving such as experiencing clearance or under-occupation in their previous homes.

Housing satisfaction: Both owners and social renters were highly appreciative of the quality of design of their homes, which represented a step-up from that which they had previously lived in. Dwelling features that were particularly liked included the outdoor space; views of the surrounding environment; the insulation, warmth and comfort of the homes; the spaciousness of the dwellings; and the 'light and airy' feel from large windows. An issue for social renters however was a shortage of storage space, especially in the kitchen areas of the dwellings.

For both owners and social renters, the utility arrangements were problematic. Both groups were unhappy about long-term tie-ins to suppliers for energy and broadband, and with the maintenance costs for the district heating system. In addition, social renters found the operation of the heating system problematic, for which they lacked instructions, and some owners were still working through the legal processes regarding the transfer of management of their solar panels to a new company.

Neighbourhood Identification: Most residents, both owners and social renters, identified the place where they stayed as 'The Commonwealth Village'. Reasons for not identifying with Dalmarnock included the view that more people would know where the Village was than

would know the location of Dalmarnock, the fact that Dalmarnock had shrunk and become a less significant place in some people's eyes, as well as an awareness of the negative image of Dalmarnock. Village residents in the main saw their neighbourhood as a different place from Dalmarnock and were aware of resentment felt towards the Village by Dalmarnock residents, with some respondents thinking that the authorities should do something to improve residential circumstances for Dalmarnock residents.

Local environment: Opinions were consistently positive about the appearance of the Village environment. Participants particularly liked features that promoted sociability such as large windows, low hedges and front gardens. Variations in house types and construction materials provided variety and stimulation that was appreciated, as was the access to the Cuningar Loop Woodland Park for recreation. On the other hand, the appearance of the sustainable drainage system was not liked or understood by many, and the large vacant sites nearby were a source of embarrassment for owners. Rather than the appearance, the maintenance of the local environment was an issue for many people, with a range of complaints directed at the company responsible.

In addition, owners also laid responsibility on social renters for problems of poor garden maintenance and the dropping of litter. This was not disputed by social renters, although they identified issues related to lettings policies and lack of finances among social renters as contributory factors. Uncertainty about the future of the metal fence along the riverside boundary of the development had allowed tensions to arise between owners and renters, with many of the former wanting the fence removed to give views and access to the river, while many social renters with children wanted the fence retained for safety reasons.

Local services and amenities: Those who used the cycleway and train station for transport were very satisfied with the provision, though there was no evidence of modal shift in transport behaviours; bus services, however, were the subject of complaint. Those with and without children appreciated the local nursery provision (private and state-run) for educational and social reasons, as well as looking forward to the forthcoming state primary school. However, parents complained of a lack of sufficient play areas for young children and of any provision in the area for teenagers.

The Cuningar Loop Woodland Park seemed to be well used by residents, particularly dog-owners and families with children, while the Emirates Arena was used by some people but not many, with lack of interest and cost mentioned as the primary reasons for not doing so. There was evidence that use of the Legacy Hub was increasing, with those who used the nursery there also taking up other on-site opportunities, although again cost was mentioned as a constraint to the use of the available spaces in the Hub. While supermarkets in the area were considered local enough to use, there was a demand from both tenure groups for a small shop within the Village itself, both for convenience shopping and to enhance social interaction.

The community: The Village was described by residents as mixed and friendly. Both tenure groups identified the role that moving in at around the same time and positive vetting of owners and renters had made to enhancing residential stability and reducing social problems in the area. There were some reports of tensions between residents relating to parking and children's behaviour. The fact that children were more common among social renters than among owners was not ideal for promoting social harmony and integration, and was sometimes the cause of differences of view between the two groups.

Cross-tenure interactions were minimal, with both tenure groups making assumptions about the other and identifying different parts of the Village as inhabited by one group or the other. This superficial level of casual interaction suited some people, although others missed a stronger sense of community than they had experienced in the past. There was evidence of people with shared interests getting to know one another, for example through dog walking or tending communal spaces. Communication among Village residents often occurred through the mobile phone app 'NextDoor', which was useful in enabling direct social interaction, but was also found to be somewhat socially divisive by social renters when observing online discussions among owners.

The future: Most participants had an intention to stay living in the Village at least for the medium-term. However, some owners had a definite intention to move elsewhere when they began to raise a family, while other participants saw the future opening of a primary school in the area as something which would improve the community. For many, their place attachment was conditional upon further progress in regenerating the surrounding area, the maintenance of the Village environment, and the continued application of controls through social rented allocations and landlord censure of antisocial behaviour.

The report concludes by reflecting upon the three sustainability dimensions of the Village development. Firstly, the Village community appeared to be socially sustainable. It was found to be generally harmonious, although not necessarily with a strong sense of community cohesion. There was an underlying sense of 'them' and 'us' between owners and renters that surfaced from time to time when common issues arose. More convivial spaces for people to mingle and meet would aid social integration.

Secondly, the residential sustainability of the Village is supported by a sense of place attachment among residents, derived from the attractiveness and value for money of the houses and environment, which many residents did not think they could easily obtain elsewhere. However, the continued regeneration of the surrounding area and the integration of the Village with wider Bridgeton and Dalmarock were seen as critical to a continued desire to live in the area beyond the next few years.

Thirdly, as regards the environmental sustainability of the Village, greater effort could be made by the developers and managers of the project to enable residents to understand and appreciate its key environmentally-friendly features, and to improve environmental maintenance and support residents in looking after the area.

Background

1 Introduction

A qualitative study was carried out among residents of the Athletes' Village during the summer of 2017, two years after completion of the retro-fitting process to make it ready for permanent residence. The following report provides an overview of the study background, research methods used, and main findings. In its conclusion, it considers the wider implications of the findings and suggests recommendations for policy-makers. The study was completed under the auspices of the GoWell East research programme as part of the meta-evaluation of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games (CWG).

2 Background

Glasgow hosted the 20th Commonwealth Games from 23rd July to 3rd August 2014, the largest ever multi-sport event staged in Scotland and the very first time that the city had hosted it. The occasion was constructed by policy-makers and city leaders as more than simply eleven days of sporting spectacle and cultural entertainment. Rather, its primary strategic justification was the delivery of a bundle of positive and enduring benefits, commonly referred to as 'legacy'. Legacy expectations were set high, described as a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity to generate universal and positive benefits on a scale anticipated to be truly transformative (Glasgow City Council, 2009, Scottish Government, 2009).

The cornerstone of the bid was the social and physical regeneration of the east end of the city (Figure 1). As the core hosting zone, Dalmarnock was subject to the greatest level of intervention in relation to the Games. This area had long been characterised by chronic de-industrialisation, population decline, deteriorating housing stock, and increasing unemployment (Clark *et al.*, 2016). At the same time, relative poverty and poor health had resulted in the stigmatisation of Dalmarnock as a 'problem place' inhabited by 'problem people' (Gray and Mooney, 2011).

Preparations in Dalmarnock for the Games, led by Glasgow City Council with its Games partners, entailed major land clearance to accommodate the construction of flagship sporting venues such as the £115.7 million Emirates Arena and Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome ('Arena') in the north-east of the area. A £230 million Athletes' Village ('Village'), comprising 700 dwellings, was also built nearby for the Games. Other CWG-related additions included an enhanced transport infrastructure (refurbishment of the Dalmarnock railway station; a new road linking the M74 to the Arena) and the transformation of 15 hectares of derelict land on the southern banks of the River Clyde into the new Cuningar Loop Woodland Park sometimes referred to as the 'Loop' by residents.

In the wake of the CWG, a 'Legacy Hub', funded by the Scottish Government and Clyde Gateway, was opened in the shadow of the Arena as a new recreational and education centre for the local neighbourhood, replacing a community centre which had been demolished as part of the pre-Games land clearance. Other recent developments in the vicinity of the Village site include a children's nursery (completed May 2017), a primary school (due for completion August 2019), and a 120-bed care home (opened September 2017). A footbridge over the River Clyde, connecting the Village directly to the Cuningarg Loop Woodland Park, was opened in November 2016.

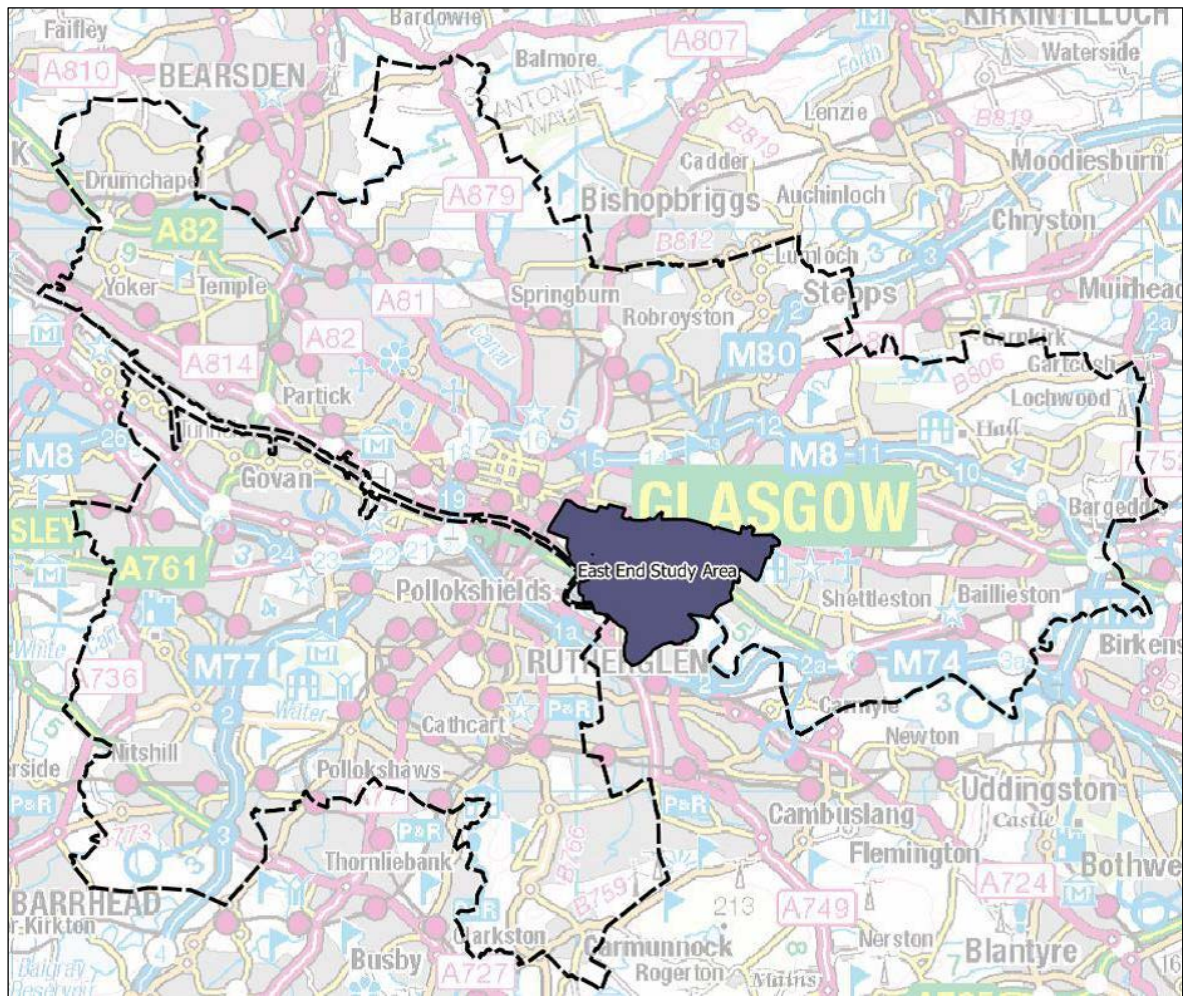


Figure 1: Glasgow district and east end location.

3 The Village

After their use for the athletes' accommodation during the CWG, the 700 dwellings in the Village were retro-fitted for permanent residence and occupied between February and December 2015. The majority of properties in the Village (400) were offered for social rent¹, with the remaining 300 homes offered for private sale by City Legacy² through a city-wide marketing campaign. Figure 2 shows the relative location of the two housing tenures within the Village area. For the most part, the private housing fronts the riverside, with the social rented housing behind this. However, both housing tenures are located at each end and in the middle of the development, rather than one end being allocated to each, i.e. the tenures are more spatially integrated than segregated.

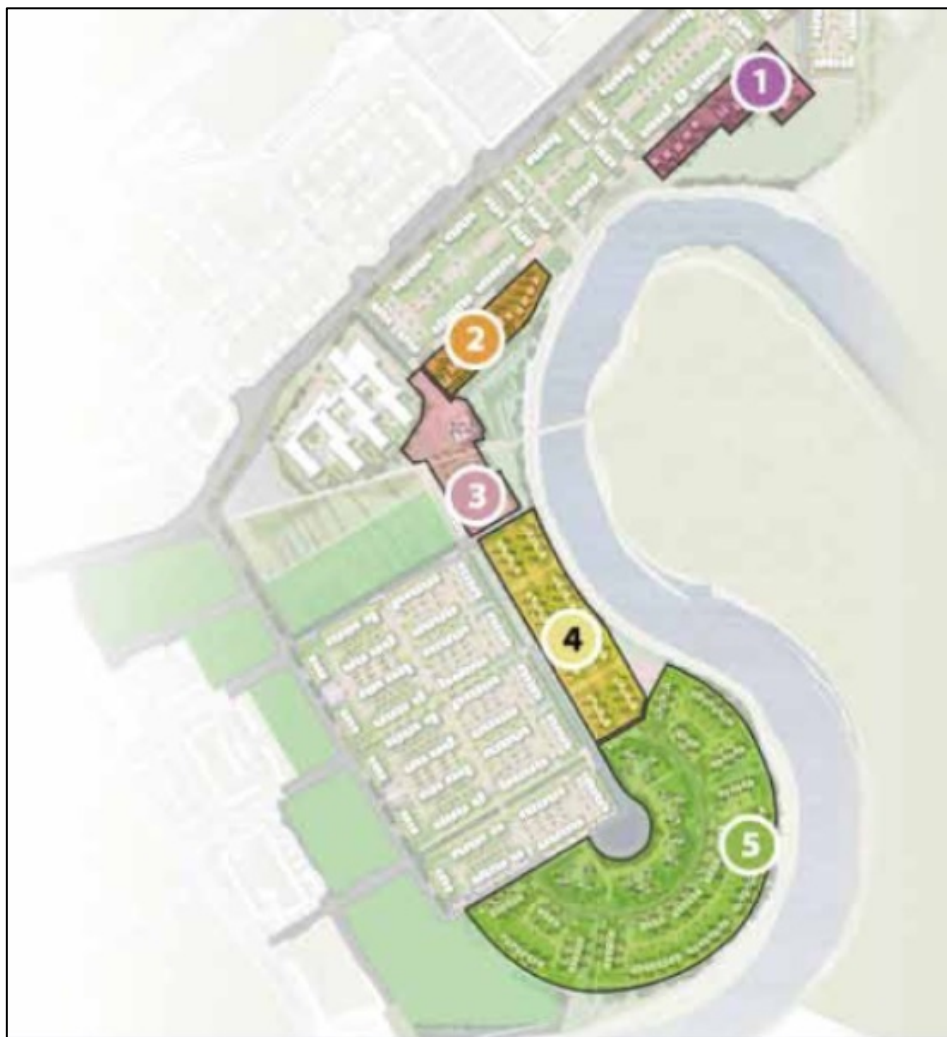


Figure 2: The Athletes' Village, highlighting private housing areas (1-5).

¹ The 400 homes were let by three local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs): Thenue Housing Association; West of Scotland Housing Association; and Glasgow Housing Association.

² A consortium comprising CCG, Cruden, Mactaggart & Mickel and WH Malcolm.

There are various house types in the Village, including one- and two-bed apartments, terraced townhouses and semi-detached houses from two to four bedrooms, with front and back doors and small gardens. The Village is a low-rise development, mostly two-storey in height, with some three-storey buildings, and uses a range of different materials. Other particular features of the development include a number of eco-friendly elements such as a combined heat and power (CHP) energy centre, the use of solar panels and high-quality thermal insulation, and a sustainable urban drainage (SUD) system. These features were part of the sustainable legacy of the Games intended through demonstration to inspire other housing developers in future to adopt environmentally-friendly designs.

The aim of the Village development was to provide a mixed, sustainable community in the east end in at least three respects: owner-occupiers and social renters living harmoniously together; a place where people wanted to live and remain in the future; and of high quality in terms of design and construction so that the development was environmentally friendly and sustainable in an ecological sense.

4 Study aim

The primary aim of this study was to explore the likelihood of the Village development in meeting its sustainability goals. A qualitative approach was used in order to map the range of attitudes, experiences, and outcomes of residents living in the Village and to gather insight about the factors and circumstances which shaped and influenced residents' responses. The findings from this study will complement those from two recent related studies:

- A qualitative study explored the attitudes of other Dalmarnock residents towards the CWG being held in their area, before and after the Games event itself (Clark *et al.*, 2016, Kidd *et al.*, 2017). Sixteen out of 20 residents from the original pre-Games study participated in the follow-up, with a further four recruited to the study. This research was limited to residents in the pre-existing housing in Dalmarnock and did not include those in the new Village development. The current study fills that knowledge gap.
- In a survey of Village residents conducted in May/June 2016, a sample of 310 adult householders were asked about their reasons for moving to the Village, their satisfaction with their housing and neighbourhood, and their opinion of the local environment, local services and amenities, and the local community. They were also asked about any hopes and fears that they had for the future of the area (Clark and Kearns, 2017). While the survey methodology measures the extent to which certain phenomena are found, the qualitative approach used in the current study brings a distinctive kind of evidence in terms of greater nuance and deeper understanding of the opinions expressed.

It follows that a full picture of the views of current Dalmarnock residents will only be acquired by reading all three reports together as a composite.

5 Method

5.1 Sampling and recruitment

Purposive sampling was used in order to capture a range of attitudes, perceptions and experiences. Although the main selection criterion was housing tenure, representation was also sought in terms of achieving a geographical split between the north and south of the development³ and other demographical and socioeconomic variables. The extent to which the sample reflected the parent population is unknown; however, representation in this study was not a question of statistical match but rather of inclusivity i.e. whether the sample contained the diversity of dimensions and constituencies, in order to gain better understanding and insight.

The existing database of survey participants was used as the main sampling frame, from which 100 names (50:50 split between social renters and owner-occupiers) were randomly selected. An initial mail-out to 26 Village residents was undertaken, inviting them to participate in the qualitative study. An information leaflet was also included. This invitation was followed up after two days by a telephone call, text, or email. Up to three attempts were made to make contact with each named individual. Subsequent mail-outs were completed, again using small batches, so that the sample profile could be monitored to achieve the desired range and diversity. This process was repeated until the target number of participants (20) was reached.

The final study sample comprised 20 households, or 25 residents including partners of the initial respondents. All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. Table 1 profiles the sample according to housing tenure, family status, employment status, and ethnicity. It also notes the postcode or city where the participant had lived prior to moving to the Village. The sample is divided equally between owner-occupiers and social renters, with the former being further sub-divided into previous and new owners. Beyond that, the objective of an inclusive sample was achieved in terms of including the following groups: households with and without dependants; those employed on a full-time/part-time basis, or retired; and those looking after the family or who were disabled. With regard to ethnicity, the sample included non-UK participants as well as White Scottish residents.

³ Dwellings with postcodes above G40 4RN were considered to be in the north of the Village: while postcodes below this postcode were considered to be in the south.

5.2 Data collection and analysis

Semi-structured interviews, informed by a topic guide, were conducted in participants' homes from May to July 2017. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. NVivo 10 software was used for the purpose of data management and identification of dominant themes. The primary comparative analysis was between social renters and owner occupiers, as this reflected the main thrust of the social mix sought in the Village. Emerging ideas and possible lines of investigation were noted and stored in analytical memos. To ensure that the interpretations and conclusions were generated from, and grounded in, the data, supporting quotations were copied and pasted into the memos.

The main findings are presented below in seven main sections:

- Moving to the Village: The main reasons why residents moved to the Village and any concerns that they had in moving there.
- Housing satisfaction: Residents' overall satisfaction with their housing, including particular likes and dislikes. Current sources of dissatisfaction are identified.
- Neighbourhood: Issues of place identity, including the perceived integration of the Village with the wider Dalmarnock area.
- Local environment: Residents' opinions of the appearance and quality of the Village.
- Local services and amenities: Views about the provision and usage of local services and social amenities.
- Community: Local social relations, including residents' views about mixed-community functioning.
- The future: Residents' future intentions regarding staying in the Village, including their hopes and fears for the area.

In writing up the findings, numerical statements or indicators were avoided as far as possible because of the small and purposive basis of the sample design. That said, there were circumstances in which it was appropriate to refer to a particular perspective or response as 'dominant' or 'widespread' or 'consistent'; or conversely, 'more exceptional' or 'less common' or 'rare'. In these circumstances, the finding is accompanied by a discussion of the reasons for its dominance or rarity within the study sample. While the perspectives of interviewees are central, the distinction between researcher and participant interpretation is noted, where relevant. Quotations are used throughout the findings sections for illustrative purposes.

Table 1. Village Study Sample Profile

Name	Housing Tenure	Dependent Children	Employment	Ethnicity	Previous Address*
Steve & Chrissie	Owner Occupier: New	No	Full-time	White-Scottish	G45
David	Owner Occupier: New	No	Full-time	White-Scottish	Edinburgh
Mhairi	Owner Occupier: New	No	Full-time	White-Scottish	G11
Janet	Owner Occupier: New	No	Full-time	White-Scottish	G4
Andy	Owner Occupier: New	No	Full-time	White-Scottish	G51
Jonny & Trish	Owner Occupier: New	No	Full-time	White-Scottish	G5
Neville	Owner Occupier: Previous	No	Retired	White-English	EH
Keith	Owner Occupier: Previous	Yes	Full-time	White-Scottish	G32
Darren	Owner Occupier: Previous	Yes	Full-time	White - Any other White Background	G34
Carrie	Owner Occupier: Previous	Yes	Looking after the home/family	White - Any other White Background	G40
Joanne	Social Renter	Yes	Full-time	White-Scottish	G32
Colin & Laska	Social Renter	Yes	Full-time	White - Any other White Background	G45
Noor & Saad	Social Renter	Yes	Long-term sick/disabled without a job	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	G40
Maggie	Social Renter	Yes	Part-time	White-Scottish	G40
Diane	Social Renter	No	Looking after the home/family	White-Scottish	G22
Esther & Ayube	Social Renter	Yes	Full-time	Black or Black British - African	G31
Charlene	Social Renter	Yes	Part-time	White-Scottish	Hamilton
Lisa	Social Renter	Yes	Full-time	White-Scottish	G31
Denise	Social Renter	Yes	Full-time	White-Scottish	G40
Helen	Social Renter	Yes	Part-time	White-Scottish	G31

* The east end is defined in this report as comprising five postcode sectors: G1, G4, G3, G32 and G40. This is a conservative definition, as others might also include the more northerly postcode sector of G21 and G33, and the more easterly postcode sector of G34 as being the in the east end. We have kept our definition closer to the GoWell East study area boundary.

Findings

6 Moving to the Village

The following section examines where Village residents came from previously, the circumstances which brought them to the Village, and any concerns they might have had prior to moving. Differences between social renters and owners are noted.

6.1 Where people came from

Study participants originated from different geographical areas. Table 1 shows that, most commonly, residents moved to the Village from within the Glasgow area, as defined by G postcodes. While the east end of the city was typically the place of origin for social renters, owners tended to come from other parts of the city or beyond.

6.2 Prior connection with Dalmarnock

Participants were asked about their prior connection with the Dalmarnock area. Analysis of individual responses to this question identified three main clusters along a continuum: i) absence of prior connection; ii) 'weak' prior connection; and iii) 'strong' prior connection. Each of these is described below, together with an overview of how they appear to have influenced attitudes towards moving to the Village.

No prior connection: Participants in this group were very aware of Dalmarnock's negative external reputation, which, as will be shown below, was a major concern for them when considering a move to the Village. In the following quotation, Keith (previous owner) underscores the durability of spatial stigmatisation: *"How long does a kinda stigma take tae go away? I don't know. Because Dalmarnock is stigmatised, make no bones about it."* (Keith, previous owner).

Weak prior connection: The range of weak connections in this study included current employment (work location in nearby secondary school; work requiring occasional visits to the Arena from outside the area) and volunteering experience during the CWG. People in this group tended to have knowledge and experience of the current regeneration of the area. In thinking about moving to the Village, their views were found to be relatively upbeat about the future prospects for Dalmarnock. The following statement typifies this viewpoint:

"I suppose I did consider the reputation of the area beforehand. But, as I said, through my job, I do believe in regeneration and that it can work, if done right. There are obviously lots of bad examples, but there's... I'm hoping this will continue to be one of the good examples." (Mhairi, new owner).

Strong prior connection with Dalmarnock: Participants in this group were either born in Dalmarnock or had spent a significant proportion of their formative years there. This historical association had left a deep emotional imprint on the individuals concerned, but in markedly different ways, depending on their past experiences of living in Dalmarnock. Helen (social renter) said that she was pleased to return to her birthplace because of the fond memories she had:

“It was good to come back doon tae, like where you were brought up. I remember it was all the old flats, and all the old houses and... so it’s nice to be back here again.”
(Helen, social renter).

On the other hand, Maggie (social renter) admitted dreading moving back to Dalmarnock from an adjacent neighbourhood, because she regarded it as a regressive step:

“I didnae really enjoy staying in Dalmarnock when we stayed here, tae be quite honest, especially doon that bit there. And the thought o’ coming back here, I was just like, I don’t know if I can dae it. Go back. I would rather no’ go tae – you felt as if you were going backwards instead o’ forwards. And I just thought, mm.” (Maggie, social renter).

This last quotation conveys Maggie’s initial reluctance to return to Dalmarnock, almost to the point of resistance.

6.3 Reasons for moving

Participants were asked about the circumstances which brought them to the Village. An analysis of the responses found that no two stories were the same; nor was there a typical story. However, a key finding was that ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors were present simultaneously in resident accounts of the decision-making process involved. The study found that while social renters and first-time owners mentioned both push and pull factors, previous owners were more inclined to talk exclusively about the latter.

Push factors were dominant in cases where respondents said that they had been subject to racial abuse or antisocial behaviour in their former places of residence. In a rare example, a participant reported having been the victim of a serious crime. The quotations below show the wide range of reasons which prompted a move to the Village, including past experiences of antisocial behaviour and crime victimisation, plus the effects of housing demolition and clearance processes and other prior housing circumstances:

“I was just wanting out o’ where I was, tae be honest with you. I was desperate tae leave there. I knew I wanted oot o’ there. Yeah, we were just getting a load o’... you see, we had moved tae an area where we weren’t known, so a lot o’ it was cliquish and we were getting a lot o’ trouble at the door, just people hanging about the close an’ just... yeah, just a complete – people hitting balls off the windows, our door

getting chapped at all hours in the morning, just really quite bad.” (Joanne, social renter).

“And they were pulling the buildings down, they were demolishing them. (...) it was a’ tenement buildings an’ it was a bit o’ a run-down place, whatever you want tae call it. An’ it wasnae very nice at a’, so we were quite happy tae make, like, a fresh start.” (Diane, social renter).

“I was a victim of a crime and so it was a police recommendation that I got a move. And then that’s how I got a move, because otherwise I was adequately accommodated in my previous accommodation.” (Lisa, social renter).

In another example, Maggie’s (social renter) concern for the safety of her teenage sons outweighed her lack of enthusiasm for leaving her home in an adjacent east end neighbourhood:

“As much as I loved my flat, I loved my close, my neighbours, the actual... But, especially, they [sons] were getting up, they were hitting teenage years, and it’s a worry enough having them, but when they want tae go oot and maybe go places and meet people, I just felt as if it [their neighbourhood] wasnae safe enough.” (Maggie, social renter).

A common thread running through these examples is that the householders were compelled to leave their previous home and were delighted with an offer from their respective RSLs of a new home in a new neighbourhood.

Other push factors included altered family circumstances which meant a re-classification of their housing provision by the RSL as either under- or over-occupation. In one case, a social renter said that she had felt somewhat pressured by her RSL to move into the Village because she had already rejected two previous offers of alternative housing:

“The housing contacted me because I was under-occupied. This was the third new build they had asked me to take. In so many years. And I thought, I don’t really want to move but I’ll put my name doon and I’ll just see. And before I knew it, I was signing for it.” (Denise, social renter).

Pull forces were also present in participant accounts, whereby the inherent appeal of the Village itself was influential. Both social renters and owners were attracted to the Village because the houses were brand new, pleasing to look at, and had a garden. Location was also a factor for residents working in the city centre or needing to drive beyond the city environs for work:

“Big thing for me, being closer to work.” (David, new owner).

“Well, area is the thing. [Name of partner] teaches down in [town name], so it’s very easy to get onto the motorway. And, straight down the road, I’m in town.” (Andy, new owner).

“Yes, very good connection... M74, M8, everything is close here.” (Colin, social renter).

At the same time, social renters underscored the pull factor of their expectation of living in a better community, understood as being more family-friendly and safer. This finding is not surprising in itself, given the nature of the push factors cited earlier. Owners typically cited the environmentally-friendly aspect of the development. The prospect of riverside views was a prime motivating factor for some owners, as shown in the following quotation:

“Yeah, we were adamant that we would only take a plot if it was facing the river ‘cause there didn’t really seem any point in buying something that was overlooked by anybody ‘cause you could get a house in a scheme overlooked anywhere, but you can’t get this anywhere. This is pretty unique.” (Carrie, previous owner).

Typically, owners had been actively house-hunting in the months preceding their move, or were at least keeping a watchful eye over property movements and selling prices. Keith (previous owner) was an exception. He admitted that he had not envisaged moving at all because he and his family were very settled in their *“leafy suburb in the East End”*. However, personal curiosity had led him to follow the construction of the Village homes over time:

“And I used to come down here and walk down the cycle path, I’d come down and walk the whole length of the cycle path, all the way around, just to see, have a peek over, have a look, talk to the guys working. I would say, “Oh, can I watch it coming up?” (Keith, previous owner).

In the end, he was won over by the unique proposition of the Village, including the opportunity to experience *“something completely different”*, and decided that *“it was good enough to uproot a family who were settled”*.

Although making a financial gain was not cited as a primary motivation for purchasing a Village property, owners were generally confident that they would not make a financial loss. Notwithstanding, the value-for-money proposition of the Village, relative to other new builds at the time, arose consistently in the interviews with owners. Darren (previous owner) concluded that *“the space which you get for the price you paid here, it’s just, it’s just a bargain here”*.

6.4 Concerns about moving

Participants revealed their concerns prior to moving to the Village. These are grouped below under three main headings: place, people, and personal.

Place: The external reputation of Dalmarnock was a salient concern for owners who had no prior connection with the area. When they discussed with others their intention to purchase a

Village property, the responses were overwhelmingly negative, even if these were sometimes made in jest:

“...and the popular opinion at the time was that, after a year, and I'll quote somebody on this – after a year, this place will look like Bosnia.” (Keith, previous owner).

“My ex-partner said, “Oh, you don't want to move there”. You know, “It's a rough area”. (Neville, previous owner).

“She'll [her friend] be like “You and your east end.” You know? “What are your otters like? Have you got junkie otters out the front?” So, you know, it's just... it's a bit o' banter.” (Carrie, previous owner).

Owners, with a weak prior connection with the Dalmarnock area, also received negative feedback from others. However, as the following excerpt shows, any concerns that they might have had were summarily dismissed because they judged the area by its current regeneration:

“There was a couple o' pals kinda joked about “Oh, Dalmarnock. I'll go and get you some bricks for your car now.” That kinda thing. And it was kinda, it was laughed off and it was never something that we then thought ‘Wait a minute, he's said that’. Is that a concern? It didn't seem to be a concern. Even from kinda walking about, the days that we came to see it, we never felt there was any sort of issue, especially here in the Village.” (Andy, new owner).

Two factors were found to ease any concerns that owners might have had about purchasing a property in Dalmarnock. These were considered as virtual guarantors for a positive outcome for Dalmarnock. In the first place, a political commitment to securing an enduring legacy from hosting the CWG meant that regeneration efforts would simply not be allowed to fail. Moreover, the fact that a public/private partnership was driving the regeneration instilled a greater confidence in the decision to buy:

“Because if it's like a private build, who knows? Private builders go out of business constantly. So at the end of the day, as far as I do remember, it was a private builder, it was the council, it was the government, so it was like a lot of institutional bodies which were involved. To be totally honest, this gave us a little bit more, let's say, idea that this is going to be the right house for us at the right moment.” (Darren, previous owner).

From this perspective, the usual risks associated with buying property were significantly reduced by the fact that the development was being delivered by a government-backed partnership.

People: There were also concerns about the planned social mix in the Village population. Owners admitted to being concerned about relations between owners and renters, although

their opinions tended to be expressed in abstract terms because they had had no prior experience of such a mixed community. Social renters also had people-related concerns, but these were of a different nature and were drawn from past lived experiences. The dominant concern for social renters was that bringing strangers together into one place might spark territorial behaviour such as 'gang' membership, antisocial behaviour and ethnic segregation:

"Because a lot o' it, there was talk o' people all moving fae different areas an' all that, how's that gonnae work and things?" (Joanne, social renter).

"My main concerns always is my two boys. The concern was am I gonnae take them in tae – is there gonnae be gangs o' boys, is there gonnae be gangs. 'Cause I didnae want them mixed up with that." (Maggie, social renter).

Personal: The disruptive effect to family lives of moving house was a concern shared by owners and social renters alike. Responses were consistent, in that deliberate steps were taken after moving to maintain continuity with the past, even if this entailed additional time pressure and financial cost. Examples found in this study included parents driving their children to the schools that they were attending prior to the move, so that they could complete their education there; or driving their children to clubs, friends' houses or usual hangout places so that they could maintain existing social associations or networks.

6.5 Housing trajectory

A common housing trajectory in this study involved becoming a first-time property owner, with the 'Help to Buy'⁴ scheme singled out by new owners as having been instrumental in their decision to purchase *at that time*. New owners typically came from the private rental sector. They said that they had been looking for a property to buy, but they expected more time would be needed to save for a deposit. In this respect, the financial incentive on offer accelerated their pre-existing plans to buy a home. At the same time, the scheme had placed them higher on the property ladder than they might have even hoped for:

"This is definitely bigger and nicer than we ever thought we'd jump onto as a first rung." (Andy, new owner).

⁴ The Help to Buy (Scotland) Affordable New Build Scheme helps buyers who would not otherwise be able to do so to buy an affordable new build home from a participating home builder, up to a maximum value (which was £230,000 for homes bought up to 31st March 2017). The Scottish Government aids the buyer by taking a 15% equity stake in the property (repayable at any time), thus reducing the size of the deposit and mortgage loan (from a participating lender) required by the purchaser.

New owners were asked how they felt about the change in housing tenure. Responses were universally positive about property ownership. One benefit was that it signalled the end of serial renting, meaning that they felt able to stay for longer in one place:

“I suppose you’re settled. You know you don’t have to move again or look for another place right away.” (David, new owner).

Ownership also brought a sense of security and peace of mind, in that they felt less vulnerable to the whim of landlords deciding to withdraw rented properties at short notice:

“You just know it’s yours at the end of the day.” (Janet, new owner).

Another benefit was having the autonomy to make home improvements at will. The following quotation was typical in this respect:

“You can do what you want to it, so, you know, you’re able to decorate it, and get it looking the way you want it.” (Trish, new owner).

At the same time, there was an acknowledgement that property ownership also meant personal responsibility for organising and paying for repairs. This point was front-of-mind at this time because fieldwork coincided with the termination of the two-year house warranty on the properties.

Home ownership was not a commonly held aspiration among social renters who were White Scottish. Indeed, one social renter (White Scottish, with one young child) had made a rational decision to rent her house from a social landlord rather than buy, on the basis that house repairs and servicing would not be her concern, allowing her to better manage her household finances. However, another social renter (White Scottish, with teenage children) regretted that she had not thought to buy her house when she was younger. Views of those (few) social renters who expressed an ambition to buy property were consistent in that the east end was not considered a desirable location. In the following quotation, Esther (social renter) expresses her concern about the wider social environment which would deter her from considering buying in the area:

“...because the east end has been seen as a place where people are, take more of... they don’t care about going out to work, they just want to stay, take drugs, take alcohol and that’s all that matters, you know.” (Esther, social renter).

Finally, all participants were asked whether or not they would recommend a Village move to their friends and colleagues. This line of inquiry was used as a quick means of assessing whether residents were pleased, with hindsight, to have moved there. Responses indicated a high level of endorsement, even to the point where some had already suggested to family and work colleagues that they consider buying in the next phase of housing development or registering interest with a RSL. Similarly, there was a general view of little or no desire among current residents to return to their previous place of residence. Exceptionally, some

regretted having made the move, a situation explained by strong place attachment to their previous dwelling or neighbourhood and a degree of reluctance to move to the Village in the first place.

6.6 Summary

The Village residents in this study came from diverse geographical areas, although social renters were more likely to come from the east end of the city than owners. The nature of residents' prior connection with Dalmarnock shaped their concerns about moving to the Village. Having no prior connection meant that concerns about the area's external negative reputation was uppermost. Having a recent or current association with Dalmarnock meant a more balanced view of the area, and fewer worries about its reputation. Having an historical connection with Dalmarnock pulled individuals in different ways, depending on their personal experience of having grown up in the area. The reasons for moving to the Village were broadly classified according to push and pull factors, with previous owners more likely to be exclusively influenced by pull factors, particularly the environmental quality, accessible location and value for money offered by the Village. On reflection, residents had few or no regrets about having made the move to the Village. Typically, study participants said that they would recommend moving to the Village to their friends and family.

7 Housing satisfaction

This section provides an overview of residents' opinions of their new Village home and identifies the aspects particularly liked or disliked by them. Recurrent issues, in relation to everyday living in a Village house, arose unprompted during interviews, and these are also examined.

7.1 The dwellings

Opinions of housing in the Village were consistently positive in both housing tenure groups:

"I would describe the houses as amazing. They're lovely, and so far, so good." (Joanne, social renter).

"Absolutely brilliant. Love it, love it." (Diane, social renter).

"Excellent." (Brian, previous owner).

"There's still nothing that we've said 'Oh well, it would be better if...'. You know, we haven't found a kind of thing that we realistically would improve on." (Andy, new owner).

Typically, residents felt that a Village house represented such a radical departure from their previous dwelling that no comparisons between them could be made. For those social renters with an aspiration to buy their home, their Village dwelling had become the standard-bearer for the future: *"Theoretically, if we buy our house, it should be minimum like this one."* (Colin, social renter).

Moving to the Village typically entailed the first-time acquisition of a front/back door and a garden. The quotations below convey the high value bestowed on these features and convey the impression that they signalled 'doing well in life':

"I like the fact that you're walking into your ain front door." (Maggie, social renter).

"Well, my other houses, we've always been kinda been up a close, so even tae have the back an' front door is good an' a garden is... yeah, it's a big improvement that way." (Joanne, social renter).

Moreover, there was a widespread view that gardens encouraged people to be outdoors and fostered social interaction between neighbours:

"It's just kinda like when I'm oot, I kinda potter about the garden. I love it. I've never had a garden so I'm just like 'Oh my God, I can... oh my God, oh my God!' So, like, when I'm oot I usually see the lady next door, [name], and we kinda just talk, you know, over the garden fence sorta thing. So we gab away or I see [another name]"

next door, I'll gab away tae him. So people just kinda... you see each other, you just gab away." (Diane, social renter).

Having accessible outdoor space was appreciated by Lisa (social renter) who recalled her previous lifestyle in a high-rise building where residents were inclined to stay inside, once they had reached their floor:

"You get to socialise a lot more being in a house than, you know, being up in a flat. Although there's lots o' people occupying the building, it's like when people go in, they close their doors because they don't have gardens to go out and sit in and, you know, start conversations with their neighbours or talk to people while they're hanging out their washings and things." (Lisa, social renter).

The design of Village housing was well liked, especially the response it elicited from others:

"I wouldn't fault it. It's brilliant. It's good. The design is good. The way it's....I mean, a lot of family and friends come in here and they will say, 'Wow!'" (Ayube, social renter).

The quality of the build also received high praise. Carrie (previous owner) criticised the so-called "shonky" quality of typical new builds before commenting on her Village home:

"The [Village] building is excellent. It's really sturdy. It feels like it could last a hundred years. Everything in it is finished to quite a high standard and it's really lovely to live in." (Carrie, previous owner).

Other aspects of the Village dwellings which were particularly liked included their spaciousness and the fact that they are well insulated, light and airy, and comfortable. Owners with riverside views commented on the wildlife that they could see directly from their front room.

Although positive aspects dominated discussion in the interviews, several shortcomings were cited, by social renters exclusively. This might be due to the fact that their household sizes were typically larger than those of owners. Accordingly, the lack of storage space, especially in the kitchen area, was uppermost in social renters' accounts:

"The kitchens are totally inadequate for the size of the hoose. There's nae cupboards, absolutely no cupboard space in them at all." (Maggie, social renter).

"You've got one cupboard here for the whole house. There's a cupboard out there that's got a boiler in it. There's a wee cupboard out there, but it's got all your electricity in it. There's a cupboard up the top, but it's got all your stuff for your solar panels in it. So we've only got one cupboard." (Charlene, social renter).

"Which is the only downfall in this house, for a big townhouse, there's only one big cupboard, and that's it, just in there, and it's no' even a walk-in. It's more a jacket cupboard." (Helen, social renter).

Respondents believed the inadequate storage to be the consequence of the previous use of the houses as athletes' accommodation. With the catering for athletes provided in communal canteens rather than in the houses, the kitchens had been part of the retro-fitting and, in their view, had not been given the same attention to quality and detail. Similarly, there was a perception that storage space had been compromised because of the showering and toilet facilities required for multiple occupancy by athletes. The unintended consequence was that everyday large items such as vacuum cleaners had to be stored in the internal hallway with children's bikes and large toys having to be kept outside in the garden area.

At the time of the fieldwork, snagging issues were also front-of-mind, especially for owners, as the two-year warranty period was drawing to a close. Resident accounts indicated that no major fault had arisen during the warranty period. However, there were numerous minor issues, most of which were related to the plumbing (leak beneath the heat distribution unit; radiators not heating uniformly; bad smell from toilets). Other issues cited were cracks in the plasterboard, arising from the fact that the terraced houses had internal adjoining doors when they were used as athletes' accommodation. The original front door handles had also been problematic and had been replaced with more secure ones. Most problems were reported to have been dealt with satisfactorily, though not always as promptly as some residents would have liked.

7.2 Utilities

Despite universal approval of house quality and design, several recurrent issues of concern were found in the study. As will be shown below, these are not related to the actual design and quality of the Village dwellings themselves but rather with the provision of utilities to their homes.

The cost of heating/electricity elicited divided opinions. For some, bills were reported to be cheaper because the move from a bigger or older property with inferior insulation or an inefficient storage heating system had resulted in lower energy consumption; or because owners had received rebates from solar panel use. Other residents however said that they had been very disappointed. Those who had anticipated a significant reduction in bills claimed that sales agents had misrepresented the savings that might be had. Costs relating to the CHP system, particularly maintenance charges, were judged excessive:

"I think that there was a bit of mis-selling going on because all the leaflets said that your bills were going to be... your hot water and heating is going to be 40% cheaper. And it's on every document, it's going to be 40% cheaper. If anything, I'm paying more, but not because of the energy units, but because of the maintenance charge." (David, new owner).

Mhairi (new owner) described the CHP system as "*almost a bit of a fraudulent sell*". This was on the basis that unfair benchmarks had been chosen for cost comparisons: charges were

matched against standard, rather than discounted tariffs, and against the four major utility suppliers only, rather than the total market sector, which would have included cheaper tariffs from smaller companies, bringing down the comparator. The customer billing process had also been problematic with first-hand reports of bills which were delayed (one resident only received his first bill after seven quarters) or were confusing (some renters, thinking that the bill also included electricity, were alarmed to receive a separate bill for electricity). The most contentious aspect was that customers had no control over the charges because they were “*tied-in*” to a pre-existing contract not of their own making.

Another issue, regarding solar panels, applied to owners only. By all accounts, the problem arose when the original solar panel management company had fallen into bankruptcy and the management had to be transferred to another company. While some owners had managed to extricate themselves from the ensuing legal tangle, others were embroiled in sourcing the required legal documentation to affirm their ownership.

Using the heat distribution system was described as overly complicated by social renters. When asked the reason why, the response was that, although they had been given an initial demonstration, a manual had not been left in their possession, with the result that they were obliged to resort to Google to work it out. Owners did not mention this issue at all, although it cannot be assumed that they had no problems with the system. It may be that they had manuals to work from.

The supply of broadband services was also a contested area for residents⁵. The sole supplier contract with BT over a number of years received widespread criticism because it meant that customers could not shop around to get the best deals, despite consumers being generally encouraged to do so these days. Ayube (social renter) described the current situation as “*a rip-off, it’s a total rip-off*”. However, there was evidence of Sky satellite dishes in the south of the Village, which one respondent said was to supply Polish television to some residents⁶.

7.3 Other contested areas

Some issues belonged to social renters, or were mentioned exclusively by them. There were accounts from social renters who had asked permission from their RSL to appropriate small areas of ground, adjacent to their house, which they perceived to be within their natural boundaries. These requests had either been refused, or the decision deferred. Consequently, patches of ground were currently left untended, because no one had responsibility for them:

⁵ Superfast broadband is supplied to each property by BT under a contract between the Council and City Legacy.

⁶ Satellite tv from Sky is provided to each block through a communal system. The social landlords have installed additional dishes to allow access to East European services. Tenants are not permitted to erect their own dishes and have been asked to remove them by the landlord(s).

"I don't know what it is, but we've been on at the council about it because we're like, what's the point, like behind that bin shed it's a bit o' mud, about that width. About a foot. And you're like, what's the point in that. So we've asked, can we get it attached to our garden, you know, for us just to extend our fence out to that bit. We were told, "Oh you have to wait tae April" or something it was, and, 'cause there was some big meeting going on about the hand-over and a' the, I don't know what." (Denise, social renter).

"I don't understand one thing, I will contact my housing officer again. Last year I ask to extend my fence a little bit because, behind my fence, is just like – my fence is like that, and there" like area is, I don't know, it's just people they were throwing rubbish or stone, it's not even grass. I don't know the purpose of this, you know, I asked them you know to extend my fence, just add on to make it like nice... And of course, we look after it, you know. The council when they heard said no, because it will be too much ground the council could give you. I said, "Too much? It's just about two metres or something like that." And this was just a funny thing about the council why it's too much?" (Laska, social renter).

The consequence of ill-defined physical boundaries was revealed in other social renters' accounts, which contained stories of neighbourly discord about parking spaces, or of misunderstandings with RSLs about the status of driveways outside socially rented dwellings, as illustrated by the account from Helen (social renter):

"But see this parking bit? Apparently that's a big issue the now as well, that's no' mine."

Oh, is it not?

"That, anybody can park in there... That doesnae come wi' the house. Because [next door neighbour] and I were gonnae fence oor bit off. And we were gonnae divide it doon the middle."

Oh yes. Yeah, 'cause it's wide enough for the two of you.

"And we got the housing oot and she said, 'You cannae divide it doon the middle.' She says, 'I don't know if yous know,' she says, 'but this is no' your parking space, although it's your house.' She went, 'That's a public parking space, anybody can park there.' And we were like, 'No, I call it my drive.' She says, 'No, it's public.' She went, 'But we're looking intae it. It should've come wi' the house.' She went, 'If that lassie o'er there had visitors, she can park...'"

You wouldn't be happy about that, would you?

“No, I certainly wouldnae be happy going tae my bed at night and this is a strange car what I would call in my drive, so no’ a lot of people know because I think it was [neighbour], she was like mair or less, ‘Don’t say anything’.” (Helen, social renter).

7.4 Summary

Both tenure groups were extremely positive about the design, quality and comfort of their Village home. The Village move represented a fundamental lifestyle change for those who had a house with a front/back door and a garden for the very first time. No major snagging issues were reported with regard to the fabric of the house. Nevertheless, several areas of contention, regarding everyday living in the Village, remain unresolved *at the time of fieldwork*, several of these related to the environmentally-sustainable features of the development. Renters and owners expressed feelings of anger, frustration or confusion in relation to being tied-in to deals which seemed excessively high or unfair to them. The two main issues in this regard were maintenance charges for the communal heating system and the contract with suppliers of broadband services. At the same time, owners were grappling with the legal complexities regarding the management of their solar panels. Moreover, there were a number of current grey areas for social renters, namely, the precise physical boundaries of their rented property and ‘ownership’ of parking places.

8 Neighbourhood identification

This chapter summarises the main findings relating to perceptions of place identity and examines their significance when considering the prospect for integration between the ‘new’ Village and ‘old’ Dalmarnock.

8.1 Place identity

The same question (*‘when people ask where you live, what do you say to them?’*) was asked of all participants to help elicit the geographical location that they most identified with. Further prompting was used to reveal attitudes towards the wider Dalmarnock area. Typically, the Village was found to be the primary spatial identifier:

“I don’t say Dalmarnock or Parkhead or anything, I automatically just say the Athletes’ Village.” (Chrissie, new owner).

An explanation was provided by respondents, with a widespread view that the Village enjoyed universal awareness because of its association with the CWG:

“You just answer the Village and people know where it is.” (Darren, previous owner).

“If somebody asks me, I tell them it’s the Commonwealth Village, ‘cause that’s – people will then know where it is, because it was the big thing where all the athletes were staying.” (Maggie, social renter).

However, using Dalmarnock as a spatial identifier was either a secondary consideration, or was simply not mentioned at all. In two exceptional cases, a particular stance towards Dalmarnock was consciously adopted by the respondent. The following excerpt highlights a deliberate attempt on the part of Keith (previous owner) to reject any notion of himself as a Dalmarnock resident:

When people ask where you live, what do you say?

“I say the Commonwealth Village. I don’t say Dalmarnock.”

So, is that a deliberate thing on your part?

“Probably deliberate, aye. What I will say is probably... if somebody says, ‘oh whereabouts you staying, (name)?’ I’ll say, ‘You know the Commonwealth Village?’ Aye, ‘we’ve moved in there, that’s where we stay’. And I won’t, I probably won’t ever say I stay in Dalmarnock, I don’t classify this as Dalmarnock, although technically it might be.”

So what would you call your local area?

“Well I don’t classify myself a resident of Dalmarnock. I would say I’m a, I stay in the Commonwealth Village.” (Keith, previous owner).

On the other hand, Lisa (social renter) purposely foregrounded Dalmarnock because she felt that, to do otherwise, would be insensitive to the feelings of indigenous residents:

“I say Dalmarnock, yeah. I say Dalmarnock. But there’s a lot o’ people that’ll say ‘I stay at the Athletes’ Village’ an’ I think that can get a lot o’ the older residents’ backs up a wee bit, as if they’re [Village residents] almost better than them.” (Lisa, social renter).

The negative reputation of Dalmarnock was a common explanation for not wanting to be identified with the area:

“Some do, some don’t, but I think most of the neighbours refer to it as the Village, or like to refer to it as The Village. When you say Dalmarnock, it doesn’t sound as nice.” (Trish, new owner).

At the same time, the following quotation suggests that the stigmatisation of Dalmarnock might only be a concern for an older generation:

“That association with Dalmarnock being a bit more rougher, that’s way back, that’s quite far back in time. So maybe tae like older people they would maybe think that, whereas the newer generation or people younger wouldn’t associate it because they wouldn’t really know of it.” (Steve, new owner)

While this statement offers hope for the future reputational rehabilitation of Dalmarnock, the study also found that Dalmarnock in any case had diminished as a geographical entity, in that it had been eclipsed by the construction of the Village and/or had its boundaries eroded by adjacent neighbourhoods:

“It [Dalmarnock] seems a pretty nebulous area. Not like Parkhead, you know, Parkhead is Parkhead. Bridgeton is Bridgeton. But Dalmarnock seems to be... you know... I think the Village has sort of overshadowed Dalmarnock.” (Neville, previous owner).

“I don’t even know what counts exactly as Dalmarnock area-wise and what’s like Bridgeton and what’s...” (Mhairi, new owner).

“Well, I think most people now kinda realise that Dalmarnock isn’t the place it was. Because there’s not a lot left of Dalmarnock.” (Brian, previous owner).

“There’s not really a lot to it anymore, I think most of it’s gone. (...) To be fair, if you took away the Village now, I mean, what is left of Dalmarnock? There really isn’t anything.” (Trish, new owner).

In the view of one participant, the disappearance of Dalmarnock was affirmed by the fact that its name did not appear on the postal address for Village residences.

8.2 Perceptions of 'old' Dalmarnock

Participants were asked for their opinion of the 'old' Dalmarnock, a shorthand reference used by the researcher to signify the area immediately adjacent to the Village. The key finding was that these two spaces occupied separate realms, both physically and socially. The following statements underscore Dalmarnock's 'otherness', specifically in relation to its location and appearance, and its near disappearance in reality and in the consciousness of home owners in the Village:

*"Well, it just sits on its own, doesn't it? It's not really connected to anywhere else."
(Trish, new owner).*

"You just kinda think, that [old Dalmarnock] looks a bit run down. And then, here [Village], you've got the nice new area now." (Chrissie, new owner).

"The wider Dalmarnock area doesn't really figure into anybody's kind of consciousness in any way. I mean, a lot of it doesn't exist. A lot of it is wasteland. There's a few kind of patches of houses (...). Nobody really knows anything about them or kind of factors them into their thinking. It may as well be on the moon for all I know." (Carrie, previous owner).

The following exchange reveals the perceived social divide between the residents of the Village and old Dalmarnock:

"You know, they [people living in old Dalmarnock] look at you and you know, 'cause you know – you can tell a mile off somebody's not from here [the Village]."

You mean, you can spot the people...?

"Oh, aye, you can spot—"

From the old Dalmarnock?

"Yeah."

What things then might identify them as not being from the Village?

"I don't know, kinda trackies, and some of them don't work and you know, things like that." (Janet, new owner).

The spatial and social distance between the Village and Dalmarnock was most vividly illuminated by Helen (social renter), who had grown up in Dalmarnock on the site where the Village had been built. Her statement, *"When I go oot o' the Village, that's [only] when I realise I'm back in Dalmarnock"*, affirms a commonly held view that the Village and Dalmarnock were perceived as 'worlds apart'.

Participant accounts indicated an awareness of the resentment felt by the indigenous population towards the regeneration of Dalmarnock, attributed to social media, a TV documentary⁷ or, less typically, talking to local people. In one case, this resentment had been directed towards Village residents. Lisa (social renter) having moved into Dalmarnock from an adjacent neighbourhood, was targeted as an 'incomer' by the local population:

"When I was on the Facebook page [Dalmarnock Matters⁸], I was even, you know, victim of some of the posts saying, you know, 'Youse don't know anything. Youse have just come into the Dalmarnock'. An' I'm like, 'No, well, I've actually just come from across the road'. Although it's classed as Parkhead, it's across the other side o' London Road. You know? So there was that real... I don't want to say bitterness, I think that's a bit harsh, but, you know..." (Lisa, social renter).

The following quotation supports the more nuanced view that local resentment towards Village residents might be aimed at social renters rather than owners. The social renters were perceived by Dalmarnock residents to have taken something to which the latter felt entitled. In the following excerpt, Jonny (new owner) describes a recent conversation with a local Dalmarnock resident while out walking his dog:

"And then I quickly put it in that I had bought the property that we got. And then it was different, then they felt a wee bit more willing, to open up to me. "Oh well he bought it, that's fine". They were talking specifically about the people who were social housing, and they felt that they were entitled to it more so than others." (Jonny, new owner).

There was a divided response among study participants towards the apparent local resentment. On the one hand, sympathy was expressed for local Dalmarnock residents who had had to endure many years of major CWG-related disruption without seeing any personal benefits, not least having priority to moving into a Village dwelling:

"I think a lot of them were upset because they never got in. I think they were all expecting to get in. They felt really let down by their housing association." (Helen, social renter).

This situation was often described as being socially unjust:

"Like, honestly, I just think they [city leaders] need to do something for them, because it's not fair." (Chrissie, new owner).

However, an opposing view was that the perceived sense of entitlement among indigenous population was misplaced:

⁷ Shortly before the CWG started, a three-part BBC documentary series, entitled Commonwealth City, highlighted the impact of the CWG on communities in the east end of Glasgow.

⁸ Dalmarnock Matters was established on Facebook by local Dalmarnock residents in order to voice their concerns in the lead-up to the CWG.

“You know, a lot of folk don’t like change. You know, ‘I’ve stayed here for 40 years and, you know, my friend’s brother has lived there and he got...’ that sort of thing. That’s my own personal opinion, I think it’s the east end, you know, if you come from somewhere else, ‘Oh, you don’t come from this area’. I think it’s a bit of that.” (Janet, new owner).

“I heard people who don’t live in the Village were saying that ‘oh, you can’t get a place’, you know, ‘it’s no good going on the housing list because it’ll probably go to some foreign person’, you know.” (Neville, previous owner).

From this perspective, residents of ‘old’ Dalmarnock were characterised by owners as inward-looking and resistant to change, even to the point of holding xenophobic views.

8.3 Summary

This study found that the Village was the neighbourhood that participants most identified with, not least because of its association with the hosting of the 2014 CWG. Dalmarnock, as a spatial entity, had become less prominent in people’s minds, eclipsed by Bridgeton on one side and the Village on the other. The ‘old’ part of Dalmarnock and the ‘new’ Village were perceived to inhabit separate social worlds, with little or no connection between them. There was awareness of local resentment among the indigenous population towards the Village development. However, participant responses were divided: some understood why local people might be disgruntled; while others were less sympathetic.

9 Local environment

This chapter reports on resident opinions regarding the quality and appearance of the local physical environment within the Village. It also considers their views about the maintenance of the landscape, two years on from their move there.

9.1 Quality and appearance

Opinions were consistently positive about the quality and appearance of the Village, with a consensus view that the change had indeed been transformative:

*“An’ a lot of people says ‘Have you seen that area before?’ an’ ‘Look at it now.’”
(Joanne, social renter).*

Social renters typically compared the physical environment of the Village to their previous residential location and found the Village significantly better. Diane (social renter) described the downward spiral in her previous neighbourhood, with urgent repairs being left undone, which in turn had fostered a feeling of neglect and increasing hopelessness.

The riverside location with easy access to the woodland was particularly liked because it had created a pleasant neighbourhood to walk around:

“You could walk for hours here, there’s loads of beautiful places to walk, and it’s lovely. You feel safe, and there’s always something interesting to look at. There’s loads of wildlife.” (Carrie, previous owner).

The layout too was appreciated because it promoted sociability: having a front garden meant that people were drawn outdoors to work or sit in it; and low hedges and large windows conveyed a pleasing ‘openness’. The non-uniformity of the housing was also well received, including: the variations in brick colour; the use of wood in some houses; the range of housing types; and, even within any single housing type, different internal layouts. However, while the distinctions between social and private housing might not be immediately apparent to visitors, the Village residents were conscious of them, as the following quotation suggests:

“I’m aware of it, but I don’t know if people that don’t know the area, walking round, would know. I can’t see why they would, ‘cause they’re more or less the same houses.” (David, new owner).

The markers of distinction cited by participants were subtle and included the following features: different brick colour (‘yellow’ denoting private ownership); having a front door porch (reserved for privately owned houses); use of wood cladding (social housing only); location (social housing on the outskirts and bought houses on the inside); and, finally, the most socially distinctive feature, having a riverside view (some private houses).

Responses were also consistent regarding aspects which residents were less enthusiastic about. The unkempt appearance of the sustainable urban drainage (SUD) system was a

recurrent theme, but comments made about it also revealed widespread uncertainty about how it was meant to look:

“I don't know if it's supposed to be empty, I'll be honest wi' you. I don't know.” (Keith, previous owner).

Those study participants who were already familiar with the SUD system from their professional life, claimed that ignorance was the main problem:

“I think a lot of folk have been complaining about that [SUD system] because they're thinking it should be maintained. But these sort of things... you get two different types, you get ones that's supposed to be wild growing, which is that. And you're supposed to leave it, you know, natural, like. So I think a lot of folk have never... to be fair, I don't think the... City Legacy told, discussed about these sort of things. 'Cause a lot of them [residents] were like that, 'Oh, that should be cut'.” (Janet, new owner).

“It's meant to be empty.” (David, new owner).

Other dislikes included the large empty spaces located at the Village entrance and boundaries. Social renters talked about their frustration in waiting for work to commence on the planned primary school, earmarked for one of these spaces; while owners referred to the vacant land as a source of embarrassment, especially when they were welcoming first-time visitors to their home:

“So, for example, if you come off at the station and walk down here, you still have to walk through no man's land to get here, and even when you're driving as well. You know, you don't really notice it so much yourself but you feel conscious that when you're driving in with visitors or people who've not come to see your house before, then you feel very conscious that you're driving through this great big expanse of wasteland before you get to your house.” (Carrie, previous owner).

“And for friends coming to see me for the first time, it's just the eyesore of walking through the brownfield site from the train station. “Where am I?” You know, walking through a car park in a muddy brownfield site.” (David, new owner).

“As you come in through that entrance, it still looks very derelict. The flats that are there are still very derelict, there can be sometimes a really overwhelming smell of open sewage, and it can compound it, just making you feel, make the shoulders drop just that bit more. Do you know what I mean?” (Jonny, new owner).

9.2 Keeping up appearances

The dominant issue for residents was landscape maintenance, with a widespread perception that the situation had deteriorated noticeably in the past 12 months. According to resident accounts, landscape maintenance had been undertaken by City Legacy for the first year, but this had come to an end with the transfer of responsibility to YourPlace⁹ within the terms of a five-year contract:

“The maintenance of the communal areas and the landscaping is not great. It was – well when I first moved in, it was all still being maintained by City Legacy, ‘cause they obviously still had houses to sell at that point. And I think the minute all the houses had been sold, I think everyone’s kinda washed their hands of it, to be honest. It must have been at least a year in, and I would say it’s getting worse.” (Trish, new owner).

Accounts from residents indicated blurred responsibilities between the multiple agencies involved in the upkeep of the Village site. There were reports that the critical transfer of responsibility from City Legacy to Glasgow City Council had not yet happened, although it was said to be imminent. This delay in the handover was considered to be an attribute of the downward spiral in the maintenance of the physical environment¹⁰.

The company, YourPlace, responsible for the delivery of factoring services, received widespread criticism in this study. The main complaints against YourPlace were centred around both management and operational issues, including: lack of clarity about responsibilities across public, communal, and private areas generally, as well as between the social and private parts of the Village; absence of a master work programme; little or no employee supervision; poor quality work; incompetent customer service; and high (and ever-rising) costs. These gave rise to considerable frustration and anger among respondents in both housing tenure groups, as the following excerpts illustrate:

“The original planting was really well thought out, but it kind of got left to go to seed a bit before the factors originally took over, and when the factors did take over, they didn’t have proper maps to say what was their bit, and what wasn’t their bit, and what they had to do, and they’ve just sent round these wee boys and girls to really pull the weeds. They don’t really do it. They’ve not really had any training.” (Carrie, previous owner).

⁹ YourPlace is a private property management company, part of the Wheatley Housing Group, appointed as factors by the developer City Legacy. YourPlace is responsible for maintaining the common landscaped areas of the development and the internal common parts of the flatted buildings. Private owners individually pay a separate charge for this service, with each social landlord also paying a share of the contract sum based on the proportion of properties they own in the Village.

¹⁰ This is a reference to the delayed adoption of the roads and footpaths in the development by the Council. This may be due to defects works required to the roads and footpaths and/or the clarification of maintenance issues relating to the sustainable urban drainage system. Until the adoption takes place, the Council has no responsibility for the maintenance of the roads and footpaths, streetlighting, road sweeping or gritting.

“This is probably one thing I’m gonnae really moan about. YourPlace, they make more mess than what there was in the first place, they really do. (..) Yeah. I don’t think there’s anyone properly managing that? I don’t think any o’ the social landlords have come down to actually see what work is getting done by YourPlace.” (Lisa, social renter).

“A lot of people have been asking, you know, what is the plan for the land maintenance, what areas are they responsible for? Because obviously we’ve got this split between the social housing and the owner-occupied. And no one at YourPlace seems to be able to say, you know, what areas they are looking after. So how can they work to a plan if they don’t actually know what they’re looking after?” (Trish, new owner).

At the same time, there was also recognition of residents’ responsibility for maintaining the appearance of the Village. However, not everyone was perceived to be playing their part. The two main problems identified by study participants were unkempt gardens and litter. When attribution of blame arose in discussion, there was a marked difference in the attitudes between the two housing tenure groups. Accordingly, owners believed that social renters, by definition, had less pride in place than they themselves did:

“I would separate the Village in two parts – you have the private part which is very well maintained by both the YourPlace people and the owners, and you have the rented part which, although it’s maintained, I would say there are some problems there. And I can easily say that people are not caring that much about their property because I think they don’t feel like it’s their property, probably. But there is a difference, I think. When I walk by, you can see the difference in terms of people, how they treat their property one part and how they treat their property in the other part.” (Darren, previous owner).

“And the big problem that we had with the factors is that they said they were putting all of their resources into maintaining the litter problem. My husband actually went into their offices and said ‘Listen, there is no litter problem where we live. The litter problem is across the other side of the moat.’ And that’s the thing that becomes really visible when you’re walking round (...) and it’s quite striking the difference between this side and the other side and the amount of litter and gardens that haven’t been maintained and things.” (Carrie, previous owner).

“I don’t want to sound snobbish, but it’s... the litter if you go into the social housing areas is much worse than... People won’t... a large percentage of people won’t bother to pick up litter even if it’s in their own front garden.” (Neville, previous owner).

More often than not, such owner statements were accompanied by views about perceived bad parenting practices among social tenants, including parents not teaching their children to put litter into a bin.

Social renters offered different explanations for people not taking care of their environment. Remarkably, they automatically framed their responses in terms of the problem being 'owned' by social renters. Some accused RSLs for letting in bad tenants, who did not take care of their gardens or the wider environment. Others had more sympathetic views, suggesting that, in the case of neglected gardens, social tenants might not be able to afford garden tools:

"I don't think anyone's doing it intentionally. I think people just don't have the resources to be able to do it. There's people up the top o' the street that are unemployed, that are on benefits, got large families, that can't afford tae pay a private gardener, so their gardens are getting out of control, you know? But what can they do? Some of them can't go out and cut their grass when they've got three kids or, you know, or pay £20 for someone to cut their hedge because it's a lot o' money to them." (Lisa, social renter).

9.3 The Riverside fence

At the time of fieldwork, one particular issue pertaining to the physical environment was hotly contested. Opinions about the metal fence separating the Village site from the adjacent public walk/cycle pathway along the river Clyde were polarised¹¹. The issue was particularly fraught at this time because some sections of the temporary fencing were in the process of being removed. One view was that having no fence was dangerous for children and would encourage crime, while a contrasting view was that having open access to the riverside was part of the original 'deal' in moving to the Village:

"Uh-huh, because, wi' the amount of house break-ins you've got in here, wi' that fence doon noo it's just easy access for them to come in and oot the Village. Plus the fact that fence was there to keep the kids away fae the Clyde. So the minute they take that fence doon, they weans can then get easy access to the Clyde. But, I mean like, what's it gonnae take, is it gonnae take a wean for to drown?" (Denise, social renter).

"No cycle paths, you know, the fencing, that shouldn't be, that wasn't in the original plans. And that's really important, because that was one of the main reasons why you buy, why we bought this. What we signed up to has no' been provided" (Keith, previous owner).

Participants did not explain the differences in opinion with reference to housing tenure. However, the following statement was exceptional in claiming that owners were advocating

¹¹ The temporary riverside fence was erected during the construction period and it was a condition of planning permission that it be removed afterwards. Concerns about children's safety have led City Legacy to resist removal of the fence and it is still an issue under consideration between the developer and the city council as part of the handover discussions.

the removal of the fence, implying a democratic bias in their favour by virtue of property ownership, and hinting at an undercurrent of tension between the two housing tenures:

“Apparently, the people in the bought hooses all voted to get it put doon (...) And it’s them that wanted it doon. Well, obviously these people don’t come fae this area. They don’t know. They just think, ‘Oh, they’ve got a hoose wi’ a view of the Clyde. So now parents are like, “Don’t be going over there. The fencing’s doon.” (Helen, social renter).

In this particular case, the perceived lack of progress or stalemate was attributed to an absence of leadership. One owner suggested that the struggle was between legal rights and political expediency. His expectation was that the most likely outcome would be a compromise, involving a permanent fence with access points along it, thereby failing to satisfy either side of the heated debate.

9.4 Summary

This study revealed positive views about the appearance and quality of the Village. While residents consistently liked the non-uniformity of its design and layout; they were much less positive about the appearance of the SUD system and also the areas of wasteland located at key entry points into the development. There was a widespread perception of a deterioration in the appearance of the Village in the past 12 months. Landscape maintenance was the dominant issue and source of dissatisfaction among residents, and the delivery of factoring services widely criticised. Attitudinal differences were found between housing tenure groups. Owners presumed that social renters cared less than they did about their local environment and the problems of litter and untended gardens were laid squarely at their feet. Social renters tended to attribute blame either to RSLs for letting in bad tenants or to be sympathetic towards other tenants who might not have the financial resources to tend their gardens. The boundary fence between the Village and the riverside path was a contested issue during the time of fieldwork. However, this issue might be interpreted as being symptomatic of an underlying problem, namely that contentious issues should be dealt with swiftly and equitably to avoid social fault-lines opening up within the Village community.

10 Local services and amenities

This chapter reports Village residents' assessments of the quality of local services and amenities. It considers six domains in turn: transport; shops; schools; children's play areas; sport & leisure facilities; and community facilities. The chapter also explores experiences and behaviours in relation to these services and amenities.

10.1 Transport

Car ownership was almost universal across the study sample. Not surprisingly then, the car was found to be the dominant mode of transport for shopping and/or commuting to work or school. In this respect, Village residents felt well served in terms of being accessible to motorways. Cycling was used for commuting to work by those who already did so before moving to the Village. Nevertheless, this group said that they enjoyed having access to the Clyde Walkway, which had made their cycling journey easier than before.

As far as public transport was concerned, attitudinal differences were found between occasional or non-users and regular users. The former considered themselves well served by public transport, while the latter were more critical of the services available to them. The company, First Bus, was the subject of criticism on a range of issues, including the adequate provision of routes, the frequency and reliability of services, and the cleanliness of buses. School bus provision was noted for being patchy, especially as children had to travel outside the area for their primary and secondary education. The train connection from Dalmarnock to the city centre, an eight-minute journey, was appreciated as a local asset but only used by respondents at weekends and for leisure purposes.

10.2 Shops

No significant difference was found in views between owners and renters regarding the provision of local shops. The large supermarkets (Tesco, Asda and Morrisons) were considered 'local' to residents in the sample because they were accessible within five minutes by car or 20 minutes on foot. However, shopping in large supermarkets entailed spending more money than anticipated:

“Cause you know yourself you go into Tesco for bread and milk and you're £30 out of pocket.” (Denise, social renter);

Similarly, large supermarkets were not convenient when residents simply ran out of a household item or had only a few purchases to make:

“Like yesterday we needed... what did we need? Lemonade. So had to drive down to Asda.” (Esther, social renter).

The only alternatives to the large supermarkets were the local garage forecourt or the ice cream van. As the following statements illustrate, opinions on the latter ranged from gratitude for its existence to being a source of irritation:

“The van, we all rely on the van.” (Charlene, social renter).

“No, no, no. I understand around eight o’clock, the latest, but after eleven o’clock, sorry, it’s too late, and this guy, actually, he doesn’t care. Maybe he’s got like, you know, not so loud now, you know, this you know klaxon, whatever it is, but when we moved here I thought I’d go mad really, you know do punctures on his van because, I hated this van because you know, we have always liked [the] window open because it’s, but I mean, this bedroom is very, very hot.” (Laska, social renter).

When asked about desired improvements, there was a widespread view that a small shop, located in the Village itself, would be convenient for purchasing everyday items such as newspapers, milk, and morning rolls:

“Having a shop on the doorstep for the weekly shop doesn’t matter so much as just being able to go out and, you know, buy a couple o’ things.” (Andy, new owner).

Jonny (new owner) argued that a local shop within the Village would also increase social interaction:

“I just think people would go out on foot more. You know, at the moment everyone’s in the car, and there’s no socialising going on. But I think if people were more inclined to quickly walk up to the shop and grab something, that’s where you get your sense of neighbourhood.” (Jonny, new owner).

Many recalled having easy access to a small independent newsagent in their previous place of residence, but some were sceptical about the commercial viability of this retail model in the modern world, with the convenience store sector having been captured by large retailers.

There was wide expectation that planned further development within the Village would necessarily bring in its wake additional retail outlets.

10.3 Schools

The opening of a new primary school was eagerly awaited by parents of young children because, as the following excerpt suggests, they were currently obliged to travel outside what was perceived to be their local area for their educational needs:

“I think it would be really good because, as far as I know, a lot of families that live in the Village either use Dalmarnock Primary which is quite a walk away. For being called Dalmarnock, it’s almost in Bridgeton. So I would say it’s gonnae be really good, it would benefit residents of the Village to have the primary school here.” (Lisa, social renter).

Aside from the locational aspect, some accounts indicated parental concerns about the pressure on places in local primary schools. Charlene (social renter) expressed her reluctance to send her youngest daughter to the primary school attended by her other children because it was *“bursting at the seams”*. She attributed this worsening situation to the increased population in the area:

“That’s my main concern about this area, I feel since we’ve moved here, their school’s kind o’ no’ as good any more. When they first started it was a great wee school, but I think wi’ a’ the kids and they’re all more kids and more kids.”

Regarding early years’ education, a state-run nursery school had just opened during the fieldwork period, and therefore its impact could not be assessed. The private nursery located in the Legacy Hub was used by several families in the study sample. Discussion around the latter underscored the potential of these establishments to build social capital in that the mothers of children attending the private nursery had subsequently arranged playdates outside nursery hours. Although households with young children were more likely to discuss schools provision, those without children also expressed satisfaction that, in thinking about starting a family, they knew that they would have nurseries and a primary school right on their doorstep:

“We’ve not got kids right now, but it’s handy to know that there is like a nursery there, and there’s a school right down the bottom, so that’s quite good. Yeah.” (Chrissie, new owner).

10.4 Children’s play areas

People without children or with adult children, mainly owner-occupiers, made positive statements about what was on offer for children in the Village. The following quotation typifies this perspective:

“You just need to look at the green space. Your kids could go off, and out on bikes, or they could go to the Loop. There’s certainly enough for the young kids and they’re relatively safe, there’s not, you know, there’s not fast cars driving around.” (Steve, new owner).

Households with children, mainly social renters, had less positive views. The study revealed a range of different views, depending on the age of the children involved. Parents with younger children called for more play facilities for younger children such as a swing park or a ‘football cage’ (fenced all-weather football court). Importantly, they were adamant that such amenities had to be within close range to the family home; for this reason, the play park at the north of the Village was perceived to be too far away by those living at the lower end, and the Cuningar Loop Woodland Park was suitable only for play under parental supervision.

Parents of teenage children, again mainly social renters, sought improvements for them in terms of the supply of diversionary activities, especially at weekends and evenings. This desire was explained by personal experience of antisocial behaviour such as gang association and underage drinking in their previous neighbourhood. Denise (social renter) reported that she drove her teenage son to Glasgow Green each evening so that he could hang out with his friends. In her view, the multi-activity court nearby in Baltic Street in 'old' Dalmarnock was not an option:

"I wouldnae send my wean o'er, no' because it's in the auld bit, it's just, from what I can gather and what I've heard, there's quite a lot of tension and fighting. And if you're nae from there, then you're no' welcome. That kind of nonsense." (Denise, social renter).

Moreover, she said that the Arena was too expensive for playing football on a daily basis and too formal and structured an environment for simply kicking a ball around with friends.

10.5 Sport and leisure

Two main amenities were discussed in respect of sport and leisure: the Emirates and the Cuningar Loop Woodland Park.

The subject of the Emirates Arena rarely arose unprompted during the interviews, and the facility itself did not appear central to Village residents' everyday lives. The attitude towards the facility, and its use by residents, was neatly summed up in the following statement:

"It does tend to be used a bit. Probably not as much as people might like to have seen it used, but I suppose that's the same with any sports facility – there's a level of use and if it's on your doorstep it almost kind of gets taken for granted that it's there." (Andy, new owner).

There was no evidence of any difference in usage between social renters and owner-occupiers. Resident accounts indicated the following three main user categories:

Current users: this group used the gym or five-a-side football pitches, albeit infrequently;

"I've got my gym membership so, yeah, I've been o'er a couple o' times. Just, again, it's like it's getting the motivation and the time." (Joanne, social renter).

The recent refurbishment of the gym equipment was viewed positively, but there were complaints about the spa charges, which were additional to the cost of Glasgow Life membership.

Lapsed users: people in this group had used the Emirates Arena in the past but had ceased to do so for any of the following reasons: lack of time; low motivation; preference for an activity not available within the Emirates such as dance or swimming.

Non-users: this group (which included both owners and social renters) cited any of a multitude of reasons for having never used the Emirates Arena: it was too expensive or there was cheaper provision elsewhere e.g. Pure Gym or discounted workplace facilities; they were too old to frequent a gym; they had no interest in sport; or, less commonly and among social renters, they did not want to commit to monthly direct debit payments because they did not have salaried employment.

In stark contrast to the Emirates Arena, the Cuningar Loop Woodland Park was highly valued as an amenity. Many superlatives were used by participants to describe the attractive natural environment. The woodland area, including the riverside boardwalk, boulder centre, bike track, play area, and café, had become accessible from the Village with the recent opening of the footbridge, generating first time visits by residents:

“Since the footbridge opened there seems to be a lot more people using it an’ it’s a lot easier for us to access now so we’ve been making more use of it, whereas before it was the dreaded thought of walking away round Dalmarnock...” (Lisa, social renter).

“So I hadn’t been over until that, we were kinda waiting. And that’s – well, that’s actually when it first opened, that’s when we realised actually that was already there.” (Steve, new owner).

The Cuningar Loop Woodland Park was especially popular among dog walkers and families with young children. However, concerns about ‘stranger danger’ or fear of antisocial behaviour meant that the parents in the sample did not allow their children to go there unaccompanied. Other concerns cited by participants proved to be unfounded. One resident was worried that the Cuningar Loop Woodland Park might be used by teenagers for underage drinking in the evenings but there were no incidents of this arising in the accounts. Similarly, another resident had been worried that visitors to the Cuningar Loop Woodland Park might use the Village area for parking but again there were no reports in this study of any serious problems arising in this respect.

10.6 Community facilities

There were signs that the Hub was being increasingly used by Village residents. The recent opening of the Commonwealth Medical Practice meant that the centre could become the focal point for community health services. In this regard, some residents announced their intention to switch to the dental and medical services at the Hub because of the convenience. The pharmacy also appeared to be well used by sample residents.

Parents of children used the Hub more extensively than professional households without children, with the latter viewing the centre as being mainly for young children or for daytime activities only for adults and children. Adult classes and children's activities, including drama club, summer clubs and toddlers' groups, were available. Those who used the private nursery in the Hub for childcare had taken up the opportunity of free adult educational courses there and were aware of the social programme available. One report suggested that the Hub had been used as a venue for a local meeting but was no longer used because it was considered to be too expensive.

10.7 Summary

The car was the dominant mode of transport for residents, with this study finding no indication of behavioural change towards non-motorised transportation. While rail connections were perceived to be good, the bus service was the subject of much criticism. Local shops were deemed adequate, but the availability of more localised shopping within the Village itself was regarded as something desirable both for convenience and for social reasons. The opening of the new primary school was eagerly awaited. Parents considered the provision of play-areas and spaces for play for older children to be inadequate; while parents of teenage children were dissatisfied with the lack of activities targeted at that age group. While the Emirates Arena was not a focal point for Village residents, the Cuningarr Loop Woodland Park was universally appreciated as a pleasant natural environment within which to undertake a range of different activities, and the use of the Hub appeared to be increasing. In the case of both venues, there were indications that the charges involved deterred some usage, although the main reasons for not using the Emirates Arena related to a lack of interest or motivation to do so.

11 Community

This chapter reports the findings with regard to social cohesiveness and social interaction. Particular attention will be given to exploring how the two housing tenure groups view each other, and whether the tenure mix within the Village is an issue or consideration for anyone.

11.1 A shared experience

Residents moved into the Village at roughly the same time, which meant that, to all intents and purposes, the experience was a shared one, regardless of residents' place of origin and personal circumstances. This was typically regarded as having a bonding impact:

"Yeah, I think it really did make a difference because we were all starting off at the same stage and we were all learning, you know, how to settle into our new homes, so it really did help." (Lisa, social renter).

"There's a comfort thing because everybody's in the same boat. Everybody's got a common thing, you've all moved, you're all new." (Steve, new owner).

It also meant that there were no pre-existing social relations to hamper social integration:

"I think everybody moving in at almost the same time was a good thing, 'cause then everybody was in the same starting position. I think everybody's – you know, you're not moving into an established community, neighbourhood, and having to fit in. We all moved in at the same time, so, there's no... clique-ness about it." (David, new owner).

This last point was particularly pertinent to Joanne, a social renter, whose 'incomer' status had been problematic when she and her family had moved into their previous place of residence:

"An' the good thing about it is, people all came at the one time from all the different areas. It wasn't like a one area that's been developed over, like, years an' then they move in a different family, which was my experience." (Joanne, social renter).

11.2 A 'filtered' population

Despite being socially diverse, the Village population had been filtered, or pre-selected, to some degree. This process had been executed in different ways, according to housing tenure group. Social renters described the two policies which applied to them. The first one entailed a form of systematic vetting, in effect setting eligibility criteria for new social tenants. Laska (social renter) reported that her RSL had stipulated that tenants had to be in paid employment. The following quotation highlights her belief that this would reduce the likelihood of social problems:

“So I had to prove that we both worked last year, and we didn’t have any like benefits or something like that. (...) And if you’ll be getting benefits, you know, usually you’ve got like alcohol, drugs, you know everything, sorts of, all sort of you know bad things. And I think they wanted to get people in the village who will like look after the houses.” (Laska, social renter).

The second policy assumed a ‘zero tolerance’ of bad tenant behaviour, characterised as “two strikes, and you’re out” or having a ‘red and yellow card’ system. Reports of multiple evictions¹² in the Village suggested that these policies had in fact been implemented, although one social renter, whose family was experiencing harassment from a neighbour, was disappointed that the relevant RSL had not been more stringent from the outset to prevent troublemakers moving into the village in the first place:

“They should have done a wee background check-up. That’s the thing they shoulda done. That’s why people got kicked out, 26 families caused a lotta trouble but they should’ve found that out before they moved in, you know.” (Noor, social renter).

Owners reported being curtailed by restrictions in that they were not permitted to buy in the Village for letting purposes, or to buy a Village property as a second home. However, their accounts highlighted some uncertainty in defining the precise detail of these requirements. Some believed the time limit to be two years, while others believed it to be five; some stated that the restriction also applied to the sale of the property; and still others admitted that they were unsure whether these stipulations were expectations or legally-binding clauses.

Nonetheless, the principle of having social controls elicited positive responses from both tenure groups:

“Yeah, I think they’ve picked—I think the council have picked people who deserve the houses and, you know, they’re not gonna pick somebody that’s going tae be... It used to be years ago you’d put anybody in just to get them away. But they’ve – I think they’ve been selective and I think that has made a difference.” (Janet, new owner).

“You’re only allowed to sell it in special circumstances for so many years. I think the bottom line is, you could sell it, but I think to try and deter it, there was like, I don’t know – it was, you could only do it after a certain amount o’ time, if a certain amount o’ time had passed. I think they just didn’t want developers coming in and just shoving anybody in.” (Steve, new owner).

¹² We have not been able to corroborate the occurrence of ‘multiple evictions’ in the Village. Although it does seem as though a strong message about zero tolerance of antisocial behaviour in the Village was conveyed to residents through the social landlords, the police and Community Safety Glasgow, it is unclear whether or not a particular approach to evictions has been adopted in the Village. One social landlord reported that their policy on evictions was no different in the Village to elsewhere and that they had not evicted anyone.

“In the flat [where she lived before] I would say the majority of everyone was unemployed and I think a lot of people were put in those flats because high-rise flats, as you know, are less desirable.” (Lisa, social renter).

Typically, residents supported the rationale for having controls in place. They understood that these would minimise population turnover and allow time for the community to develop. The new owners below said that people like them would be more likely to invest time in making friends with neighbours, because they intended to stay in one place for an extended period:

“But, to me, they [caveats] were good. To some people I think they would be quite restrictive. But, to me, I could see the long-term in it. (..) I know that I’m going to have the same neighbours.” (David, new owner).

“Maybe ‘cause it’s just more permanent. It feels more permanent so people make more of an effort.” (Mhairi, new owner).

11.3 A harmonious community?

Indications from resident accounts were of a socially diverse but harmonious community:

“I think it’s quite friendly. Quite friendly. As I said, never had any issues with people. Everyone is quite friendly and chatty, so it’s a nice area.” (Darren, previous owner).

“I think it’s a mixed people, but people just generally seem to be nice. You know, you say ‘hello’ and whatever. People just generally be nice.” (Diane, social renter).

Examples of individual acts of neighbourly kindness were reported, as well as several neighbourhood initiatives which had brought people together and provided mutual support. Carrie (previous owner), for example, described what happened when her second child was born:

“Like, when she was born the family across the road would bring their suppers over – pots of chilli – and bake and things like that...” (Carrie, previous owner).

Lisa (social renter) explained that informal childcare practices had developed as well as other social activities:

“But it’s a great street, we all get on very well, we manage to help each other with childcare. Since coming here I’ve managed to give up the after-school care for my son because the neighbours help me and, you know, we have other events as well – we have summer barbecues and Halloween parties and stuff so it’s a great community spirit.”

And how did that come about then?

“We just all got started talking. We’re all really similar people, we’ve all got the same kinda households and... yeah.” (Lisa, social renter)

Yet the Village was not without social discord, at least within the rented sector. Social renters provided witness accounts of incidences, ranging from neighbours physically fighting in the street to neighbours no longer speaking to each other. Generally, the main sources of everyday conflict were found to be around parking (residents putting cones down by way of reserving their ‘designated’ space in front of their home) and parents fighting with other parents over their respective children’s behaviour. There were rare reports of more serious incidents. One household (social renters) had installed cameras in their back garden because of fears that their neighbours might cause damage to their property. At a more extreme level, there was a reported incidence of homophobia which had resulted in a gay couple moving out of the village because of harassment.

However, it is unclear from this study whether the examples of disharmony cited above were isolated or localised incidents. In other words, they might refer back to a time when multiple evictions were being carried out, or pertain to a single troubled area within the social rented part of the Village.

11.4 Cross-tenure integration

In terms of social integration, there was no substantive evidence of cross-tenure social mixing. Consequently, each tenure group tended to make assumptions about the other. Jonny (new owner) characterised the situation as follows:

“You know, they [owners] might feel that they’re just that wee bit better than someone else in the social. And there are people like that in the world, you know, there’s no denying it. And at the exact same time there’s people who think, ‘oh look at them, awe fur coat and nae knickers’ type of thing. It’s the same, you’re always going to get that. You’re going to get that clash.” (Jonny, new owner).

In the quotation below, Helen (social renter) expresses her belief that owners look down on people like her because they see themselves as socially superior:

“But I think, I think the bought side thinks different o’ this side, to be truthful. I think they think ‘cause they’re in bought houses, they’re better.” (Helen, social renter).

The data would support this perception. Owners perceived social renters rather than owners to be guilty of antisocial behaviour, such as poor parenting, littering, and low civic engagement. A social renter described her discomfort when walking her dog past the riverside houses. She felt ‘watched’ by owners whom, she surmised, would assume that a social renter like her would allow her dog to foul the pavement. Similarly, Lisa, a mother of a

young boy, reiterated the argument she used against owners in defending children's freedom to play in the Village:

"They're [the children are] not being antisocial. They're not, you know, damaging anyone's property or anything. They're using old bits o' nature that's, you know, lying about. So we've had to just say to them [people who complain] 'Look, let's be reasonable here. They're kids. Yes, you own a house, but we aren't any different because we're social tenants.' I think a lot o' people think, when you're renting a house, that you're beneath them, you know, because you're renting it through a housing association, that everyone has this, you know, pre-judgement about council tenants, so yeah."

Is that an issue, a big issue, or just an irritating thing?

"I think it's a big issue. I would say it's a big issue. People don't know people's personal circumstances. I feel like saying sometimes, you know, 'I work in housing, I'm in a really well-paid career and I'm renting a social housing. There's nothing wrong with it. It doesn't make you any less deserving than what you are because you've got a bought house.' But that's almost the way they treat you sometimes, as if we can't touch certain areas of the Village because they own that house, and that patch of grass is near their house." (Lisa, social renter).

Children's outdoor play could also cause tension between social renters. Charlene (social renter) reported her difference of opinion with a neighbour over her young son playing outdoors in the Village, although her neighbour's concern was also about what might happen next:

"Like say like my son goes out wi' his ball, nobody would moan [where she used to live in Hamilton]. Because they're kids. Whereas some – I've found some folk down here in this street are like – oh, they're trying to get a 'no balls' scheme sign put out there."

Oh are they?

"And I'm just..."

On the land out there?

"On the grass, uh-huh. And I'm dead against that, because I wouldnae let my boy venture out anywhere else."

Who's doing the moaning? And is it to your face or is it through NextDoor¹³?

¹³ NextDoor is described on its website as a 'free private social network for your neighbourhood or community'.

“To my face. I’ve spoke tae her but no argument. I have spoke tae her, and she says, ‘Oh look it’s not [Charlene’s son], it’s...’ She doesn’t want another crowd, like an older crowd coming up. Which I do understand...” (Charlene, social renter).

The Village was typically described as being divided into two parts. Carrie (previous owner) likened the SUD system to a ‘moat’ or ‘barricade’ serving as a physical delineation and social distinction between the people living on either side of it:

“It’s the kind of elephant in the room a lot of the time and people will kind of whisper under their breath about ‘The other side’. You know, and ‘Oh, the people from over there’. And then in the same breath, you know, the people over there will talk about ‘The people in the bought houses’. You know? And there is a ‘them’ and ‘us’. (Carrie, previous owner).

An interpretation of these statements might be that it would be more accurate to describe the housing tenures as juxtaposed, rather than mixed.

11.5 Social interaction

Social interaction was through face-to-face contact and social media, with the latter found to be the most influential in shaping attitudes and behaviour.

Face-to-face contact was conducted at a superficial level, characterised by exchanges of social pleasantries and saying ‘hello’. Most people said that they knew their immediate neighbours only. Beyond this, there was evidence of communities of interest springing up organically, including dog-walkers, parents of small children, or people sharing responsibility for communal spaces. The main explanation given by respondents for this superficial level of interaction was that the majority of Village dwellers were out working during the day. A less typical reason was the ethnic mix, which some felt fostered the formation of cliques and limited the depth of social contacts, due to language or cultural differences:

“There’s quite an ethnic mix in the social housing. Which I don’t have a problem with, but I don’t think they want to, you know, get sociable. You know, because, you know, maybe they’re (stutter) I don’t know what their language is and, you know, culture. I don’t think the ethnic people... are... any... any worse than the Glasgow people for, you know, for example.” (Neville, owner).

Exceptionally, Denise (social renter) showed resentment towards other residents because of their ethnicity because of a belief that the Village “was for the people of the east end, and you’ve got people fae Nigeria and the Philippines and god knows where else.”

This superficial level of face-to-face interaction was not necessarily seen as a negative social phenomenon. On the contrary, it suited those respondents very well to whom the notion of a community was appealing but who wanted no more than casual social

interaction. In the following statement, Keith (previous owner) described the optimum balance for him:

“I mean, for me a perfect neighbour is not somebody that you're gonnae go and have cups of coffee in their house with, it's somebody who's there for you if you need them. You know, if there's maybe an incident at the house or if you've got an emergency you can feel that you can go to the people. I like it that way.” (Keith, previous owner).

Some had hoped for a stronger sense of community, although it was not clear where this expectation had come from, and some social renters said that they missed the close-knit community that they had left behind.

Interaction through social media was dominant in this study. This was perceived as a reflection of community life in the 21st century rather than a feature pertaining only to the Village:

“And, in a way, it seems to have moved to that online space rather than folk chatting across the fences and that sorta thing. It seems to have moved that way. Again, possibly a kind of more societal thing than anything else.” (Andy, new owner).

The main digital network used by participants in this study was NextDoor. This was used by both social renters and owner-occupiers, although, atypically, one (older) non-user perceived that it was a medium reserved for owners exclusively. Although there was some confusion about its genesis, use of the network seems to have grown via word-of mouth and leaflets through the door. It was reported that its geographical reach had recently extended to include neighbouring areas, although users were still able to post their comments to Village residents only, if preferred.

Respondents identified wide-ranging benefits of a digital network such as NextDoor. In this study, the app was used for the following purposes: posting Village-related information; selling or giving away unwanted items; initiating face-to-face social contact; fulfilling an informal Neighbourhood Watch function; and encouraging social action. An example of the latter was an initiative to bring together volunteers to remove sectarian graffiti after an Old Firm football match. In fulfilling the above functions, the app provided a social glue which might otherwise not have been there.

Although NextDoor appeared to have a bonding effect, concerns were raised by some users about the subject and tone of postings. Several threads were judged to be socially divisive by their very nature, for example, discussion about rebates on solar panels which were relevant to owners only. Others revealed linguistic sensitivities – social renters said they resented being labelled by owners as those people living “*over on the council side*”. Carrie (previous owner) said that she had stopped using the site because the tone used by some owners, particularly about social renters, had become unacceptably moralising:

“It’s not subtle at all. It becomes, actually, quite derogatory and... I would feel quite insulted if I lived across there. They tend to lump them into a group and say things like ‘Well, I mean, if they can’t control their children (...) then perhaps we should go across and speak to them because I’m sure it would have a detrimental effect on their tenancy’. And you’re like... you can’t write things like that. You know, it’s like what kind of society do you think you live in, you know?” (Carrie, previous owner).

This quotation indicates a darker side to the app and raises questions about responsibility for moderating comments posted on the site.

11.6 Summary

Two main influences were considered by residents to be important ingredients in building positive social relations within the Village. The first is that moving there was a shared experience, with accounts suggesting initial excitement and high expectations. The second was the implementation of pre-selection processes for prospective owners and social renters. These had the effect of privileging those who intended to stay in the Village and build their lives there, at least in the medium to long term. These policies appear to have had social dividends in that residents reported that people generally got on well with each other and neighbourly behaviours within streets had developed.

There was also evidence in this study of some issues arising between neighbours, at least within the rented sector, but it remains unclear whether these are isolated, or part of a recurrent – and ongoing – pattern of social discord. The study found that each housing tenure group made presumptions about each other, which, by their nature and tone, were socially divisive. The fact that social renters had more children than owners¹⁴ could also be a source of tension, critical comment and differences of opinion.

Virtual space was more predominant than physical space as an arena for social interaction, with the NextDoor app acting as the social glue to bring local people together. Despite seeming to be a positive force, there were however hints of a darker side to the use of social media, with the evidence suggesting that it has the potential to reinforce, or amplify, the prior assumptions which social renters and owners had about each other.

¹⁴ The household survey in the Village reported that while 68% of social renters had households of three or more persons, only 32% of owners did so (Clark and Kearns, 2017).

12 Looking to the future

In this chapter, we look at what respondents had to say about their future residence intentions, on the basis that these would be a strong indicator of the future sustainability of the Village development. The findings relating to respondents' expectations, hopes and concerns for the future are also discussed.

12.1 Place attachment

When participants were asked about their future residential plans, the dominant view among both owners and renters was that they intended to remain in the Village on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. The main reason for staying was the incomparability or uniqueness of the Village in terms of quality and affordability:

"And when you consider, you know, the cost of running the houses, how affordable they were to buy in the first place, you know, you'd really struggle to go somewhere else and get that same level, for the same amount of money. So I don't think there'll suddenly be a mass rush of people to leave. But I think there will be a few people." (Trish, new owner).

Participant responses can be grouped into three categories along a continuum of place attachment. The first (more typical) group showed strong place attachment and expressed unequivocal enthusiasm for a future life in the Village:

"That's me for life. You need tae carry me oot o' here in a coffin box, you know, as far as I'm concerned. I love it. Everything about it, I love it." (Diane, social renter).

"I'll probably be here for as long as I live, yep. Yeah." (Lisa, social renter).

For owners, the timeframe was determined by the term of their mortgage:

"Our mortgage was two years so we'll do another five year, fixed rate, so next five years we'll definitely stay here. After that, we'll see." (Darren, previous owner).

Keith, previous owner, said that he regarded his original two-year mortgage as a "probationary period", which served as a "get out" clause in the event that Village living had not worked out for his family. However, he had recently shown his renewed commitment to the Village by signing up to a new five-year fixed mortgage deal on his property. Young owners in this group who were at the start of their career trajectory said that they would only consider re-locating for the sake of career progression, if this entailed moving to another city or country. Otherwise, they would be prepared to travel from the Village to work within the wider Glasgow area.

A second group also said that they would probably stay in the Village, but admitted to having mixed emotions. Typically, respondents in this group said that, while they loved their current home in the Village, they wished that they could move it to another (better) location:

“It is home, but, don’t get me wrong, I have had days already within this two year period where I’ve thought, if I could pick up my house and take it somewhere else, I would. And it is to do with the environment, and it may well, I am sort of here in the hope that over the next few years the area does improve, that there is development, that we’re not stuck amongst this derelict land. Because I think if we are, would I want to live here long term, no, I wouldn’t.” (Trish, new owner).

“Every noo and again I get that wee, ‘that’s it, I’m putting in for a move’. And then I think ‘naw’, because I like ma hoose and I widnae get a hoose anything near what it is, and you know, what like this one is. And then I think, ‘well I could still just put in for a move and see’. And I might still dae that.” (Denise, social renter).

A common theme in this respect was that of high expectations followed by disappointment. Trish and Jonny described being “*super excited*” about moving into the Village but admitted that this feeling had subsided after the first year, to the point where they contemplated selling for the first time. They added that their initial pride in the Village had also waned over time. Nevertheless, they were holding on to the prospect that things would get better:

“And I think we’re all, there’s a lot of people holding out for the area to improve, you know, for there to be the future development and see what Dalmarnock looks like in five years, ten years’ time.” (Trish, new owner).

Similarly, Helen, a social renter, compared her initial feelings to how she felt now about living in the Village, two years on:

“The first year was kind of a, everybody was getting to know everybody and we were all excited, we were all talking about what kinda house you’ve got, because apparently all the houses are all different. There’s no one... there’s no two houses the same, the shape and even like your wee knicky-knack thing, apparently all the houses are all different. So we were all kind of excited and ‘Oh, what – how many rooms have you got, [name]? What’s your house like? Blah, blah...’ So everybody was nice. But after that year, it’s just... people fighting, children throwing stones... the place is doon hill.” (Helen, social renter).

However, despite occasional feelings of despondency, she concluded that she would probably remain in the Village long-term:

“There’s days where I’m like (exhale) ‘Dae I want tae be here?’But I wouldnae move. I wouldnae move.” (Helen, social renter).

A third group of respondents announced their firm intentions to move out. Carrie (previous owner) said that she did not want her young children to go to the local schools in the east end. This left her with no choice but to leave the Village. When asked whether the Village had met her expectations, she replied:

“Yeah, pretty much. I mean, I’d say it probably exceeded them because I’ve felt really happy here, I’m really comfy here. And it will be really sad to leave, but I’ve just got to do it.” (Carrie, previous owner).

Similarly, Mhairi (new owner) did not see herself raising a future family within the east end:

“If I did go on to have children, like, in my early thirties and stuff, I’m not sure. It’s fine when they’re younger I think but as they get older it’s not the best place to bring up children.” (Mhairi, new owner).

The social renters in this third group were doubtful that they would stay in the Village when their teenage children had finished their education or had moved out from the family home. Being from the east end originally, they saw themselves returning to their former close-knit communities. The following statement from Denise (social renter) indicates that she had not truly settled into the new Village community:

“I loved my location [previous place of residence], ‘cause my daughter, my mum, my grandparents, my aunts and everything was a’ two minutes away fae me, so. I’m an east end girl. Although this is the east end it’s just, it’s different. (Denise, social renter).

12.2 Hopes and fears

Many owners believed the trajectory of the Village to be at an early stage in that all the essential building blocks for a sustainable community had not yet been put in place. The timeframe for the completion of the Village development was anticipated to be around ten years, with the next five years considered most critical in determining the final outcome.

The prevailing mood was one of guarded confidence and optimism. Residents were pleased about the renewed momentum generated by recent openings or launches, including the Cuningar Loop Woodland Park footbridge; the state-run nursery; the GP surgery; and the residential care home. Further developments were expected to follow shortly, including more housing, a primary school, a business park, and hotel complex at Celtic Park. Chrissie (new owner) sounded excited at the prospect of these:

“So I think it could be unrecognisable in five years, and actually then, you know, we’re in a great place to live.” (Chrissie, new owner).

Although these were expected to be positive developments, potential negative consequences were also mentioned, such as traffic congestion, increased vehicular traffic coming into the Village and implications for resident parking:

“It’s positive that things are being done and things are happening an’ all that sorta thing, but, within that, there’s the kind of concerns of traffic and that sorta thing, ‘Is that gonnae become a pain in the morning, trying tae get onto the motorway if there’s an extra five hundred folk or whatever trying to get in the same direction?’” (Andy, new owner).

“I’m worried that it’s going to create havoc with the parking and getting in and out of The Village. Because we already have issues on match days, for Celtic Park.” (Trish, new owner).

Social renters were concerned that some of the young people in the Village would grow up to be troublesome teenagers:

“Aye, ‘cause they a’ grow up. They a’ grow up the gether, don’t they? So they’ll a’, they will a’, it will come to a head if they don’t dae something.” (Maggie, social renter).

“I think it’s holding the gether the noo, but then the families grow up and then there’s nothing for them to dae and they find things to dae, and them finding things to dae, that’s when, do you know I mean, It’s mair destruction what they dae. And then you get the gangs, that’s where the gangs congregate and that’s when the...” (Denise, social renter).

These fears were grounded on their lived experiences of territoriality in their previous places of residences.

12.3 “A major game-changer”

The building of the primary school was commonly perceived as the most significant new element to be added to the Village in the future. The explanation provided by residents was that the new school would encourage families to settle in the local area, thereby building social capital:

“And I know there is the new primary school which is going to be built so I think this is going to be a major game-changer for the whole area.”

In terms of...? Why do you think it’ll be...?

“Well, even more involvement in terms of people getting involved in the activities of their children. So I think one thing leads to another. If you get more involved with your children, you get more involved with the area and that’s pretty much how things happen.” (Darren, previous owner).

“I think, like, the schools have a lot to do with that [building a community] and kind of people get community through schools, which I’m not part of ‘cause I don’t have children and the school’s not built yet, but.” (Mhairi, new owner).

Some believed that the school would raise educational attainment by altering the social environment; while others believed that a new school would simply mirror the current social environment in its pupil composition. The latter prospect was the reason why Carrie

(previous owner) said that she could not even contemplate a future for her children in the Village:

“And the nursery and the school will, I’m absolutely sure, be staffed wonderfully and will have excellent facilities and will be a really brilliant asset to the community, but, for my children, I would rather they went to a school where their peers were... all of their peers were in a very similar kind of level to them. And because I’ve worked in the local schools many, many times in many different schools, I’m really aware of the peers that they would be mixing with here. I don’t want to send them to somewhere where they’re gonna be surrounded by children who are... it’s harsh but it’s true.” (Carrie, previous owner).

12.4 Future priorities

Social renters and owners expressed the same view that progress should be proactively maintained to avoid the risk of any backwards slippage. Maintenance was understood in a broad sense to include both the physical and social environment. In the following quotation, Keith (previous owner) tacitly acknowledges that these two aspects are interconnected:

“For me, I think the continued success of the village, I think is doon tae one thing. And that’s the maintenance of the grounds. I think if things aren’t maintained well then it will go downhill very quickly. If things are left to get... a lot of it is an exterior thing. If things are left to go shabby looking, people will... you know, people will follow suit. If things are kept maintained nice, then people will feel more pride in the place and keep it tidy and be proud of it.” (Keith, previous owner)

There was a consistent view that the social controls should also be maintained, such as continued restrictions on ‘buy to let’ and the vetting of social tenants by RSLs, with the ultimate sanction of evictions being applied. Steve (new owner) summed up this view:

And so what would need to happen to make you decide to move out?

“The only thing is I would say if there was an awful lot of antisocial behaviour, you know, like, if that started, you know... Without trying tae – I know it’s trying tae say the social housing side, but as long as that – I suppose both sides, as long as both sides look after the village, and it doesn’t become run down. You know, ‘cause that was always the fear wi’ kinda, I suppose wi’ moving in tae somewhere is that perception that, depending who moves back in... if you’re putting the same people in who are antisocial, then is it gonnae drag the area down?”

Has that happened or...? Well, you mentioned the evictions and stuff...

“Yeah, I mean as long as they maintain that. Yeah, well they've been – they're being strict. Aye. And keep to that, then I suppose we don't have any concerns. But it would be if that comes relaxed, and they're not as prompt at basically evicting.”

Okay. So it's keep doing what they've been doing, is that really the main message, is it?

*“Just keep doing what they're doing, yeah. Yeah, no – basically no nonsense, really.”
(Steve, new owner).*

A specific call was made for a local shop in which to buy everyday items such as bread and milk:

“I would like to see a bit more... some more, you know, retail or something in the area, whether that's a small newsagents or a small express shop like one o' the bigger supermarkets or something.” (Lisa, social renter).

For owners, more social venues, such as local cafés, restaurants and gastro-pubs, would be a major improvement for the local area. These should be open in the evenings to suit working people and would provide more opportunities for local people to gather and meet face-to-face:

“an' maybe even the... that's what I say, like a pub, like if there's a good one, not like some of the ones you might see right beside the football club.” (David, new owner).

“I think they need to kinda bring in like more kinda diverse shops like more coffee shops, more kind of... social gathering type things. I think everybody could go.” (Janet, new owner).

Social renters called for children's play areas and more amenities and activities for older children, especially at weekends and in the evenings:

“Something for young kids, something for teenagers 'cause it's teenagers that dae the damage. And there's nothing for them here. (...) They'll need to dae something, or I can see this being an absolute hell hole. And I'm like, 'do I try and get oot it the noo before it goes right doon hill'. 'Cause that's what's gonnae happen.” (Denise, social renter).

12.5 Summary

This study found that residents had positive place attachment to living in the Village, with the dominant response being an intention to remain there in the medium-to-long term. This augurs well for the future sustainability of the Village. The development of the Village was still regarded as being in its infancy, and therefore time was still needed to realise the aspirations of living in the neighbourhood. Further developments and reductions in vacant and derelict land in the vicinity of the Village over the next five years will be crucial to retaining those residents who are currently uncertain about their future plans. The most significant development on the horizon was the construction of the new primary school which was generally, but not universally, expected to build social capital, making the Village an excellent place for families. Specific additions which would improve everyday living in the Village would be local shops, social venues, children's play areas and amenities/activities for older children. In relation to the latter, planning for a future where the initial cohort of children become teenagers together would be desirable.

Conclusion

13 Summary and overview

The Village development is part of a long-term vision for the regeneration of Dalmarnock. Its aim is to provide a mixed, sustainable community in the east end in at least three respects: owner-occupiers and social renters living harmoniously together; a place where people wanted to live and remain in the future; and of high quality in terms of design and construction so that the development was environmentally friendly and sustainable in an ecological sense. This study explored the likelihood of the Village development in meeting these three sustainability goals. The timing of this study, two years on from residents moving into the Village, is an early assessment of 'work-in-progress'. The findings in relation to each of its goals are summarised below.

The study revealed a social environment within the Village which was generally harmonious on the surface and in public. That said, there was a lack of social cohesion, with interaction between the housing tenures found to be sparse, with presumptions made by each group about the other, and some tensions around behavioural issues. The conclusion therefore is that tenure mixing within developments wherein one tenure group is mostly families with children and the other tenure group is mostly adults without children, might be not conducive to achieving the most integrated social outcomes.

In this study, residents were reliant on the presence of an online community for social contact. This is a relatively new phenomenon and appears well suited to the new Village development. But as well as enhancing contact and co-ordination between people who are either out at work all day or who lack immediately accessible spaces to socialise in, social media also facilitates the expression of prejudices about other social groups. The latter could become dominant in the absence of more face-to-face contact between social groups. Convivial spaces, such as local shops, cafés and restaurants, would improve the situation greatly by breaking down social and cultural barriers.

For the second residential sustainability aim, an important finding was that people were generally pleased with their move into the Village and stated their intention to continue residing there. The Village development was perceived to be an attractive, walkable environment with natural woodland adjacent to the site. The houses were also considered to be well designed. However, landscape maintenance was found to be a dominant issue, including problems with litter, unkempt gardens and the appearance of empty spaces awaiting further development. Of particular note is the disappearance of hedges across the Village, as original planting is replaced by wooden fences to eliminate the need for hedge maintenance. This is likely to have the cumulative effect of reducing the amount of greenery across the Village landscape and reducing openness which residents said that they particularly liked.

While place attachment was extremely positive, the study also found this to be a fragile phenomenon, subject to fluctuation. In this respect, single issues such as the boundary fence and landscape maintenance pointed to bigger concerns and risks. The fence issue had remained unresolved for some time, resulting in a hardening of attitudes and burgeoning community division along housing tenure fault-lines. Similarly, dissatisfaction with factoring services has become acute. Confusion and a lack of clarity about ownership and responsibility for the open-plan designed landscape resulted in lack of care, by both residents and contractors, and contributed to neighbour disputes. It is clear from this study that residents were continually assessing progress on these fronts when contemplating a long-term future in the Village.

The integration of the Village into its surroundings has shown no progress, with the Village in danger of becoming an isolated development in the east end. In quality terms, the Village could be seen longer-term by residents and others as of quite a different quality to other houses and neighbourhoods close by; and this might not aid its integration nor help sustain demand to live in the Village. Moreover, Dalmarnock is seen as different, resentful and increasingly irrelevant by some Village residents. This may only get worse as the rest of the nearby development around the Village is completed, unless improvement actions are taken here also.

As regards the third sustainability aim, the innovative features of the development which make it environmentally sustainable were some of those which caused residents most confusion, largely due to misinformation or lack of information. This applied to heating use, energy bills, solar panels, and the drainage system. More widely, there was no indication of a modal shift towards non-motorised transport, with the car remaining the dominant mode of transport among residents.

14 Recommendations

The study findings are relevant to other CWG host cities who have regeneration at the heart of their event-hosting bid. As far as Glasgow is concerned, although the development is connected to a large scale, one-off sporting event, the Athletes' Village project nevertheless represents an opportunity to enhance understanding of the potential for what could be achieved elsewhere in the city after the Games.

An urgent priority for the Village is resolving the vexed issue of landscape maintenance, particularly the factoring services. The space shared by residents and between landlords and contractors seemed overly complicated, and therefore simplification and clarity over issues such as physical boundaries, areas of responsibilities, and agreement around milestones or targets would help. Not least, the RSLs should work in concert within the Village to ensure equity and consistency between them. The handover of the Village to Glasgow City Council is an opportune moment for exploring and resolving any remaining issues. It might also be an opportunity to communicate the long term vision for the Village and the wider Dalmarnock to renew 'buy-in' to its long-term ambition of being a sustainable community.

The fact that the Village development sits adjacent to the main Games arena and a new urban park presents a situation from which maximum health and wellbeing gain should be sought for residents. This would entail the agencies responsible for such amenities engaging with residents to see how issues relating to time, motivation, available activities, costs and safety could be overcome in order to encourage greater use.

Generally, greater emphasis should be given to *anticipating* potential problems arising from further development within the Village. The opening of the primary school is a significant development on the horizon. In this study, some residents voiced concerns about unintended consequences. Therefore, city leaders should seek to pre-empt issues relating to traffic congestion or local parking. One example might be to encourage active travel behaviour from the outset.

There is a need to build greater social cohesion by facilitating more face-to-face social contact. In this respect, more imaginative approaches might be needed, such as the temporary use of empty spaces in the vicinity awaiting development. This particular line of inquiry was not fully explored in this study, but, given the insight gained into residents' hopes for the future, it might be worthwhile considering allocating resources to supporting those who need help with garden maintenance (e.g. garden tool library; gardening workshops) or encouraging 'pop-up' initiatives offering street food or artisan goods. If Dalmarnock is not to be eclipsed and seen as an anomaly or 'rump' neighbourhood, then the issues of integration, of overcoming resentments through improvements in the pre-existing neighbourhood, and of spatial identity across the area as a whole also need supportive work.

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