

Commonwealth Games Scotland Update on Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games

In response to media interest in the past days and weeks, Commonwealth Games Scotland (CGS) can provide an update on the process for the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

In April, CGS revealed details of an innovative, cost-effective and sustainable concept for the Games without the need for significant public investment. Since then, CGS has developed the concept with the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) and other stakeholders, including the Scottish and UK governments.

A fundamental part and principle of the project is that it does not require - nor has CGS asked for - any underwriting from Scottish or UK governments.

Unique to this opportunity, the Games will be funded by private income rather than the public purse, with the majority of costs covered by the CGF, using money secured in a compensation negotiation with the Victorian Government following their withdrawal as hosts in July 2023.

This support includes:

- £100 million towards the cost of running the Games, with the remainder funded through commercial opportunities.
- An additional multi-million-pound investment into upgrading public sporting facilities including maintaining Tollcross as a world-class venue and to ensure the future of Scotstoun as a world-class rugby and athletics venue.
- Funding for city activation projects across Glasgow.

The inward investment to the Glasgow and Scottish economies of that magnitude will bring significant benefits, with an anticipated 500,000 tickets available to spectators and an estimated economic value add of over £150 million to the region. In context, in 2023-24 Scotland saw £1.89bn of capital investment in Scotland¹ – the Glasgow 2026 Games will provide over 5% of that figure alone, without a reliance on public spending.

It is anticipated that the Games will provide a wide range of economic benefits including:

- the creation of a Scotland-focused procurement strategy which provides operational and event-based contracts for Scottish suppliers and ultimately creates a significant number of Scottish jobs, in line with other similar sized events.
- continued utilisation and development of the world-class event specialists in Scotland.
- full hotel occupancy across the city in the summer of 2026.

¹ Source: Scottish Enterprise news release August 2024

- fully booked world-class sports venues.
- hundreds of thousands of city visitors filling bars and restaurants.

The cost of the Games is calculated at approximately £114 million, devised by a team of experienced major event budgeting professionals. Unlike other major multi-sport events, the concept has been specifically designed to ensure that there is no requirement from the public purse to deliver the Games, and in doing so the concept includes:

- budgeting for all direct Games costs, including security and other blue light services where required.
- a budget contingency of up to 24%, accounted for in the projected Games cost.
- scope to adjust service levels to reduce costs where required.

Additionally, Games costs have been minimised through several aspects, including:

- a revised programme of 10 sports, reducing the number of athletes and support staff.
- a compact four-venue model within an eight-mile corridor, minimising transport, hire and security costs.
- using existing sport and accommodation venues, avoiding the need for major capital projects.

Chair of Commonwealth Games Scotland, Ian Reid CBE, said “The Games will undoubtedly look and feel different to the historic events of 10 years ago. However, the circumstances facing us are remarkably different – the 2026 Games hang in the balance and the UK finances are facing tough decisions. But the Games presents a real opportunity for Glasgow and Scotland, giving us the chance to bring wide-ranging benefits to the country and public purse.

“Scotland has been offered £100m+ of the Victorian Government’s money to secure the future of the Commonwealth Games. That is £100m+ of inward investment at a time when there are critical works needed in the city; that investment alone would account for 5% of the overall inward investment into Scotland over the past year. To potentially turn down such a significant sum of money, which only serves to boost the Glasgow and Scottish economies and has been deliberately created not to rely on the public purse at a time of economic uncertainty, is – in our opinion – short-sighted.

“We are confident of delivering a world-class sporting event to packed crowds in Glasgow, with some of the world’s sporting stars providing inspirational moments for the millions of spectators in Scotland, the UK and across the Commonwealth.

“Should we choose not to step up and host, the future of high-performance sport in Scotland will be under serious threat.

“Glasgow 2014 provided a catalyst for success for many Scottish athletes, including those who won medals at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games; 25 of the 34 Scots on Team GB have competed for Team Scotland at the Commonwealth Games, including six of the nine medallists. The same can be said for many of the Scottish athletes inspiring the nation at the Paralympic Games. For so many in Scottish sport, the Commonwealth Games is a pinnacle – a career highlight, loved by athletes, support staff and fans alike.

“The Commonwealth Games is the only opportunity for many athletes to compete under the Scottish flag and is a key development stage for our stars on their journey to international success. The Scottish high-performance system is largely designed around the Games, being the biggest stage for many of our sports.

“The decision to host the Games has been sitting with the Scottish Government since May, and we have worked tirelessly to address all questions and concerns raised across the past few months. However, the window of opportunity is fast closing, and with it, the ability to deliver within the timeline ahead of us hampered by uncertainty and delays.

“It would be a travesty if instead of grabbing the opportunity of over £100 million inward investment, we chose to let it go and instead be left needing to find millions elsewhere to fund the essential capital work needed to upgrade public facilities in the coming years, and leave hundreds of Scottish athletes, aspiring and established, without an avenue to compete for Scotland on the international stage.

“A decision over the coming weeks is critical to deliver the Games – we believe the concept is a no brainer.

“This is a unique opportunity for the people of Glasgow and Scotland to be at the centre of a bold vision for the Games and we are calling on the Government to not waste the unique opportunity which is in front of us.”

Commonwealth Games Federation President Chris Jenkins OBE said “We fully endorse Commonwealth Games Scotland’s innovative concept for the 2026 Commonwealth Games and believe that Scotland, with its significant experience in organising major sports events, is more than able to deliver a world-class event in such a short period of time.

“In utilising existing sporting, transport and accommodation infrastructure, and world-class venues and expertise, the compact concept would not only build on the legacy of Glasgow 2014 but would position Scotland as pioneers at the start of our journey in resetting and reframing the Commonwealth Games of the future as a collaborative, flexible and sustainable model that minimises costs, inspires athletes, and excites Hosts and International Federations.”

-ENDS-

For further information please contact

Sophie Ashcroft

T: 07764 490393

E: sophie.ashcroft@56degreesnorth.co.uk