

## **Holyrood Briefing – October 2009**

### **STOP HOUSING 'PRIVATISATION'**

There are growing concerns regarding the proposal in the Housing Bill, currently out for consultation, to allow profit making companies to become registered to build social housing.

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and the Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations have expressed their opposition to any moves in that direction.

The result of such a move would be that developers concerned to maximise the returns to their shareholders would receive public money to build houses for rent or sale.

The consultation document also proposes to allow English based companies to register to build social houses in Scotland. The claim is made that this is necessary under European law, ignoring the fact that the Welsh Assembly legislated to stop that happening.

The result of such a change could be that large English based housing associations would come to dominate social housing in Scotland.

Both of these measures could spell the end of community based housing associations of which we in Scotland are so proud. In this constituency, we have excellent local housing associations, focused on the communities they serve. It is to be hoped that the Scottish Government will think again about this ill-considered and unwelcome proposal.

### **ST BERNARD'S PRIMARY AND WOODACRE NURSERY**

It was good to attend the opening of St Bernard's Primary School and Woodacre Nursery. We were greatly entertained by the pupils who did themselves, their families and their school proud.

Their enthusiasm and infectious participation in the opening showed just how proud they are of their new school.

It is good to see young pupils in facilities which support excellent teaching and learning.

### **ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

In contrast to the Community Champion Awards and the excellent work done by so many people in our communities stands the appalling recent examples of antisocial behaviour in the constituency.

In particular, I am thinking of the dropping of a fridge from the 10th floor of a housing block in Tarfside Oval and the arson of children's toys at Dove Street nursery.

Most people will find it hard to credit that such wicked vandalism could exist.

Fortunately recent reports from the police show that crime, including antisocial behaviour, continues to fall in the constituency but it is essential that police action against anti-social behaviour should continue.

### **BUS USERS' GROUP**

I meet regularly with First Bus Glasgow to discuss the frequency and quality of its local services.

At our last meeting, representatives from First Glasgow said that they were keen to discuss directly with local people how their services can be improved.

I am certainly keen to ensure that all bus companies take into account the needs of the diverse communities across the constituency.

It is my intention to support the establishment of a bus users' group with representatives from across the area.

If you would be interested in participating in such a forum, please get in touch.

### **JOHANN LAMONT SPEAKS OUT**

I was gravely disappointed at the decision of the Finance Secretary, John Swinney, to cancel the Glasgow Airport Rail Link.

This project represents huge investment in Glasgow and the West of Scotland. It was an important commitment made during the bid for the Commonwealth Games; more importantly, it provides the opportunity to create jobs and apprenticeships at a time when young people in particular are facing an uncertain future.

A project described only recently as being on time and on budget is now to be dropped.

I have serious concerns about an approach by the Scottish Government which does not recognise the particular impact of the economic recession on communities within Glasgow.

### **POLLOK POST OFFICE / CREDIT UNION OPENING**

I was delighted to attend the opening of Pollok Post Office and Pollok Credit Union within Silverburn.

This is an exciting development, bringing together the services of the post office and the local credit union in a busy shopping centre.

At the opening, Sarah McCarthy Fry MP, UK Minister for Financial Inclusion, and Ian Davidson MP congratulated all at the post office and Pollok Credit Union for this world-leading partnership.

I am grateful to all those involved in making this exciting development happen.

**SURGERIES**

Friday 2nd October - 2.00pm - The Wedge, 1066 Barrhead Road, Pollok

Saturday 3rd October - 10.00am - 996 Mossspark Drive, Cardonald, (Paisley Rd West junction)

Friday 23rd October - 2.00pm - 996 Mossspark Drive, Cardonald, (Paisley Rd West junction)

Saturday 31st October - 10.00am - Pollok Civic Realm, 27 Cowglen Road, Pollok