

## **PE1748/H**

Petitioner submission of 2 January 2020

The Agencies, the Authority and Government in their responses have signposted the Planning Bill, the formulation of National Planning Framework (NPF4) in 2020, along with local placement plans which may provide the solution without the need for this petition. None of the above mentioned, in law, guidance, advisory or through consultation provide any statutory protection for small communities. The petition is:

*Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide specific provision within the National Planning Framework 3 (NPF 3) and the Scottish Planning Policy for small communities which:*

- *Provides for a pre-development community asset and infrastructure audit when an area is identified as being able to accommodate large-scale, urban growth and;*
- *Protects areas considered by its community to be high value scenic assets and at risk of the coalescence of communities.*

North Lanarkshire Council (NLC), in it's response, makes much about the consultation times, dates and process. As NLC referenced the concept statement and consultation, we therefore reference the present outcomes associated with the above and include comment on references made in other agencies and government responses.

The CGA Consultation was put forward almost as an environmental project. Politicians made much about access to the land and the Seven Lochs Project. Beautiful illustrations were created related to Johnston loch and descriptions of significant stand off areas, walkways, peri urban development creating a development that looked towards the rural uninterrupted views.

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, (introduced in section 15a) schedule 19 states a community body must have regard to the local development plan, for the land, or any part of the land, to which the local place plan relates and the National Planning Framework, such matters that are prescribed.

Prescribed will be translated to mean what has been decided, stipulated, required within a local development plan with community input ignored. Our experience has been that the Local Development Plan has been settled by the local authority even though the community raised objection to the scale and choice of sites. We will be creating a place plan but like many other communities it will require to be worked round an already created development plan which communities are at odds with. Place Plans created in the spirit of schedule 19 found within the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 provides limited or no solutions and would not accommodate for the most part, any community's preferred options or requests in relation to land.

The Gartcosh Tenants & Residents Association (GTRA) disagree with the Heads of Planning Scotland submission with regard to a specific reference to small communities and we believe the petition is necessary. The issues the petition raises have not been solved by applying planning policy and framework. We recognise there are a range of policy drivers which should protect the landscape and environmental qualities of communities and know full well the implications of development on local infrastructure and assets. That being the case why have these drivers not protected our community? The fact

that Gartcosh is in this position is testimony to the ineffectiveness of the policies or the interpretation that have been made by the planning professionals and politicians involved.

The same comments could be made of the RTPI response. Why have paragraphs 196 to 201 of SPP not been used to safeguard valuable landscape and the issue of coalescence paragraph 49 to 50 and covers greenbelt policy used to prevent coalescence? Why would a local authority not choose to use these sections of SPP as tools to protect the community they service and how and why when referenced by the community are they disregarded in objections to planning applications and consultation? GTRA were informed coalescence is not a consideration in large scale development?

The outcome has resulted in planning applications which will reach over 1800 units on the land round the loch. The Seven Lochs project will be shoehorned into the development, if at all, with negotiations between the council and developers as to who will pay for part of a walkway here a green corridor there. The hope being this strategic 16k urban park with its own Masterplan (Seven Lochs) can be circumvented as not to affect the house build quotas along with establishing the mitigation measures that can be applied ensuring this outcome. None of the interventions associated with the Seven Lochs Projects marked for Gartcosh have been carried out.

The Masterplan for the Seven Lochs project was used in the CGA consultation as the focus with housing development sensitive to the creation of the park, with the park being placed at the centre of the consultation process which was misleading but even with this approach, the development scale still raised serious concerns in the community.

Considering the above and in context to Gartcosh, every piece of land including the only site of scenic beauty has been allocated for large scale housing development. There has been a provision for community asset on the west shore of the loch, not within the original settlement, which will be less than 3ha as it is mixed with retail provision. The development is so large in scale, asset will be placed almost 2 kilometres from the village, 2.4ha have also been made available closer to the original settlement but only for retail shops. Gartcosh has been waiting since the late nineties for community asset. We currently sit just over 2 kilometres from the Fort shopping park one of Scotland's largest retail facilities and now take the approach traffic portion from the north of 4.87 million cars which visit the venue annually on a B road and the A752, with no road infrastructure improvements. This is additional traffic to any new development. The above are examples of wrong asset, wrong place, along with a cumulative effects from other sources.

Unfortunately consultation has been carried out in poetry and governed in prose. The housing development Masterplan has been abandoned and made difficult to execute for various reasons. The recognition and almost apology is present in the council's response on how the Masterplan is being delivered. The Masterplan checklists within the strategic development framework are not being applied and planning applications do not meet the threshold required in the document. Through the Local Area Partnership residents have tried to raise development and planning as an issue. When planning and development is raised in this forum, relations between NLC and Residents often deteriorate. It raises the question how Part 1 section 16B of the bill can be effective? We are hopeful for a change in attitudes as we enter 2020 and a new decade.

The Scottish Government submission/ response has given an account of how the issues encountered by our community can be address now and in the future through the new act.

The issues can also be addressed by the Scottish Government using the act as a tool that may help our community, intervention would not in anyway reduce the housing capacity planned for the area. The act leaves scope to change or amend a Local Development by the authority and government but such opportunities for intervention and assistance has not been used at local or national level. It is as if “creative destruction” in the face of community concerns will create a sustainable community, in our opinion this is not the case.

Consultation is not the answer, Residents have submitted their objections to the NLC Modified Plan, however the planning authority deal with applications in front of them and planning applications will be passed before the amendments requested by the community are considered. Planning applications with allowed status will “trump” the consultation process. This is the most blatant and unreasonable approach to a consultation process. There may be sufficient powers in the act which are available at local and national level but we can only conclude there is no willingness to assist the community.

Consultation has taken place in Gartcosh regarding development plans, concept statements, strategic development framework and placement of the new school (which took place 2 years ago). The community was unsuccessful on every occasion in putting their views across. The vision for the area is also abandoned. The government response also states “Scottish Ministers are committed to empowering communities and encouraging participation and collaborative working in local areas.” In response to the reference above, the GTRA state if this is the case, communities must be allowed:

- To list the community asset requirement,
- Highlight the sites of scenic beauty for protection,
- The allocation of new community asset on sites put forward by the community,
- No build sites established ensuring no coalescence and maintain community cohesion.

This should be carried out through a community audit process and be incorporated into the Masterplan of major development thus ensuring a path into local development plans. These elements being recorded within a place plan is advisory and based on the evidence to date, there is no guarantee any suggestions valued by a community will be adopted within a Local Development Plan.

This community only has one community hall with a capacity for 70 built in 1903 which we could have requested to be protected. It has a site of scenic beauty, it is 11,500 years old and maintains a fragile eco system, SINC and the best example of wetlands in the west of Scotland. The Loch was created by the same glaciers that receded and created Loch Lomond and the geographical topography in the National Park. Johnston Loch is part of the kettle lochs making up the Seven Lochs. It is part of Scotland’s heritage. As a community we have participated in every consultation, objected to planning application in this area with no success. Any land within the original settlement is in the hands of developers and identified for development. Development on the loch site was described as being discrete pockets of development matching the landscape. Now all land with the exception of the SINC is to be developed.

We confirm to NLC that the GTRA look forward to any partnership working which can improve the outcomes related to the CGA, but no amount of participation, working together in partnership can manufacture land. A recent meeting with NLC was very positive. The

measure will be any progress made in the first quarter of 2020. The GTRA confirm to the Scottish Government that we welcome participation and being part of the engagement phase of NPF4. We welcome a thematic review and hope that it will highlight the risk original communities may still experience when large scale development is proposed.

Maybe we have not made ourselves clear. There is now no land that could be made available to the community to build any community capacity. Many communities are made up of lay people in reference to professional planning qualifications. We cannot quote planning law and are probably unaware of all the tools at our disposal. We can only reference experience as it directly relates to our given community. A resident made a comment some months ago, "this is Easterhouse in the early 1960's, built with no amenities or primary healthcare facilities. It just has a very expensive price tag in that it is private housing". Surely this is not a comment that should relate to 21st century planning and development, based on the mistakes made in creating large scale development in the 50's and 60's. Not related to house type but in amenities and infrastructure. Planning outcomes were catastrophic in social and economic benefit and felt for decades. The CGA could have met the strategic aims and objectives regarding housing quotas, properly incorporate a strategic green network in the form of Seven Lochs and accommodated the needs of the community, using planning as a tool which would be transformative to peoples lives.

There is a serious disconnect between policy, planning authorities and what happens at grass roots. This petition addresses this disconnect and cuts through to what policy is trying to achieve but for a whole host of reasons is unable to deliver. Inappropriate development of a site of scenic beauty, no community asset close to the original settlement and infrastructure (a new school) after over 10 years of being designated a community growth area. The abandoned Masterplan and road infrastructure becoming more difficult over time and being so close to a major shopping venue only adds to the issues.

Politicians at all levels or planning professional will agree it is not difficult to find the empirical evidence in relation to this community's experience highlighted in this response. The GTRA feel the elements within the petition are required in addition to any changes that have been made in planning legislation.

This community has always been open to discussion and compromise. However, it is not prepared to formalise the decisions being made on the community's behalf as being acceptable. The petition is required so it will never happen to another community in Scotland again.