Govan
Central Govan Action Plan
Town centres are at the heart of their communities and can be hubs for a range of activities. It is important that planning supports the role of town centres to thrive and meet the needs of their residents, businesses and visitors for the 21st century.

The **Town Centre Action Plan** (November 2014) sets out various actions to bring a focus on town centres.

One of its key themes is **Proactive Planning**, the Scottish Government fully embraces the Town Centres Review recommendation for a simple, encouraging and pro-active planning policy in support of town centres.
We committed in the Action Plan that:

**We will identify pilots with interested planning authorities who wish to consider collaboration and test approaches which could help simplify planning processes in town centres.**

The Town Centres Planning Pilots Programme is working with 9 planning authorities and Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) supporting 14 pilots based around 7 key areas, as shown on the map.

This case study is about an award-winning project which delivered £90 million of investment in new homes and business spaces as well as restoring historic buildings and the public realm. It explores the benefits these investments in the town centre offered the local businesses.
Since 2006, the Central Govan Action Plan has successfully delivered nearly £90m investment in new homes, business space, the restoration of historic buildings and public realm improvements. In 2014 CGAP won British planning’s most prestigious award, the RTPI Silver Jubilee Cup.

Project Details: The story behind it all...

The Central Govan Action Plan (CGAP) was developed in response to the community’s concerns about the long-term decline of Govan, especially the town centre. Glasgow City Council, supported by a steering group of local residents and organisations, commissioned the plan which was launched in 2006. Much of the original plan has been implemented but CGAP continues and has evolved into a governance, partnership and investment framework. The Govan Cross Townscape Heritage Initiative was launched in 2009: the action plan and the THI are managed as an integrated programme by a shared executive team.

Since 2006 CGAP has focused on four key areas of activity:

- Building new homes for sale and rent
- Creating new business space
- Repair and restoration of historic buildings
- Public realm schemes.

By spring 2015 a total of £89m had been invested in 45 CGAP projects, including £68m (three-quarters of the total) on housing schemes.
Govan was at its economic and demographic peak in the early years of the 20th century. The then Burgh of Govan had a population of around 100,000 at that time. Today, the Greater Govan ward, which covers a broadly similar area, has a population of about 14,000. The depopulation of Govan was largely the result of slum clearance programmes which cleared large areas of traditional tenement housing, and the situation was exacerbated by the decline of traditional industries, especially shipbuilding and repair.

2011 Census returns show that, compared with Glasgow and Scotland Greater Govan had:

- a relatively youthful population
- a high proportion of single parent households
- a low rate of home ownership
- a high proportion of people in social classes D and E
- a high proportion of residents whose lives are limited by poor health or disability
- a high proportion of people with no educational qualifications or a level 1 qualification.
Baseline

There are 16 datazones in an area which broadly corresponds to the Greater Govan ward. In the 2012 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), six datazones were among the 5% most deprived in Scotland, five more were among the 10% most deprived and another three among the 15% most deprived. The greatest concentration of poverty is in the Govan & Linthouse intermediate geography which includes the town centre.

In the modern era Govan has been one of Scotland’s most deprived communities. This was reflected in the condition of the town centre: retail vacancy rates peaked at around 42% in 2007.

Despite these persistent social problems, Govan is an important employment location: key economic assets include BAE Systems shipyard, the new Queen Elizabeth University Hospital and Pacific Quay (headquarters of BBC Scotland).
A Steering Group was formed in 2003 to guide the development of the original action plan. It included representatives of Glasgow City Council (elected members and officers), a range of partner organisations, and a number of community organisations including community councils, housing associations and others. The Steering Group lapsed immediately after the launch and Glasgow City and the now defunct Govan Initiative jointly coordinated an early action plan.

The Steering Group was reformed in 2008 and led the implementation of the initiative ever since. It lobbies, consults and champions CGAP, and agrees an annual investment plan.

Funding applications are appraised and approved by an Executive Group of senior council officers. Day-to-day management of CGAP and the Govan Cross Townscape Heritage Initiative (GCTHI) is the responsibility of a small, dedicated project team based in Govan.

CGAP engages with a wide circle of project partners to agree priorities for action and mobilise community support for projects and initiatives.

Much of the success of the initiatives rests on the contribution of key community anchor organisations such as Govan Workspace, Govan Housing Association and Elderpark Housing Association.
What was done...

Location of major CGAP projects
Policy Links

The Town Centre First principle, which was developed jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA, aims to put “the vibrancy of town centres” at the heart of an “open, measured and transparent decision-making” process. It highlights a “collective responsibility to help town centres thrive sustainably, reinvent their function, and meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors”.

Although CGAP predates Town Centre First, the initiative shares a common concern with the viability of the town centre in a time of rapid change and a context of competitive challenges from the city centre, out-of-town retail/leisure (notably Braehead) and new destinations in the city.
Policy Links

Town Centre Toolkit

The Toolkit published in 2015 sets out advice on how to make town centres attractive, active and accessible.

The CGAP programme corresponds closely to the key themes and priorities identified in Toolkit.

The table highlights some of the ways in which CGAP has addressed the headline themes of the toolkit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Centre Toolkit theme/priority</th>
<th>CGAP/THI activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attractive</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Making the most of physical assets</td>
<td>Restoration and reuse of historic buildings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Streets and spaces</td>
<td>Streetscape improvements at Govan Cross and Govan Road</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Active</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Business and enterprise</td>
<td>30,000 sq ft of new workspace at Orkney Street and Fairfield Shipyard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail, leisure, culture</td>
<td>Vacant shop units reduced from 54 to 23 since 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping centre improvements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New community and leisure facilities</td>
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<td>The Portal Project</td>
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<td>Town centre living</td>
<td>Six new-build housing developments and tenement upgrades</td>
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<td><strong>Accessible</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking and cycling</td>
<td>Langlands Path upgrade</td>
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<td>Public transport</td>
<td>Summer ferry services</td>
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The CGAP/GCTHI business model is lean and efficient. CGAP is a governance, partnership and investment framework, which is managed and coordinated by a two-person team, with support from Glasgow City Council officers as required. The focus is on creating a framework which will help the existing partners and agencies to work together on an agreed programme and to secure external funding.

The Steering Group, which is chaired by a community representative, brings together local organisations with the City Council and other agencies. It is not an executive body, but it is the forum where priorities for action are discussed and agreed, and the overarching strategy is kept under review. The delivery partners report to the Steering Group and are accountable to it. The project manager plays a pivotal role, maintaining lines of communication with the community and the partners; she is the public face of the initiative, acting as an advocate and champion. The core budget directly controlled by CGAP has accounted for less than 10% of total expenditure since 2007 but it is vitally important: it gives the CGAP/THI team a degree of autonomy and helps to establish it as a credible and influential player.

The Council’s consultations show that the critical success factors are community ownership of CGAP and partners’ commitment to invest in the programme. Local people need to feel confident that their voices will be heard and influence investment decisions; the partners need to back up their support for CGAP with practical action and financial resources.

The success of this model is reflected both in the scale of investment delivered since 2007 (£89m) and in the durability of the model.

As CGAP approaches its 10th anniversary, new projects are coming forward, some linked to the City Deal and the partners are turning their attention to the challenges of skills, employability and wellbeing.
Achievements

- **Between 2006 and spring 2015, 45 CGAP projects were completed** at a total cost of £89 million. CGAP has had a stake in a much larger number of projects, about 70 in all, but this figure relates solely to activities which were implemented directly by the CGAP/THI team, or funded by resources levered in as a direct result of CGAP activity. It therefore excludes expenditure on transport projects such as Fastlink and the Govan transport interchange.

- **Six new-build housing developments** have been delivered by housing associations working within the CGAP framework, supported in some cases by the private sector. These developments have **created 483 apartments and houses**, 40% of which were properties for sale.

- **Two listed buildings** (Orkney Street police station and Fairfield Shipyard offices) have been converted to provide a range of office space and meeting rooms.

- **Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) funding has been used** to refurbish the listed Pearce Institute, the former British Linen Bank and YMCA tenement at Water Row, Cardell Halls/Brechin’s Bar, the Pearce Statue and the Aitken Memorial Fountain.

- **Traditional shopfronts restored** in Water Row, Govan Road and Langlands Road.

- **Major public realm schemes completed** at Govan Cross and Langlands Path.

- **Other projects completed** include:
  - support for a summer ferry service between Govan and the Riverside Museum
  - refurbishment of the Riverside Hall
  - creation of a heritage centre at Fairfield Shipyard
  - wayfinding and signage schemes
  - archaeological studies
  - complementary training and other initiatives.
What difference has the initiative made?

- CGAP has created or refurbished about 500 residential units, providing new homes for more than 1,800 people in an area which had been experiencing steady depopulation for decades.

- 30,000 sq ft of modern business space created at Orkney Street and Fairfield Shipyard

- For the first time in many years, people are buying homes in Govan and the town is attracting high quality businesses

- Transformed Govan Cross – the heart of the town – and restored many of Govan's most important historic buildings.

- Sharp reduction in the number of vacant shop units, from 54 in 2007 to 23 in 2015 – a large majority of retailers say they are optimistic about the future.
What do the people think...

★ CGAP has gained the trust of the local community and the plan reflects their needs and aspirations.

★ Partners and stakeholders value CGAP as a framework for action in Govan.

★ Consultations and survey evidence show that people think that Govan has changed for the better:
  - it is a more attractive place and it’s historic buildings, parks and open spaces are in better shape
  - there is a better and more attractive choice of housing
  - there is a better choice of shops, cafes and services
  - people are optimistic about Govan’s future.

★ There is a high level of awareness of CGAP’s activities.

★ There is pride in what has been achieved, but no sense of complacency: there is still a long way to go but there is strong support for CGAP to continue to drive the regeneration process forward.
What do the people think…

★ What the stakeholders say:

“Govan is coming back to life – it feels like a miracle”
“There’s a real feel-good factor. The town centre is more relaxed and comfortable”
“These changes really matter – they give everyone a lift”
“It’s a different place - when friends visit they are amazed by the change”
“We’ve got a shared vision and we’re engaged upon a common endeavour”
“There’s been a new approach, more sensitive and sympathetic to community needs”

★ What the people of Govan say:

“It’s a fantastic place to live, far removed from what it used to be”
“I think it’s changed for the better. Definitely. They’re putting a lot of money in”
“I think it’s up-and-coming. It’s more upmarket now”
“The streets are cleaner and now we have all these new buildings. It’s a big improvement”
“A lot of good changes, especially housing. It’s been miraculous”
“People are really friendly and I have got every hope for Govan in the future”
Challenges

CGAP is a governance, partnership and investment framework. The initiative is managed by a small team which has only directly controlled about 8% of the programme budget since 2006. The core challenge has therefore been to demonstrate that CGAP adds value – that it makes things happen that wouldn’t otherwise happen, or would take longer and be less effective.

Some people, especially local representatives, had reservations about the original plan: they thought that the community’s aspirations weren’t adequately reflected and that some of the proposals were unrealistic. The plan is now acknowledged to have been a vital catalyst for change, but the key steps were the appointment of a project manager and the decision to reform the Steering Group. Those steps enabled CGAP (i) to gain the trust of the community, and (ii) to exert real influence on decision makers in the City Council and partner bodies.

There is still work to be done and there is a perception that some Council departments and partners are more bought into the process than others.

However, consultations have shown that there is a now clear consensus that CGAP has given the regeneration of Govan a huge boost and helped to secure additional investment.
Key learning points

3 key steps to mobilise the regeneration process

- the action plan was imperfect but producing it was the catalyst for change
- appointment of a dedicated project manager
- reforming the Steering Group and putting community leaders at the heart of the process.

7 critical success factors

- active engagement with the community
- an active role for community anchors such as housing associations and Govan Workspace
- a pivotal role for Glasgow City Council providing leadership, resources and expertise
- a project manager who has the trust and confidence of the community and the funding partners
- funding partners who have backed up their commitment to the initiative with significant investment
- a culture of transparency and openness
- a long-term perspective: Govan has been in decline for decades; it will take a long time to turn it around.

Sustaining the momentum: challenges for the future

- CGAP has made huge progress on the physical regeneration of Govan but changing socio-economic conditions remains a huge challenge: a balanced approach is required in the next 5-10 years
- a key measure of success will be evidence that the private sector is willing to invest in Govan without subsidy or support: for that to happen more people need to choose Govan as a place to live, work and invest
- connecting the people of Govan to the economic opportunities available in the city
- reducing CGAP’s dependency on a few key individuals by creating a more resilient governance structure.
Useful Information

Further Information
The findings summarised in this document are the subject of a detailed case study, commissioned by Glasgow City Council and prepared by yellow book ltd. An accompanying report documents evidence gathered for the case study, including data analysis, survey results and records of consultations and focus groups. Copies are available from Susan Hanlin, CGAP Project Manager.

Details of CGAP activities and accompanying documents can be found on the initiative’s website: www.getintogovan.com

Background reading


For further information contact:
Susan Hanlin
CGAP Project Manager
susan.hanlin@glasgow.gov.uk