

PE1748/A

Petitioner submission of 16 September 2019

Gartcosh has a school built in the 19th century, is full and has temporary class rooms and little outdoor space, a community hall built in 1903, capacity is 70, two small shops and a chemist. It has no community centre, no primary care facilities, council nursery, viable play park and no free vending ATM.

It has a diamond grade motorway junction (M73, 2a) facilitating north and south access to the network providing good links to the whole of the country. There is park and ride railway station. Gartcosh hosts Johnston Loch which is part of the Seven Lochs project and the Scottish crime campus for forensic science and analysis. The population expanded in the late 90s to 2006 (before Clyde Plan's strategic development plan was created) with the building of 3 or 4 private estates. The community struggled to absorb the new developments and population increase. It came with no additional amenities or infrastructure and through the years the council changed the catchment area of the school and excluded part of the community rather than build a new school. The need for amenities and infrastructure (school) occurred before the financial crash. There were repeated calls for assistance, investment which went unanswered.

Through developing the strategic plan by Clyde Plan and the of North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan, Gartcosh was designated part of a Community Growth Area taking 3,000 units provided to a masterplan designed by the council. Not everyone is against development, but the lack of engagement, disregard for community perspective and ideas is unacceptable. Residents are habitually told plans are too far down the line and cannot be amended.

Developers refer to community asset and infrastructure in a positive light to sell their product. The station and park and ride facility is not an asset. The crime campus was built with insufficient parking. The service is subject to unacceptable levels cancellation.

Police and staff commandeer the park and ride car park all day. The local community cannot use the facility, especially those who are disabled. By visiting the tenants and residents association website pictorial evidence is available of parking conditions.

The developers product is sold on this semi rural location and scenic views of Johnston Loch. We offer the local plan, displaying development sites passed by the local authority and the reporter as evidence. Development is scheduled all round the loch with only a portion on the west side bank which is wetland and provides the habitat for protected wildlife. How this important habitat and classified as such can be unaffected by a possible 1800 unit build is debatable. It is explained away by mitigating actions as a justification. The visual impact within the community is beyond comprehension. The diamond grade junction (M73 2a) gives transport routes going north and south of the country and has led to additional traffic as other villages use the junction which was predicted. If you exit and travel through Gartcosh 3 miles you find the Fort shopping centre, boasting 14m visitors a year and increasing. The A752 Lochend Rd Gartcosh now serves as the approach road to this destination for

a portion of its visitors. Infrastructure which should improve local residents lives has been turned into a negative and the only scenic asset is going to be destroyed. Through a call for sites both within the community growth area and additional sites being developed in surrounding villages coalescence of communities is now apparent. Communities are losing their identity, sense of place and belonging. It actually states to plant some trees, so as not to give the “impression of coalescence” in local planning documents.

Gartcosh is under tremendous strain, has no resilience and is robbed of any capacity building equity. We cannot find one government agency or elected representative who can assist and provide a positive outcome.

This petition highlights good practice in forming policy that will prevent other small communities suffering the same fate. A pre development community asset and infrastructure audit associated with place shaping would highlight deficits, and should have resulted in a provision of land before a call for sites and incorporated into any local plan. This can only be made possible if promoted by policy.

A local plan that only provides community asset or infrastructure being placed in new development is contrary to The Fairer Scotland Duty as it leaves the original community behind. There is also no due regard for communities of interest within the original settlement when The Fairer Scotland Duty is applied especially those who are disabled or have disabilities (a CGA is a strategic decision). To date there has been no fully adapted housing provision. The private development is priced at levels unaffordable to poorer members and even those living in North Lanarkshire reaching average earnings. Is Affordable Housing pitched above social housing rates. If residents suffer unemployment, what will happen? Play parks as an example are located deep within the development. It is managed paid for and maintained by new residents' management fees. There is no collective ownership or community asset. This type of planning is leaving the community void of diversity.

Scenic views which make the community's character is taken over by developments and transformed and the scenic attributes are changed or lost.

Asset placement helps to knit a community together when large scale development has taken place. The community knew where to place the school which would bring some cohesion to the community for new and old residents. Appropriate placing of asset prevents housing units being only a commuter base. The community could not access the preferred site for the school as it is considered for housing development. The school is to be placed and requires to be evaluated against the BS standard for contaminated land within the vicinity if the land is acceptable and is being put close to the SINK and wetlands said to be one of the best examples in the west of Scotland. The loch and it's eco system has been in existence for 11,500 years. The consultation for the school was for ward 6 in North Lanarkshire but the majority of first 750 houses sit in ward 5 this will facilitate placing requests and children will be educated alongside a development that can continue for 10 years. Some children in Gartcosh will require transport. Infrastructure forced within new development is prohibitive of a cohesive community.

Actions of local authorities spring from policy. Therefore protection for small communities should be within government policy. Gartcosh is not a rural location in the true sense of the word but it cannot be all things to all men. In addition to housing development, it is designated a Strategic Economic Investment Location, looking to attract industry to the business park. It forms part of the seven lochs and green network infrastructure but is mentioned less and less in this context and we are fighting to get the walkway round the loch before the project ends in 2020. Gartcosh is also considered the front runner for a new university hospital next to the business park and crime campus but incidentally is also close to the location of the community's small nature reserve. There is no doubt Gartcosh has to change as a destination and can embrace change. But after compiling statistics from information in strategic plans, we question the vision and aspirations in relation to multiple strategies which clearly conflict. The community find it hard to square the circle and make sense of decisions made on our behalf. When you consider policy is not to achieve coalescence, communities are to have a sense of place, characteristics and a sense of belonging and are supposed to be at the centre of decision making. It is clear Gartcosh has been on the side of loose, loose on all outcomes to date.

The smugness of some politicians also gives concern. When strategic and local plans were published for consultation, the public were unaware of the true ramifications. Not all communities had high functioning informed Community Councils or enlighten residents. Now when we raise issues, the response is very often "you had the opportunity to respond, too late now" and the community is dismissed. The Gartcosh and Glenboig Community Growth area is taking 32% of the private housing development for the whole of North Lanarkshire. The CGA has gone from 3000 to over 5000 as Clyde Plan has gone forward and not one politician has an opinion about this other than it is a cash cow for the council in community tax.

There is not a blade of grass left to stake a claim on. Our neighbours in Glenboig have made good progress with obtaining grants and community asset and we could have drawn from their experience, but they started from a different vantage point regarding asset. The old village school is the only substantial asset the council owns in Gartcosh.

Our hope is that this petition will shed light on the issues and will provide protection for small communities in planning and national framework policies in the future. We hope it prevents an accumulation of a disgraceful set of circumstances our community has faced and will continue to face because government at all levels will not take the opportunity to re evaluate. We have requested through the modified plan consultation a "call back" of some small parcels of land to provide some capacity building of our own but consider planning will have given the necessary permissions to developers before our requests can be considered.