

Bob Doris MSP for Maryhill and Springburn (SNP)

Parliamentary Report- November 2017

High Rise Fire Safety

I have been scrutinising high rise fire safety following the horrific tragedy at Grenfell Tower. I have worked in partnership with local housing associations and tenants, as well as securing safety assurances nationally in my capacity as Convener of the Local Government Committee.

My committee has made a series of recommendations to the Scottish Government, as well as seeking assurances (which have been forthcoming) from Glasgow City Council. The Scottish Government actions following Grenfell have been commendable but I continue to ensure there is scrutiny of the Scottish response. Indeed I will be leading a major Parliamentary debate on the matter in the next few days.

With the skyline of Maryhill and Springburn constituency dotted with high rises (defined as any dwelling above 18 metres) I am determined to continue to pursue these matters.

Tackling Homelessness

There has been an increased visibility of rough sleeping in Glasgow. There are many factors driving this including welfare reform, safety concerns, addictions and mental health to name just a few. Homelessness had been falling for a while but that progress has halted. There are also significant concerns over the provision and quality of temporary accommodation for those that are homeless.

I led an inquiry into this matter and our committee will report shortly. I am pleased the Scottish Government has responded ahead of our report, establishing an independent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group. It has also identified a new £50m budget to tackle rough sleeping and a new £20m a year budget to look specifically at addiction issues.

With the Scottish Government investing £3billion by 2021 to deliver at least 50,000 affordable homes- a 67% increase in affordable housing supply- I want to ensure that everyone in society benefits, including our most vulnerable. I very much hope the Scottish Government will consider our committee recommendations which will be published shortly.

City Region Deal Cash Must Deliver For Maryhill And Springburn

City Deal cash will bring £1.13billion from Scottish and UK Governments to Glasgow and the Clyde Valley over a 20 year period, with far more than that being leveraged in from the private sector. 15,000 construction jobs and 28,000 permanent jobs are projected as a result.

I raised the City Deal with Cllr Susan Aitken, the new City Government leader, at an evidence session within our Scottish Parliamentary Inquiry. I pushed for inclusive growth to benefit our constituency. I am pleased the Government agreed and I hope several communities will benefit. That will hopefully mean more housing, amenities, services and jobs for local communities.

Along with local councillors, we are keen to fully maximise the benefits of what looks to be a revised City Region Deal in Glasgow.

Transport Update

Buses

I continue to believe the current system by which bus routes are planned (and often subsidised) is not fit for purpose. I have met repeatedly with SPT and First Glasgow to discuss matters. Success at changing the situation has been limited. The Scottish Government has a Transport Bill to be published shortly. I met with the Transport Minister recently to make suggestions to improve matters and I will continue to pursue improved bus travel through the Bill.

Trains

I've had a number of meetings with ScotRail over frequent complaints including delays, cancellations, ticketing and the quality of rolling stock. Following my intervention, a new ticketing machine at Summerston station (due shortly) may assist with ticketing issues on the Maryhill line. There have also been some improvements in reliability of service. However I am concerned over peak time reliability. I'm not convinced that's particularly improved.

Active & Sustainable Travel

Myself and Patrick Grady MP met with the City Government policy lead on these matters, Councillor Anna Richardson. The meeting was productive and we are keen to hold an event in relation to cycling infrastructure in the new year. The Scottish Government has signalled significant investment in this area and we want our communities should benefit.

The Scottish Government is committed to a switch to electric cars and I have contacted both the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council over local recharging points following constituents making representations to me.

Presumption of Mainstreaming In Education

I am pleased that the Scottish Government has published draft guidance as to when additional support needs children should be educated in a mainstream or non- mainstream setting. It's long overdue.

My experience locally in supporting families (despite some wonderful examples of good practice) is several vulnerable young people - particularly on the autistic spectrum- being shoe horned into mainstream provision either without the appropriate support or without the quality specialist provision required.

I contributed to a parliamentary debate at Holyrood on the new guidance and have met with both John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Colin Crawford, head of inclusion at Glasgow City Council. I continue to campaign for improvements in this area.

Regular Advice Surgeries

I hold regular surgeries across the constituency and arrange these in advance each month. This allows me to be flexible and it ensures a series of varied venues over the year. I have also held- and will continue to hold- a series of additional 'drop-in' surgeries with local councillors and Patrick Grady MP.

Want me to hold an advice surgery in a community venue near you? Contact me. I'll try and sort it.

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