



Implementing a Community Benefit Clause : Playbusters

Clyde Gateway, an urban regeneration company is driving forward a massive 20-year investment programme in the east end of Glasgow. It requires contractors to meet Community Benefit requirements. The contract for Rigby Street access and repair work required the contractor to support the Parkhead Community Garden Project. In lieu of on-site support the agreement with Playbusters that managed and developed the project was to provide a donation to the gardening project, as well as technical support services.



Background

Clyde Gateway is a specially created urban regeneration company covering 840 hectares across the east end of Glasgow, including sites involved in hosting the Commonwealth Games. Established in December 2007 to drive forward the massive 20-year investment programme in the east end of Glasgow it is working in partnership with Glasgow City Council, South Lanarkshire Council, and Scottish Enterprise. Its task is to lead the way in achieving social, economic and physical change in an area equivalent in size to 1,200 football pitches.

Clyde Gateway is committed to delivering community benefits through its approach to procurement. Under its Community Enhancement Policy all of its contracts require contractors to meet Community Benefit requirements. The contract for the Rigby Street access and repair works in the East End of Glasgow required the

successful contractor to provide support to the Parkhead Community Garden project.

The Community Garden had been identified by Clyde Gateway in partnership with a number of local agencies including Strathclyde Police, Glasgow Regeneration Agency and their own Community Engagement Planning group, as a suitable and beneficial project for the community.

All Tenderers were encouraged to make use of the existing Clyde Gateway Community Engagement Planning group as a means of engaging with partners involved in the Garden.

Clyde Gateway considered 10 tenders for the contract, with 10% of the scoring weighted to Community Benefit, awarding R.J. McLeod the main contract.

Scope and focus

The Community Benefit requirement within the Rigby Street contract, which was for repair and access works, was developed as a result of the nature of the works being carried out. Due to the works involving a level of technical ability and specialism it meant it would not be feasible for R.J. McLeod, to take on a large number of local trainees. It did however take on a small number of local trainees for whom it provided employment and training.

The tender stipulated that Community Enhancement would be to provide support to the Parkhead Community Garden through any or all of the following:

- person hours
- supplies or materials
- other forms of support

In order to meet this requirement R.J. McLeod, invited Glasgow East Regeneration Agency (GEERA), now part of Glasgow Regeneration Agency, to manage the project on its behalf, and to partner with Playbusters, an organisation active in the East End of Glasgow around community involvement in good quality play provision.

Playbusters

Playbusters was originally set up to address the lack of good quality and safe play areas for children and young people in the East End of Glasgow. As well as an 'Easy Spanish Football' programme where young people learn Spanish whilst playing football, a Connecting Generations programme, and work with schools, it has now developed an allotment plot in Parkhead Community Garden¹ where young people, adults, volunteers and the community can help

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<http://www.playbusters.org.uk/articles/article.php?articleID=119>

out and learn new skills. It also runs a community swap-shop that helps people reduce their carbon emissions by learning how to save energy and save money.

Implementation

As a result of a number of personnel changes in several of the partner agencies, including GEERA, Playbusters, who had been partnering but not leading on the Community Garden, was asked to take the lead on the project by Clyde Gateway.

Playbusters had not been involved in a Community Benefit contract before. However over a series of meetings with their partners and R.J. McLeod's team, they identified that the support they required from R.J. McLeod was technical services. Rather than providing man hours or supplies to the site. R.J. McLeod therefore provided services such as; surveying, soil sampling and technical drawings.

As a result Clyde Gateway and R.J. McLeod agreed it would be appropriate for R.J. McLeod to provide a donation to the garden project rather than having any hands on involvement. This allowed Playbusters a great deal more flexibility and freedom in timescales involved. For example it meant they did not have to wait for materials provided as and when they were available from other R.J. McLeod sites.

This type of agreement has not been utilised by Clyde Gateway previously, but in this particular situation was considered to be a suitable outcome for all parties. However providing a donation in lieu of on-site support is not considered to be an option in the initial tendering stages of any future projects.

Key challenges

There were a number of key challenges for Clyde Gateway from the outset of the contract in putting this community benefit requirement into practice namely;

- The initial challenge was to identify a community based project that could benefit from the type of support that R.J.McLeod could provide. In addition it also had to be a project that all key partners were keen to see through to completion and that would be of benefit to the wider community. Clyde Gateway worked with local partners and agencies to identify a suitable project that would be benefit from the project.
- For Clyde Gateway and Playbusters managing the expectations of the community members involved in the project was important and at times challenging. Clear communication between all partners was required to ensure that expectations were feasible and achievable.
- There required to be clear communication between the lead agency and contractor as to exactly what was required and what was possible within the site and timescales. Playbusters also had to ensure that the support that they were being offered was beneficial and appropriate for the garden development.
- One of the key challenges for R.J.McLeod was working with a group who did not have a background in construction or development, which meant that there required to be a greater level of involvement in the initial stages of the process. This focussed on identifying the development related challenges of the actual site that the group may not have considered or identified as an issue.

- For Playbusters were taking on both the management and development work, involving ordering supplies and materials was onerous. This was on top of building community involvement in the Community Garden project itself and in recruiting volunteers.

Outcomes

The use of the Community Benefit clause in the Rigby Street works has provided significant benefit to the community of Parkhead.

It has also been an opportunity for Clyde Gateway to explore the different types of local projects that can benefit from community enhancement clauses, having never had a community garden project involved before.

For Playbusters the outcomes have included:

- Being able to transform an overgrown site that was an eyesore and had previously been identified by Strathclyde Police as problem site into an attractive and working garden for the wider community.
- The agreement to have R.J.McLeod provide a donation allowed them the freedom to work on the garden at their own pace with the community
- The garden has now become a space where people can meet, learn new skills and take part in their local community life. Many residents do not have their own garden or open green space so the development of a local community garden has been a great benefit to many keen to get involved but who previously did not have the opportunity.

- The garden has also allowed them the opportunity to continue to promote healthy lifestyles, healthy eating and growing your own food, and has provided community members with an opportunity for hands on involvement.

For R.J. McLeod the specified community project allowed them the opportunity to gain experience of a different type of community support. The organisation has not previously worked with a Community Garden project as part of a community benefit clause, so has been able to learn from the experience about how to best support community projects in their work in a way that is feasible, suitable and beneficial for all involved.

For Clyde Gateway a number of outcomes have been achieved:

- A new community resource was developed with the partner agencies for the benefit of the East End.
- As a result of this project and the experience that has been gained, they are now supporting similar allotment/community garden projects in the East End and would consider involving similar projects in future community benefit clauses in contracts.
- As a result of support being provided for the Parkhead Community Garden, Clyde Gateway is able to reroute funds to support groups that would not be able to benefit from such support.

Critical success factors

A number of critical success factors have been identified by the key participants in the community benefit clause:

- For the development of the community garden, the willingness of R.J. McLeod to

provide technical services and then provide the garden with a donation rather than hands on support was critical. Playbusters felt that this level of freedom gave the project a significant start by giving control of the development over to the partners and to the community from the outset.

- Clyde Gateway, by working with local partners to identify the most suitable project, when there were issues of suitability and timescales involved meant that the project had a greater chance of success from the outset as it was well matched to the requirements of the clause.
- For Clyde Gateway the most critical factor for community enhancements to be carried out is that they are a mandatory part of the contract, ensuring community benefit in all programmes of work.
- Playbusters while not having participated in this type of contract before, have a great deal of experience in leading community projects and were well placed to manage the gardens development and future running. They were also well placed and experienced in managing the expectations of the community members involved which can often be an issue.

Future ambitions

Having been involved in this project, and having seen the demonstrable success of the community benefit clause in having a positive impact on the community the organisations have set out the following future ambitions;

- Playbusters, having now gained experience of being involved in a Community Benefit project would now

consider being involved in another in the future if it was appropriate and beneficial to the local community.

- RJ.McLeod having not previously been involved in the support of a community garden project intends to use the

experience gained from their involvement in this project for future contracts.

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