The Monkland Glen Community Council in North Lanarkshire wishes to support the submission of Kathleen Byron with respect to the Bill proposals.

Residents request that Equal Rights of Appeal are central to engaging with communities in planning matters. It is communities that are most affected by decisions taken at an appeal over which they have no say. This is manifestly unjust.

ERA would let weak planning decisions be challenged with the possibility of revision or dismissal. Developers would be forced both to engage with communities and to try to meet local needs. Local authorities should not have to face the expense and often prolonged confrontations in court over planning matters taken to appeal.

There was overwhelming support for ERA from community organisations when the response results of 'Barriers to Engagement' were analysed - 93% from the community sector and 89% in the 'other' category were in favour of ERA. There is evidence from places as far apart as Australia and the Republic of Ireland that ERA 'works' in the public interest.

Accountability and scrutiny are essential if planning mechanisms are to have credibility. If an ERA should arise, it would indicate that the 'approved development' is of concern to local communities. They may stand to be negatively affected by it for years and action to address this should be taken before earthmoving begins.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Glen
Acting Secretary Monkland Glen Community Council