Pollokshaws/Eastwood Community Council
Ward 2 City of Glasgow
Submission to the Scottish Parliament
On the C.E.R.B

1/9/2014

The above community council respectfully submits its own evidence on the community empowerment bill for consideration.

1. We believe the government’s basic idea is clear and sound, the problem as we see it as has always been is the delivery of it, unless there is clear unambiguous legislation /standing order’s it will result in some local authorities delivering their own interpretation on it and leave the communities frustrated.

2. The communities made up on average of people with a wide range of life skills and disciplines are more than capable of taking advantage from the Bill’s provisions given a level playing field to start from, time and again we the community suffer when if only for the sake of backing and finance we could be able to do a better job in some cases than the authority.

3. One example is here in Glasgow the authority is throwing everything at CPP and whilst the community councils are now given a seat at the table with a vote , as a body the community council is heavily bound by council rules and standing order’s unlike other partner’s such as RTO’S ,we survive on a administration grant of £500 less £20 insurance premium to the council and that can be means tested ,if we have more than twice our annual grant in our account ,where other groups can have thousands .

It is not positively promoted that we take on properties which we could use as a community base ,but at the same time the council contradict itself by saying we need to be more obvious to the community and promote ourselves better ,but how can this be when the registered address is the secretary’s hall cupboard ,who has to in some cases hold down a full time job ,and run the community council affairs using his /her home phone ,mobile ,lighting , and to store and run the CC computer and files etc with no remuneration, and as we say every other group can run as any small business would and the council go on about equalities .

4. The council have a CCLO for support and administration most of this is seeing that we are run to the council’s traffic light standard there is no promotional material , training courses on the essential things we need such as planning and licensing very poor in fact only now since the CPP have offered
through the NHS will licensing training be given, and planning aid Scotland have offered to pick up the bill for a one day seminar on planning the offer on the table being if the council supplied the venue the PAS will supply the materials and the bodies to deliver it, which is ridiculous when if the community council could be allowed to run its own affairs we could do this for all local community groups on a local basis.

5. The Communities Minister addressed a group of community councils from around the city and he gave us the his analogy as the Nike advert on TV if there is something needing done in your community (JUST DO IT) all very well for him to say try getting the Authority to believe in it, even with CPP there are still some dinosaurs who don’t want to be partners here, then the issue we had when the authority withheld our grant for nearly 10 months because of an internal problem as it turned out and no apology, which again begs the question why the Community councils are not independent of the council as they were at the start as it could be construed that he who pay’s the piper calls the tune again an equalities issue when none of our other non council community groups have to go through this and can and do JUST DO IT, without any hassle.

6. We are not going to get overly optimistic on this community gaining any more autonomy or financial independence without the requisite back up legislation/standing order’s being in place it does at times make you feel like giving up and let them get on with it.

7. The Bill Says it will make provision for unused properties to be brought back in to community ownership, perhaps someone could point this out to the authority we have at least 5 such properties and the authority don’t want to know nor do they want to interact with us on other issues, if it wasn’t for our MSP taking up the cudgel’s for us we might as well live in the mess forever, as we say we are not overly optimistic on the delivery but support the idea.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit our concern’s and wishes you well with the Bill.

Regards Bill Carson
Secretary Pollokshaws/Eastwood Community Council.