GOVAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY 3 JULY 2023

Present: Allan Bell, Esme Clark, Danny O’Neill, John Foster, Robert Preston, Hannah Salome, Betty Ross, Gina Preston, Ruby Kelly, Inspector Bob Anderson, PC Nicola Pack, Jim Ellis (GCC)

Apologies: Reinhild Gorniak, Annie Morgan, Jackie McColl, Cllrs Alam, Bell, Dornan and Hutchison, Amanda Brown.

Minute Secretary: John Foster

1.MINUTES OF JUNE MEETING

These were moved as correct by Danny O’Neill and Esme Clark

2. DISCUSSION WITH THE POLICE AND CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON SERVICES IN GOVAN

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MAY MEETING

1. **Cleansing, litter and anti-social behaviour**

Our Secretary reported that, as agreed at the May meeting. letters had been sent requesting attendance at our July meeting of a representative of the Police, preferably Inspector Bob Anderson, a senior officer of Govan Housing Association and representatives of the City Council responsible for Cleansing Services and for Social Work. The letters outlined the persistent and worsening character of the problems with anti-social behaviour, inadequate cleansing, struggling youth services as well as lack of funding for infrastructure improvement.

Over the past three weeks further anti-social behaviour was reported from the north end of Shaw Street outside the pub, illegal use of fireworks (and no response to a 101 call for 20 minutes), an instance of blue and green bins being emptied into the same bin lorry compartment (Harmony Place), the big litter bins at the north end of Uist Street being stacked with cardboard three foot over the top impeding traffic visibility.

1. **Car parking**

The problems continued to worsen. Our Chair expressed concern that the promised 16 space carparking at the base of the flats currently being constructed by CCG on Langlands Road did not, so far, appear to be present although they were part of planning consent.

1. **Bus Franchising, the piloting of free public transport in Glasgow and government schemes for the introduction of electric buses**

Our Vice Chair reported that, as agreed at the May meeting, a letter had been sent to the City Council requesting its support for Glasgow’s participation in the Scottish government’s pilot scheme to test the viability of free public transport in a city setting. The letter also stressed that any trial of the scheme should be universal, not targeted at specific groups, cover the whole city and for the City Council to hire the required buses from the commercial firms (minimising the outflow of income).

Our Vice Chair reported further on the Scottish government’s scheme to introduce electric buses. For the scheme’s first phase, he reported, 98 percent of the funding had gone to the private sector. The scheme was now into its second phase with £58m about to be allocated. Our Vice Chair noted that Get Glasgow Moving was proposing that the SPTE should support a bid for Glasgow to secure electric buses for routes locally and these be operated within the public sector. It was AGREED a letter be written to the City Council and SPTE in support of the call from Get Glasgow Moving and other public sector lobby groups.

1. **Meeting with Humza Yousaf** Agreed to defer for the time being.

3. SECRETARY’S REPORT

1. **Correspondence arising from 5 April public meeting on public services and the cost of living crisis**

Letters had been received from the Scottish government and from the Secretary of State for Scotland in response to our correspondence. These replies were read to the meeting.

**Scottish Government**

The response was initialled by Shona Robison, deputy first minister. It said that the government had supplemented the initial Scottish local government grant of £13.5 billion by £793m in light of the special circumstances. Of this Glasgow received an additional £62m (or a 4.2 percent addition). The letter went on to say that the City Council had its own powers to borrow and to raise additional funds through the council tax. On the proposal that the government should review local government boundaries to include the city’s very wealthy suburbs, the letter replied that there were no plans to do so. The letter noted that the Scottish government had no responsibilities for the support of asylum seekers or refugees but opposes people being pushed into destitution.

The meeting expressed disappointment with the reply – particularly with the failure to consider the issue of boundary realignment and the failure to acknowledge the magnitude and social consequences of the cuts in the 2023-24 budget. Councillor Bell noted, very politely, that the response did not admit what was the elephant in the room: that the 2023-24 settlement failed to make adjustment for rates of inflation of near 11 percent – and that the 4.2 percent supplement had required cuts of £64m to essential services.

**Alister Jack, Secretary of State for Scotland**

The reply dealt with the following issues.

*Local industry and employment*:

the government had allocated £4.2 billion for BAE naval construction, generating 1,700 jobs, and a further grant of £33m for the Glasgow innovation accelerator.

*Scottish Government and borrowing requirements*:

Scottish budgets decisions were outwith the jurisdiction of Westminster but the Scotland Acts of 2012 and 2016 had increased borrowing powers for current spend to £3 billion (annual spend £450m) and for resource spend to £600m – and additionally in light of the economic shock of 2023 there had been additional allocations of £600m for 23-24 and £300m for 24-25. There was also an ongoing review of grant funding in light of tax and welfare devolution.

*Glasgow boundaries*

These were the responsibility of the Local Government Boundary Commission, an independent body tasked to ensure proportionate electoral constituencies.

*Refugee and Asylum support*

The response detailed current levels of financial support as well the support in kind. It suggested that £45 a week was sufficient to cover food, clothing, transport and toiletries and that in special circumstances funding might available for transport for medical care or required official interviews. It noted that asylum seekers were allowed to undertake unpaid volunteering activities though not paid work and that this regime was designed to deter illegal immigration.

*Levelling Up*

Under this heading the letter stated that the UK government has committed £79m to Glasgow City including £13m for a community centre in Pollok and another £27m under the government’s Shared Prosperity Fund for climate change initiatives. Glasgow shared in the £523m investment in the City Regional Deal that included the Govan-Partick pedestrian bridge. There was also £150m under the Community Ownership Fund with grants of up to £1m when back by community funding of at least £100k.

In discussion it was noted

1. That the economic shock additions in no way matched inflation
2. That the response on boundaries was beside the point: the issue was the fiscal base for local government funding and not electoral proportionality.
3. That the specification for asylum seeker support failed to meet need (almost all had to resort to food banks) and that the ban on work had long-term consequences for employability.
4. That the Levelling Up funding was inadequate and poorly administered: Councillor Bell instanced the most recent rounds where Glasgow was allocated a minor project (the Pollok centre) in the first round, encouraged to participate in the second (financially bigger) round and then at the last moment told it was ineligible to do so because it had participated in the first round.

Arising from these discussions it was AGREED that we consider publishing these responses and our collective replies – particularly in light of the concerns of the 60 people who had attended our public meeting. We should also ask, with this mind, that Hannah and Ruby draft replies relevant to the experience of asylum seekers in Govan (with assistance from Annie Morgan). Annie noted that although special provision was being made for refugees from Ukraine, no such provision was being made for those from war zones in Afghanistan or Syria. She also noted that positive contribution that had been made by a dozen Syrian refugees to services and community life in Bute (suffering from depopulation).

It was further AGREED to consider a public meeting for later in the autumn, as proposed at our April public meeting, to hear responses and consider further action.

1. **Preparation for discussions with those responsible for local service provision at our July meeting**

It was AGREED that those invited be sent a detailed agenda and copies of the June minutes ahead of the meeting.

4. PLANNING

**Consultation on proposals for the redevelopment of the Dry Dock**

Our Secretary and Annie Morgan had attended the meeting in the Pearce Institute on 25 May. Concerns were expressed that the housing proposed would be mid-market or private when further public sector housing was needed locally. The various options for the development of the marine area were reported. Our chair reported that, under auspices of the Central Govan Action Plan, he had with the Chair of East Govan Community Council initiated plans for a Community Development Trust with community representation. Annie Morgan hoped that the initiative might include provision for heat provision from the river as at Clydebank.

5. TREASURER’S REPORT

There were no current transactions.

6. CHAIR’S REPORT

**a) E Scooters**

Illegal use of these continued on public footpaths and roads. There had been a number of near-miss accidents locally. The police had failed to respond so far.

**b)Commercial waste and fly tipping**

A number of shops in central Govan and Elderpark areas appeared to be either dumping commercial waste in public bins or hiring commercial contractors who often flytipped this refuse. It was hoped new legislation going through the Scottish parliament would close this loophole and that all commercial waste should be disposed of through City Council services.

**c)Govan Fair**

The 2023 Govan Fair had been successful with attendance maintaining, if not improving, previous levels and enthusiastic participation by young people. A point was raised about the non-availability of the double decker bus to transport young children. This was, it was explained, because of misbehaviour by young footballers on the bus the previous year and that the new rule was in the interests of public safety.

7. COUNCILLORS’ REPORTS

**Councillor Bell** noted that the City Council budget had earmarked £12m over the next two years for infrastructure for the south-west and that one major consideration was road repair. Additionally he noted that more Lottery Heritage funding was now available and that consideration was being given to possible projects in the Govan area. It was seen to be important to enhance significant local attractions for visitors if the new Bridge was to fulfil its purpose of bringing custom into Govan itself.

**Councillor Hutchison** noted that in its first week the new Limited Emission Zone had resulted in a one third improvement in air quality in the city centre. There appeared to be no significant impact so far on parking on the perimeter. He also noted that he would seek to clarify the dates of opening for the Elderpark Library.

8. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Govan Fire Station**

Robert Preston reported a news item that day which indicated that the number of engines in Govan was to be reduced to one. This was felt to be a matter of considerable concern which the officers would need to take up as it was the general rule that two engines were required for any station’s operational viability. Any closure would have significant consequences for the hospital, the shipyard and the tenements.

1. **Safeguarding the Moogetty garden space and amenities**

Annie Morgan as that the Community Council commit to ensuring that the garden space be adequately protected during the construction of new accommodation by Elderpark HA. This was agreed.

**9. NEXT MEETING MONDAY 3 JULY AT 7 pm ELDERPARK WORKSPACE**