



Dumfries and Galloway Council
Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing

Proposal Document: September 2025

Review of Education Provision
Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery

Proposal for the closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery

Summary Proposal

Dumfries and Galloway Council is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process, to discontinue education provision at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery which is currently mothballed and realign its catchment area to Dalry Primary School and Nursery.

It is proposed that education provision at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery be discontinued with effect from 27 April 2026.

Reasons for this proposal

This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are;

- Carsphairn Community Council have requested that Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is formally closed in order to facilitate a CAT (community asset transfer).
- Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery has been formally mothballed since August 2019. The number of children living in the catchment area is not predicted to rise in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group over the next 10 years.
- Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment.

This document has been issued by Dumfries and Galloway Council Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This document has been prepared by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate with input from other Council Directorates.

Publication Information

The proposal paper will be available, free of charge, at:

- Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn
- DG Customer Services, Dalry
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Headquarters

And published on Dumfries and Galloway Council's website:

<https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/council-elections/have-your-say/consultations-engagements>

Copies of this paper are also available on request from:

Statutory Consultation – Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery
Dumfries and Galloway Council
Militia House
109/111 English Street
DG1 2HR

E-mail: statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk

To request this information in a more accessible format or alternative language, please contact the postal or email address listed above.

Formal notice of the Proposal and relevant information will be given and be made available, free of charge, to the consultees listed as follows:

- a. The Parent Council of Dalry Primary School;
- b. The Parents/carers of pupils within the current Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment area;
- c. The Parents/carers of pupils attending Dalry Primary School;
- d. The parents/carers of any children living within the Carsphairn Primary School and Dalry Primary School catchment areas expected to start school within two years of the date of publication;
- e. The pupils at any affected school (considered to be of a suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the proposal);
- f. The staff (teaching and other) at Dalry Primary School;
- g. Trade union representatives;
- h. Carsphairn Community Council;
- i. Dalry Community Council;
- j. Balmaclellan Community Council;
- k. Royal Burgh of New Galloway and Kells Parish Community Council;
- l. Crichton Campus Leadership Group (Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dumfries and Galloway College, South of Scotland Enterprise, Scottish Funding Council, SRUC Barony College, University of West of Scotland, Glasgow University, Open University, NHS Dumfries and Galloway);
- m. Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland;
- n. Chief Executive, NHS Dumfries and Galloway;
- o. Area Commander Dumfries and Galloway, Fire Scotland;
- p. East Ayrshire Education Authority.

1.0 Introduction

Following the mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School from August 2019 when the school roll fell to zero and Carsphairn Nursery not operating since August 2012, a full statutory consultation in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 was undertaken, it commenced in September 2022. Members of Education and Learning Committee on Tuesday 28 March 2023, agreed to stop the closure process, this decision was following the statutory consultation process.

Education and Learning Committee – 28 March 2023 – Item 4 – Rural School Provision: Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery

<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=549&MId=5707>

On 16 April 2025 Dumfries and Galloway Council received a formal request from Carsphairn Community Council on behalf of the wider community to respectfully request the formal closure process for Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery at the earliest appropriate opportunity. A newly established group The Carsphairn Learning and Development Committee (CLaDC) is interested in taking ownership through the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process to ensure the building does not fall into disrepair and is instead brought back into use for the benefit of the community. A community-wide survey conducted in April 2025 by CLaDC reported near unanimous support for the proposal to formally close the school, enabling future community use of the premises.

Members of the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee on 1 July 2025 agreed to the agree to the commencement of the Statutory Consultation process for the closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 following the completion of the requirements of phase one of the Statutory Consultation timeline as detailed in Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee – 1 July 2025 – Item 14 – Statutory Consultation Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery

<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=626&MId=6230>

The statutory process for the closure of a rural school is laid out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Act, as amended, introduced a presumption against closure of a rural school and details specific requirements which the education authority is required to follow if they are formulating a proposal to close a rural school. This includes the introduction of certain preliminary requirements which must be satisfied prior to the formulation of a proposal. It is necessary to consider any reasonable alternatives before considering closure. It is also necessary to consider the impact on the wider community of a potential closure and the impact of any different travel arrangements. These factors have been considered as part of the preliminary requirements which were undertaken prior to this proposal being written and are set out in the Preliminary Requirements document, which is attached as Appendix 3.

In addition, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out a right for community organisations to request the transfer of local assets into local community ownership/management. The community may wish to consider alternative uses for the building as part of this process.

Carsphairn Nursery is last recorded as having four pupils in attendance in 2012, there have been no pupils in attendance since August 2012. The nursery is no longer registered with the Care Inspectorate, this is due to the period of time in which the nursery has not been operational. The Care Inspectorate do have a process by which a service can be marked as 'Inactive' this can be used in limited situations and for a period of up to twelve months. More information regarding this can be found on the Care Inspectorate's website;

<https://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/changes-to-registration>

Carsphairn Primary School has had zero pupils enrolled since the school was mothballed following the school roll falling to zero for academic year 2019/20. However, with ongoing communication with families since the temporary arrangements were put in place, a small number of families have expressed their desire for the school to reopen. Dumfries and Galloway Council have received enrolment and transfer forms and these figures are included in Section 4.3.

Councils, as an Education Authority, have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028, Education and Learning Directorate.

Dumfries and Galloway Council will improve education and learning opportunities to help all our children, young people and citizens fulfil their potential. This starts with pre-school, then school, before progressing into further or higher education or transition into work. We will work with our partners to create and promote lifelong learning opportunities so everyone in the region can live a meaningful and fulfilling life, and contribute to their community.

Strategic Outcomes:

- Places of learning are inclusive, sustainable and meet the needs of local communities
- We get it right for every child
- Children, young people and adults transition successfully through all life stages
- Young people and adults succeed in what they want to achieve
- Participation in creativity and play is part of early and lifelong learning experiences
- Local people can build their skills and confidence

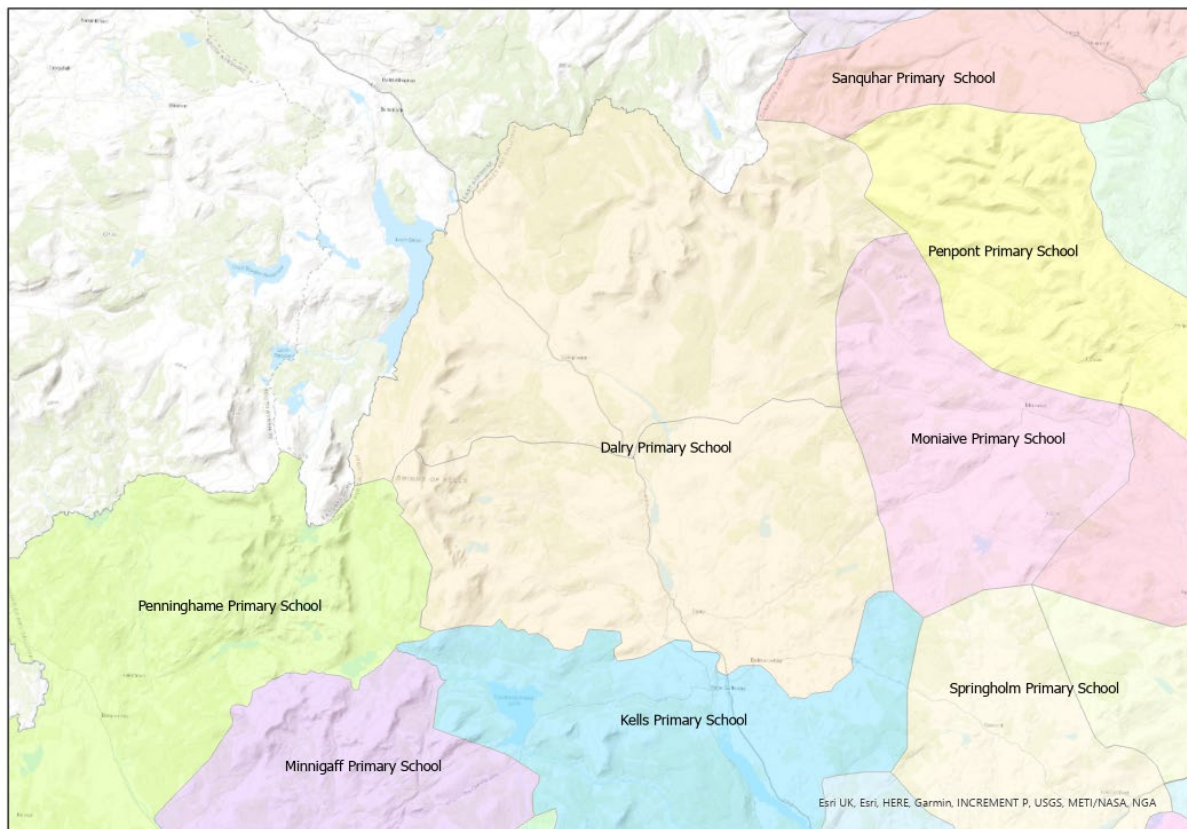
Dumfries and Galloway Council, as an Education Authority, has a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand.

2.0 Proposal

It is proposed that education provision at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery be discontinued with effect from 27 April 2026 and re-align its catchment area to Dalry Primary School and Nursery.

It is proposed that children living in the current Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment area would be directed to Dalry Primary School and Nursery depending on the outcome of the statutory consultation process. Detailed in Figure 1 below is a map detailing the proposed catchment area for Dalry Primary School. The current catchment areas are detailed in Section 3.2, Figure 3 of Appendix 3 (Preliminary Requirement Document).

Figure 1



2.1 Reasons for this Proposal

This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are;

- Carsphairn Community Council have requested that Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is formally closed in order to facilitate a CAT (community asset transfer).

- Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery has been formally mothballed since August 2019. The number of children living in the catchment area is not predicted to rise in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group over the next 10 years.
- Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment.

2.2 Additional Considerations

In addition to the main reasons outlined above, the following considerations have also informed the proposal to discontinue education provision at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery:

- The education benefits as set out in Section 8 to current and future primary aged children within the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment area.
- Councils have a statutory duty, introduced in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003, to make arrangements to secure Best Value.
- On 30 November 2023, Elected Members approved the 10 School Model Principles to be used as a basis for a sustainable School Estate. Applying these Principles will help ensure 'best-value' and sustainable settings, resulting in an improved learning environment for all our children and young people, whilst considering the needs and wishes of people and communities. These Principles are detailed in the Preliminary Requirements document at Appendix 3
- Dumfries and Galloway Council currently has in excess of 4,546 (32%) spaces within its current primary school estate (correct as academic year 2024/25). It must be acknowledged that the costs-per-pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high and that underutilised schools are expensive to maintain and operate. The current condition, suitability and over capacity is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the school estate.

3.0 Preliminary Requirements

In accordance with Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act, Dumfries and Galloway Council is required to satisfy specific preliminary requirements before proposing the closure of a rural school. These requirements uphold the presumption against closure and ensure that any proposal is only brought forward following careful consideration of alternatives and meaningful engagement with the affected community.

Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is classified as a remote rural school. The primary school has been mothballed for six years and the nursery has not had pupils

in attendance since academic year 2011/12. Following a formal request on 16 April 2025 from Carsphairn Community Council to officially close Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery, in line with statutory guidance, Dumfries and Galloway Council undertook a structured engagement process to explore the future for the school and nursery.

Dumfries and Galloway Council identified the reasons for this proposal, including:

- Carsphairn Community Council have requested that Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is formally closed in order to facilitate a CAT (community asset transfer).
- Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery has been formally mothballed since August 2019. The number of children living in the catchment area is not predicted to rise in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group over the next 10 years.
- Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment.

Through community engagement, including a public drop-in session and a stakeholder survey, Dumfries and Galloway Council considered reasonable alternatives to closure and assessed the likely educational benefits, community impact, and travel implications of each option. Three options were presented to the local community by Dumfries and Galloway Council for consideration during the pre-consultation phase, as required by Section 12A of the 2010 Act.

Dumfries and Galloway Council assessed the educational impact of each option. Reopening the school would have resulted in a single-teacher, multi-composite class with limited peer interaction and curriculum breadth. Continued mothballing offered no long-term certainty and risked disengagement.

The place of the school in the community was also considered. While closure would result in the loss of local educational provision, stakeholders expressed strong interest in repurposing the building. The school grounds continue to provide a safe space for the community to utilise. The newly formed Carsphairn Learning and Development Committee (CLaDC) is interested in taking ownership of the building and grounds through the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process to ensure the building does not fall into disrepair and is instead brought back into use for the benefit of the community. A community-wide survey conducted in April 2025 by CLaDC reported near unanimous support for the proposal to formally close the school, enabling future community use of the premises.

Impact on the environment was taken into account during the initial community engagement process. This included a consideration of the transport implications if this proposal were to be implemented, as children would have to travel by school transport (ordinarily by bus with some families paid per mile to transport their own

children to designated pick up points) to attend Dalry Primary School. Twelve children are currently entitled to school transport from the Carsphairn Primary School catchment area to Dalry Primary School. Five of the current Carsphairn Primary School catchment children in attendance at Dalry Primary School live within a mile radius of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. It is noted and acknowledged that the mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery has led to increased use of school transport and increased journey times for pupils particularly for those children living closest to Carsphairn Primary School.

Following the community engagement, the preliminary requirement document was presented to Dumfries and Galloway Council's Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee on 1 July 2025. This satisfied the requirements of phase one of the Statutory Consultation timeline, Members agreed to the commencement of the Statutory Consultation process for the closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act.

3.1 Alternatives to the Proposal

During the pre-consultation phase, Dumfries and Galloway Council invited stakeholders to consider and comment on three reasonable alternatives to closure, as required under Section 12A of the 2010 Act. Following the pre-consultation survey, Option C received the strongest support and is the option favoured by Dumfries and Galloway Council and the majority of the community, as it is considered to most adequately address the reasons for the proposal.

The three options were:

- a. Re-open Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery
- b. Continued Mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery with the temporary catchment of Dalry Primary School
- c. Closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and Realign the Catchment Area to Dalry Primary School and Nursery (the proposal)

Increasing the catchment area was not considered as a reasonable alternative given the current size and scale of the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment area, the travel distances and the road infrastructure to adjoining school catchment areas, the distribution of residential properties into the existing Dalry Primary School and Nursery catchment area and the adjacency to East Ayrshire Council.

When considering the above options during the Options Appraisal process, the following factors were key in arriving at option c as the most appropriate response to the underlying reasons behind consideration of this proposal:

- the positive educational benefits of attendance at Dalry Primary School and Nursery
- projected low pupil numbers at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery, and the associated impact on pupils' educational progress and social development;
- the challenges in recruiting and retaining teaching staff;

- the considerable expenditure needed to bring the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery building up to the required standard for reopening;
- the lack of expressed local support for the continuation of mothballing or reopening of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and the community support for the aspirations of CLaDC.

The community engagement process prior to the drafting of this Proposal considered the views of members of the community and also considered any other alternatives to the closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. Full details of the community engagement, and the findings from the fulfilling of preliminary requirements, are set out in Appendix 3.

After the community engagement, Dumfries and Galloway Council concluded that the proposal to close Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and realign its catchment area to Dalry Primary School and Nursery is the most reasonable means to address the underlying reasons for considering the future of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. Further detail is provided below in relation to educational benefits, travel, environmental impact, community impact and financial impact.

4.0 School Roll/Changing Demographics

Demographic trends and pupil numbers were key considerations in the Preliminary Requirements process, as detailed in Section 3.4 of Appendix 4. These factors have informed Dumfries and Galloway Council's assessment of the long-term sustainability of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery.

The data presented below is drawn from the annual pupil census, conducted each September. Historical school roll figures reflect past census data, while future projections are based on NHS birth data and local development forecasts. It is important to note that school rolls may fluctuate due to families moving in or out of the catchment area and parents/carers exercising their right to submit placing requests.

4.1 Demographics of D&G

Dumfries and Galloway Council holds electronic records of school rolls back to academic year 1975/76. Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group from 2018 to 2032. Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery's roll has not exactly mirrored that of Dumfries and Galloway as a region, there has however been a steady decline since academic year 2014/15.

The historical pupil rolls for Primary Schools in Dumfries and Galloway and Carsphairn Primary School are detailed in Figures 2 and 3 below.

Figure 2

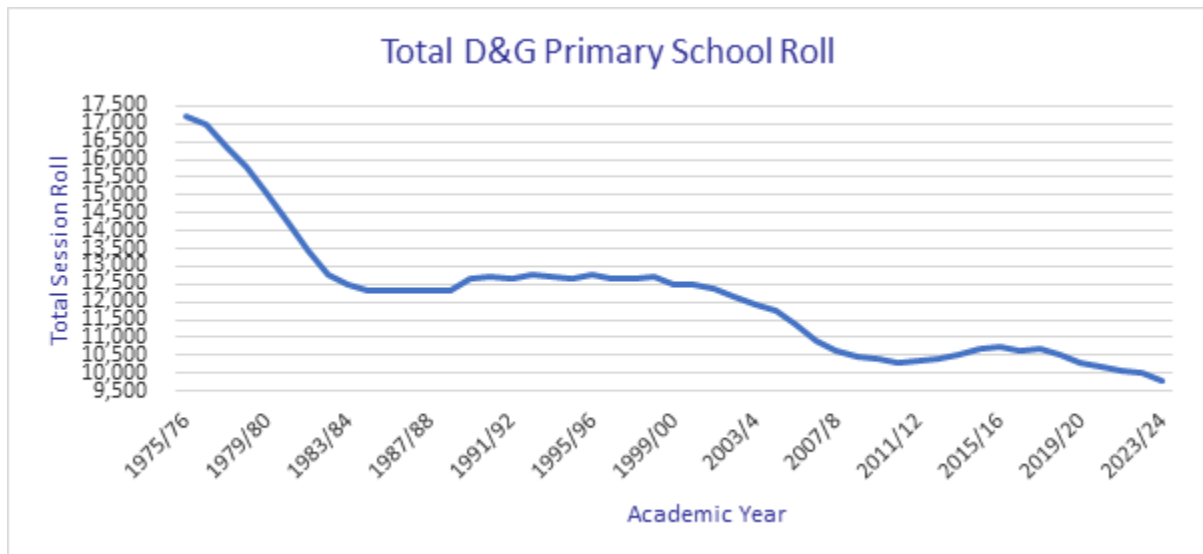
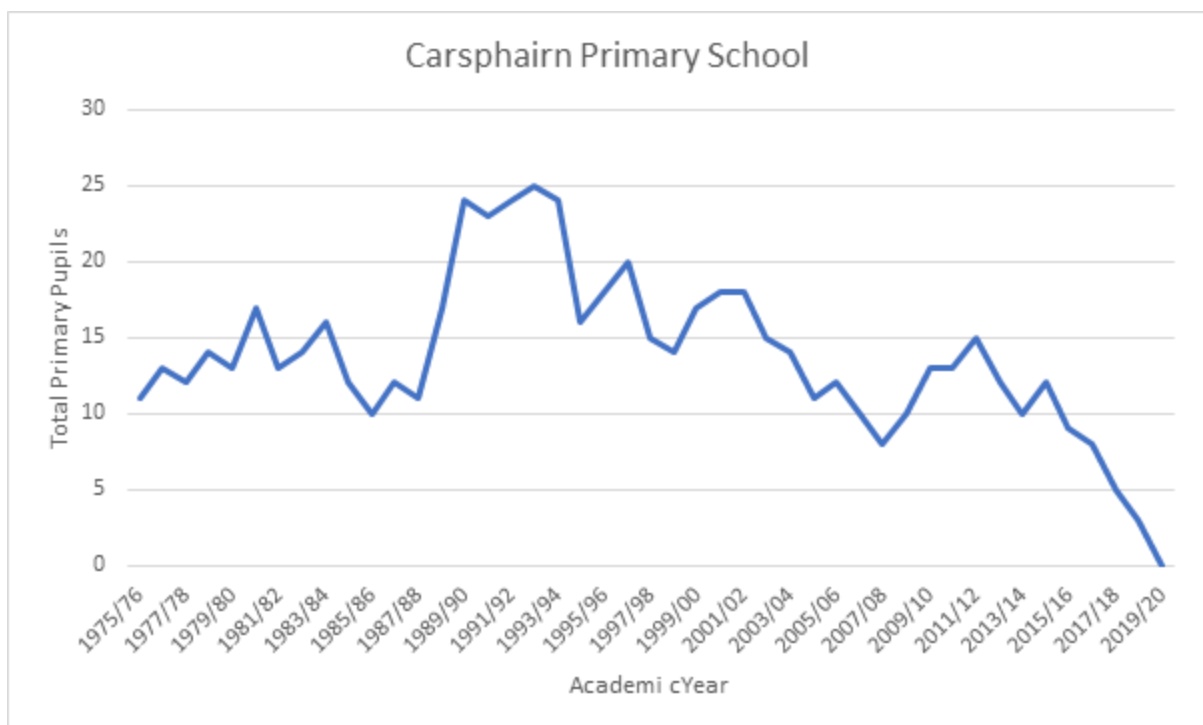


Figure 3



4.2 School Roll

There are currently twelve children of P1-P7 age (academic year 2025/26) residing within the catchment area of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery (SEEMiS data August 2025). The tracked children living within the Carsphairn catchment area are detailed in Figure 4 below, this table does not represent the number of pupils who have expressed a desire to attend Carsphairn Primary School. Numbers may differ from one year to the next due to the movement of children in or out of the catchment

area. Where children have deferred entry into Primary 1, they are included in the figures for the year they started school. Of the current primary aged children (academic year 2025/26) ten attend Dalry Primary School.

Figure 4

Academic Year	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
2022/23	1	1	2	4	1	3	2	14
2023/24	1	1	0	1	4	1	2	10
2024/25	1	1	1	0	1	4	1	9
2025/26	4	1	1	1	0	0	5	12
2026/27	0	4	1	1	1	0	0	7
2027/28	1	0	4	1	1	1	0	8

Dumfries and Galloway Council are also aware of an additional child who attends Dalry Primary School from the Carsphairn Primary School catchment area for a short period of time each year.

The school roll of Carsphairn Primary School has seen a steady declining trend since 2011/12. Figure 3 shows the historic pupil numbers for Carsphairn Primary School. Figure 5 below shows the historic and current roll of Carsphairn Primary School and Dalry Primary School. It is acknowledged that the total number of primary aged children living in the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment area for academic year 2023/24 is twelve children of primary school age and one child of nursery age.

Figure 5

	Carsphairn Primary School	Dalry Primary School
Capacity	25	75
	Roll	Roll
2013/14	10	52
2014/15	12	67
2015/16	8	63
2016/17	8	60
2017/18	5	60
2018/19	3	59
2019/20	0	59
2020/21	0	56
2021/22	0	54
2022/23	0	59
2023/24	0	43
2024/25	0	45
2025/26	0 (3)*	41

*Three transfer requests or enrolment forms were received as part of the annual review process. These children are included in the figures for Dalry Primary School for academic year 2025/26.

Nursery provision has changed significantly since Carsphairn Primary School Nursery was last operational, with the expansion to 600 hours, two year old entitlement and the further expansion to 1140hrs. The nursery headcount for April 2012 details the nursery roll at Carsphairn Primary School as four children, there were no children in attendance after this date. Dumfries and Galloway Council does not hold nursery numbers (head count) before academic year 2011/12.

Dalry Primary School Nursery is registered for a maximum of 20 children at one time. The nursery roll since the implementation of 1140 hours is detailed in Figure 6 below;

Figure 6

	Dalry Primary School Nursery Roll
2020/21	17
2021/22	13
2022/23	16
2023/24	16
2024/25	19
2025/26	16*

Dumfries and Galloway Council has three intakes across the academic year, all figures above are taken from April head count.

* This is the anticipated roll in April 2026 based on enrolment figures.

4.3 Projected Roll

Following the decision to stop the closure process to Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery on 28 March 2023, annual reviews took place in line with Section 64 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 – Statutory Guidance, initially as targeted surveys to parents but more recently through social media, local newspaper articles and targeted through Dumfries and Galloway Council GovDelivery email system to almost 12,000 individual email address. Processes were refined for academic year 2025/26 with information regarding enrolment and transfer into Carsphairn Primary School targeted to families living in the catchment area, Carsphairn Community Council, Elected Members and ward officer. Dumfries and Galloway Council has made amendments to this process over the years to ensure that the information is reaches our families and communities.

The annual review for Carsphairn Primary School has resulted in the following anticipated school roll.

Figure 7

Academic Year	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
2022/23	0	0	1	2	1	1	1*	6
2023/24	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	5
2024/25	1	0	0	0	1	3	1	6
2025/26	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3

* no response was received from one family, therefore pupil was included in provisional figures.

All figures detailed above include requests for catchment and non-catchment pupils.

These figures fall significantly below Dumfries and Galloway Council's target occupancy rate of 60 to 80%, as outlined in the School Model Principles. The sustained decline in enrolment, combined with broader demographic trends - including a projected 18.2% reduction in the 0 to 15 age group across Dumfries and Galloway by 2032 - suggests that the school is unlikely to return to viable operating levels in the foreseeable future with catchment pupils living in the Carsphairn Primary School catchment area expected to fall as detailed in Figure 4, Section 4.2.

The current pupil roll (correct August 2025) and the pupil roll forecast for Dalry Primary School is shown in Figure 8. These projections are based on the number of pupils currently in attendance at Dalry Primary School and those of nursery age living in the Carsphairn and Dalry Primary School catchment areas. It should be noted that school roll figures may fluctuate due to placing requests and changes in residency within the catchment area.

Figure 8

Dalry Primary	N4	N5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
2025/26	5	9	6	6	5	7	2	6	9	41
2026/27			9	6	6	5	7	2	6	41
2027/28			5	9	6	6	5	7	2	40

4.4 Housing Development

LDP2 (Local Development Plan) was published in 2019 superseding LDP1 published in 2014. Carsphairn remained identified as a Local Centre in the Stewartry area in Dumfries and Galloway Council's LDP2 as per LDP1. Due to the significant flood risks highlighted in the Main Issues Report (<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/18994/LDP2-Main-Issues-Report/pdf/MIR.pdf?m=636217275492870000>) the previously allocated housing site North of McAdams Way was removed from the plan.

LDP 2 can be viewed here: <https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/21885/Adopted-Local-Development-Plan->

2/pdf/Adopted_LDP2_OCTOBER_2019_web_version.pdf?m=637771647699370000
information relating to Carsphairn can be found on pages 116-117.

Whilst LDP2 does not identify a site within the settlement boundary for housing development, it supports infill development “Infill proposals will be considered favourably provided they comply with other policies contained in the Plan” and the planning objective for Carsphairn was to “Consolidate and enhance Carsphairn’s role as a Local Centre within the settlement hierarchy”.

There have been long standing aspirations within the community of Carsphairn to provide additional housing. In March 2023 Carsphairn Community Council commissioned housing need and demand survey report was published, this report was produced by SoSCH (South of Scotland Community Housing). This report is available at Appendix 3 of the Preliminary Requirement Document detailed in Appendix 3.

5.0 Teacher Numbers

Teacher numbers remain fairly consistent nationally, with a 0.5% decrease in the number of teachers nationally from 2021 to 2023. In Dumfries and Galloway there has been a 2% reduction in the FTE number of teachers from 2021 to 2024.

Carsphairn Primary School has been mothballed since August 2019 when the school roll fell to zero and Carsphairn Nursery not operational since August 2012, during this period staff recruitment to many schools has continued to be a challenge. Schools within the area have struggled to recruit and retain staff, particularly in relation to Headteachers and supply staff. Despite a sustained effort to secure staff, there is reason to think that staffing may be a considerable challenge for Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery as with all schools across Dumfries and Galloway.

At the current time, if the proposal was to be accepted, there would be no impact on staffing levels at Dalry Primary School or Nursery.

6.0 Condition and Suitability of the Building

Information relating to the Extent, Condition, Sufficiency and Suitability of the school estate is reported by Dumfries and Galloway Council to the Scottish Government on an annual basis, this is known as the Core Facts Return. Condition is concerned with the current state of the fabric of the school and with safety and security, it is undertaken by external surveyors impartial to Dumfries and Galloway Council and follows scoring methodology defined by Scottish Government for all schools. Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery was assessed in November 2024 and the overall condition rating for the property was B, satisfactory – performing adequately but showing minor deterioration. However, whilst the overall condition is B, there are some internal areas, for example the ceilings, mechanical and electrical that were graded as C or D, (C: poor – showing major problems and not operating optimally. D: Bad – Economic life expired and/or risk of failure).

Suitability is a measure of whether a school building and its grounds are fit for the purpose of delivering the education curriculum. The suitability of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery was carried out in 2014, the school was graded as C. The suitability survey has not been carried out recently as this exercise is undertaken with the building users.

7.0 Factors for Rural School Closures

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 makes special provisions for rural schools, establishing a procedural presumption against closure. This requires education authorities to follow a more detailed set of procedures when formulating, consulting on, and deciding whether to implement a rural school closure proposal.

Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is classified as a remote rural school. The Dumfries and Galloway Council is therefore required, under the terms of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014), to assess the likely effects of school closure in terms of the following three factors:

- The likely educational benefits;
- The likely effect on the local community (assessed in accordance with section 12 (4)); and
- The likely effects of different travel arrangements (assessed in accordance with section 12 (5)).

These factors are covered in Sections 8-10 below.

8.0 Educational Benefits Statement

The 2010 Act reflects the Scottish Ministers' view that educational benefits should be at the heart of any proposal to make a significant change to schools. Consequently, the Act specifies that the local authority must, for all consultations, prepare an Educational Benefits Statement and publish it within the proposal paper. The Act requires authorities to consider current and future pupils of any affected school, current users of its facilities, and the pupils of other schools in the authority's area. It must also explain how the authority intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects of the proposal.

Should this proposal be implemented, Dumfries and Galloway Council believes that there will be considerable educational benefits. These centre around:

- Learning and teaching
- Educational outcomes
- Experiences and opportunities
- The environment for learning

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) recognises the unique communities and contexts in which all our schools sit. It recognises the professionalism of Headteachers and their teams and allows them the flexibility to design a coherent curriculum that develops the knowledge, skills and attributes that their young learners need to adapt, think critically and flourish in an ever-changing global society. Individual Headteachers and schools are empowered to design and provide an enriched curriculum that is flexible, adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners and one which reflects the uniqueness of their local community and their context.

Carsphairn and Dalry Primary Schools are both remote rural schools (Scottish Government classification). Carsphairn Primary School is approximately 9.4 miles from their local secondary school, Dalry Secondary School. Children from Carsphairn Primary, attending Dalry Primary continue to benefit from a curriculum design which supports their rural location and the skills and attributes to meet their individual needs and rural context.

Dalry Primary School sits within the Dalry Secondary School campus. The campus also incorporates its own Early Learning and Childcare setting (ELC). The ELC and primary are overseen by their own partnership Headteacher of Dalry and Kells Primary schools, and the secondary is overseen by a partnership Headteacher of Castle Douglas High School and Dalry Secondary School, supported by a leadership team of Depute Headteachers, Principal Teachers and School Support Manager. Campus schools like Dalry are recognised as supporting highly effective transitions at every stage of a young person's educational journey. They are well placed to ensure pace, challenge and progression through a consistent, well-planned curriculum and approach to learning and teaching. The cross-sectoral working supports the learning of all young people, and the curriculum is responsive to their geographical, cultural and social contexts.

Pupils from Carsphairn Primary who are currently attending Dalry Primary are benefitting from learning with and alongside a greater number of peers of the same age and stage as themselves. These larger numbers allow pupils to benefit from increased friendship groups and to develop their social skills through building relationships. These relationships help them to become 'Confident Individuals' and Responsible Citizens' by allowing them to overcome the challenges and exercise responsibilities as a member of a larger social group, within a supportive educational environment. They can work as part of a team, take part in team activities, exercise their responsibilities and have their voice heard on a range of school-based committees. The establishment of a larger friendship group can also support their transition to secondary school.

8.1 Learning and Teaching

The following focuses on learning and teaching and the curriculum at Dalry Primary School. Children from Carsphairn Primary School catchment area currently attend this school, as well as other schools in the Stewartry area through parental choice.

Children who have previously attended Carsphairn Primary now attend Dalry Primary. Dalry Primary School would be the future receiving school for pupils currently living within the Carsphairn Primary catchment area.

The curriculum at Dalry Primary School is being developed to include a broad range of planned experiences that allow all young people to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

In Dalry Primary School children will be encouraged to lead their learning and be active participants who are highly motivated, enthusiastic and engaged in their learning and the life of the school. The views of young people will be actively sought and acted upon. Pupils will play a genuine part in school improvement and change. Learning is being planned within the four contexts of learning – curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary learning, the ethos and life of the school and opportunities for personal achievement. This planning will support young people to achieve their full potential, whilst providing them with a wide range of experiences and opportunities.

In Dalry Primary School pupils are divided into two multi-composite classes where children are with peers from more than one year group. Within this school, children will benefit from being part of a social context in which they can build relationships, develop resilience and skills for life, learning and work. They will be able to collaborate with peers in a variety of situations and learning activities, which will allow them to exercise responsibility. They will be provided with opportunities to work as part of a team and to represent their school at local, regional and national events.

The National Improvement Framework for Scottish education sets out the expectation and priorities for the education system to raise attainment for all and to close the attainment gap between the most and least advantaged children. Schools must deliver this improvement within the principles and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence, a curriculum for Scotland.

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence acknowledge the unique contexts in which all our schools sit and allows Headteachers and their teams the flexibility to design a coherent curriculum that meets the needs of their learners and communities. Headteachers and their teams are empowered to exercise their professionalism and autonomy to create an innovative curriculum within the broader guidance of CfE. The Headteacher of Dalry Primary School supports their staff through an annual Professional Review and Development process. This in turn leads into professional development opportunities which support effective school improvement and pupil outcomes. The Dalry and Kells partnership school teams work together to support and challenge their professional thinking. Dalry Primary School sits within the Dalry Secondary cluster, alongside Kells Primary School. These cluster arrangements provide an opportunity for staff to plan and work together on improvement priorities with stage partners, across stages and indeed sectors. They support effective moderation and will ultimately positively affect

learning and teaching, effective transitions, pupil progression pathways and positive, sustained destinations.

Dalry and Kells Primary Schools have achieved their bronze Rights Respecting Schools accreditation and are working towards their silver. They have committed to a Children's Rights based approach and engaged all stakeholders in planning what this will look like within their contexts. The focus of bronze is to develop children's understanding of their rights and to plan the journey towards silver accreditation. Dalry Primary has made significant and sustained school improvement a key aim this session. The aim of which is to ensure that staff and pupils will feel empowered to shape sustained change and improvement in their school. The use of digital technologies permeates the school's improvement priorities. The aim of which is to ensure that all staff have an enhanced understanding of pedagogy and learning theories in relation to digital technology and digital skills. These practices will support learners to become digital literate and equipped to face the challenges of the 21st Century.

Dalry Primary School is developing their curriculum to include outdoor learning and learning through play. They are engaging with Local Authority Principal Teachers of Play to incorporate play as a tool to support their pupil's cognitive development and help them to gain a better understanding of concepts which enhance their wider development. Through the developing programme of outdoor learning the school is planning to enhance their pupil's health and wellbeing, wider achievements and personal developments. Outdoor learning will allow their pupils to make connections across the curriculum and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in meaningful contexts. Using the outdoors as a stimulus provides opportunities for critical thinking, enquiry, challenge and reflection as well as boosting self-esteem, self-confidence and respect for each other and the natural environment.

Dalry Primary School is situated in the village of St John's Town of Dalry and is classed as a remote rural school. The school currently has an Acting Headteacher with the aim of appointing a new Headteacher as soon as possible this session. The Acting Headteacher is engaging with parents, carers and community partners to develop a robust understanding of their context. The school is well supported by dedicated Quality Improvement Officers who work closely with the Acting Headteacher to deliver improvement priorities.

Dalry Secondary School campus, of which the primary is part, incorporates its own Early Learning and Childcare setting. This allows for close working between school staff and ELCC practitioners as well as effective transitions. Primary 7 pupils from Dalry Primary transition into the secondary which is situated within the same building, or to the partnership secondary school, Castle Douglas High School. As Dalry Secondary School and Castle Douglas High School have the same Headteacher, opportunities for transition and partnership working are enhanced.

8.2 Educational Outcomes

Teachers at Dalry Primary School will plan, assess and track pupil progress in order to ensure that every child has the challenge, support and opportunity to reach their full potential. Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is a key priority for the whole staff team. Professional discussions, classroom observations, peer collaboration, learning conversations, moderation and careful tracking of attainment progress as well as wellbeing and wider achievement ensures appropriate interventions and support will be harnessed when a child needs it. This support, alongside close working with parents and carers, will help to ensure the needs of every young person are met.

The number of pupils at each stage in Dalry Primary School is relatively low. With small numbers the attainment picture can be variable year on year, with attainment at regional and national averages in some measures at some stages. Quality Improvement Officers are supporting the school to improve attainment for all pupils.

Rights Respecting Schools and Nurture are a key focus at Dalry Primary school. This focused approach will support the development of positive relationships across the whole school community. The larger number of staff and parent/carer body, alongside a greater number of community partners and local authority support, naturally gives the school an increased breadth of talent, interests and opportunities to harness and share within each school. This applies across the school in terms of the wider curriculum opportunities that will be afforded to young people, as well as the enhancement by staff individual expertise.

8.3 Experiences – Broadening the Range of Opportunities

Children at Dalry Primary School will be afforded a wide range of planned activities and experiences which will allow them to develop their knowledge, skills, understanding and attributes. These in turn, will support their physical, social and emotional wellbeing for both now and in the future. This, combined with strong community links, allows young people to develop skills for learning life and work and supports positive learning pathways.

Sitting within a campus setting affords Dalry Primary pupils a relatively unique opportunity when it comes transitions. Work will be carefully planned across all sectors in order to ensure smooth curricular and pastoral transition. The Dalry and Kells partnership Primary Schools feed into Dalry Secondary School. Cluster working will afford opportunities for clear transition planning and events, which in turn will provide further opportunities for pupils to make new connections and to ensure appropriate support at each step of their educational journey.

Across Dalry school, children are becoming successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. They will be engaged in their learning and supported to contribute well during lessons and wider school activities. Positive relationships at all levels are being developed within the ethos of

the school. Children generally enjoy good relationships with their peers and feel supported when things are not going as well.

8.4 Environment for Learning

Dalry Primary School and nursery is situated in the village of St John's Town of Dalry. The school is co-located with Dalry Secondary. Children attending Dalry Primary School and Nursery from the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment area can maintain links with children who live in their own village and surrounding area, as well as creating friendships across the wider Dalry Primary School and Nursery catchment area. These relationships can extend beyond the school day to activities and clubs taking place in the wider Stewartry area and beyond. The positive relationships developed supports and enhances experiences and learning in school.

To summarise, were the closure of Carsphairn Primary School to be implemented, there would be a range of educational benefits for pupils, as identified in the paragraph above. These benefits would range from the children receiving a more diverse curriculum and wider range of high- quality learning experiences, to the development of self-management, social intelligence and innovation skills. The learning environment at Dalry Primary School would also offer pupils the opportunity to experience the broader life of the school, through a wider range of committees and community links, to be involved in project based and interdisciplinary learning within and across stages, as well as wider opportunities for personal achievement and involvement.

8.5 Assessment of likely educational benefits on other users of the school's facilities - Implications for staff

Should this proposal be implemented, there will be no new implications for teaching and ancillary staff at Dalry Primary School.

Should this proposal be implemented Dumfries and Galloway Council does not envisage any adverse effects from the proposal in respect of staffing. Should any arise, these would be dealt with in line with Council policy.

The benefits for staff from Carsphairn Primary School would be the inclusion as part of a larger team. They would have colleagues to work alongside share professional ideas, support and challenge. Effective collaboration of staff can support moderation, better meet pupil needs, enhance professional development and improve learning and teaching. Staff can feel more supported when they are working as part of a larger team and professional learning community.

8.6 Implications for Early Learning and Childcare

Carsphairn Primary School had ELC provision within the school. Pre-five children currently attend other local authority and private providers across the local authority. Dalry Primary School does have an ELC which pupils from the Carsphairn catchment area can attend if they wish. Therefore, there would be no change to the current arrangements for pre-five children across the Carsphairn catchment area in relation to ELC provision.

8.7 Educational benefits for any future children who would be likely to enrol at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery (but for implementation).

Children who may live in the Carsphairn Primary School catchment area in the future will benefit from the wide range of educational experiences and opportunities outlined above.

Through the proposal the roll of Dalry Primary School is likely to remain consistent as detailed in Section 4.3 Figure 8, depending on parental choice of receiving school. This would be particularly beneficial for Dalry Primary, as it would extend the peer group for all pupils both now and in the future. This in turn would support a wider range of social interactions, extra-curricular activities, clubs and committees.

Pupils who would have otherwise attended Carsphairn Primary School, would benefit from the improved educational experience as outlined above. They would also benefit from daily interactions with a large number of peers and wider range of shared experiences and opportunities for friendships. This in turn will support a successful transition into secondary education and provide greater opportunity to develop and sustain friendships.

8.8 Educational benefits likely for pupils in any other school in the Local Authority.

The current mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery has an indirect positive effect on pupils across Dumfries and Galloway. The reduction in running costs of the school effectively means a saving to Dumfries and Galloway Council. If Carsphairn Primary School were to close, the current mothballing costs would be redirected back into Dumfries and Galloway Council. As a result, they would indirectly benefit the wider pupil body across Dumfries and Galloway.

There would be no other significant impacts, positive or negative, from this proposal on pupils with the local authority who attend other schools.

8.9 Placing Requests

In line with the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, the proposal for the closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery would not affect the rights of parents and

carers to request that their child attend a school of their choice, rather than the designated school in whose catchment area the family lives.

8.10 Consideration of how to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the implementation of this proposal

Throughout the previous consultation process the main concern arising from parents and carers was the distance pupils from Carsphairn Primary catchment area would have to travel to attend school, with the greatest increase in travel distance for those pupils living in Carsphairn Village or to the North West. The travel distance from Carsphairn Primary School to Dalry Primary School is 9.4 miles via the A713. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes (Source: Google Maps). Children who previously attended Carsphairn Primary School prior to 2019 have been travelling this distance and families have not expressed any adverse effects. Funded school transport would continue to be provided for primary aged pupils should this proposal be implemented.

School transport is not available to nursery aged children. There is currently one child in the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment area under primary school age.

8.11 Educational benefits statement summary

The ability of pupils from Carsphairn Primary School attending Dalry Primary School as a consequence of this proposal, to participate in a wider range of educational experiences and opportunities is of significant educational benefit. The broader, more diverse pupil body would allow for greater social and emotional development and opportunities to develop friendships.

The educational benefits of children attending Dalry Primary School and Nursery from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery are numerous and wide ranging. The main negative effect identified was the children having to travel by car, taxi or bus to school. However, due to the rural nature of Carsphairn Primary catchment area, many of the children had to travel to and from school by car prior to mothballing. It is therefore considered that the positive impacts of this proposal outweigh the negative aspect of travel.

9.0 Community Impact

Community engagement during the pre-consultation phase revealed that most stakeholders supported repurposing the school building for alternative community uses. Although some concerns were raised about the broader implications of losing a rural school, the feedback also reflected a pragmatic understanding of the challenges facing small schools with declining rolls.

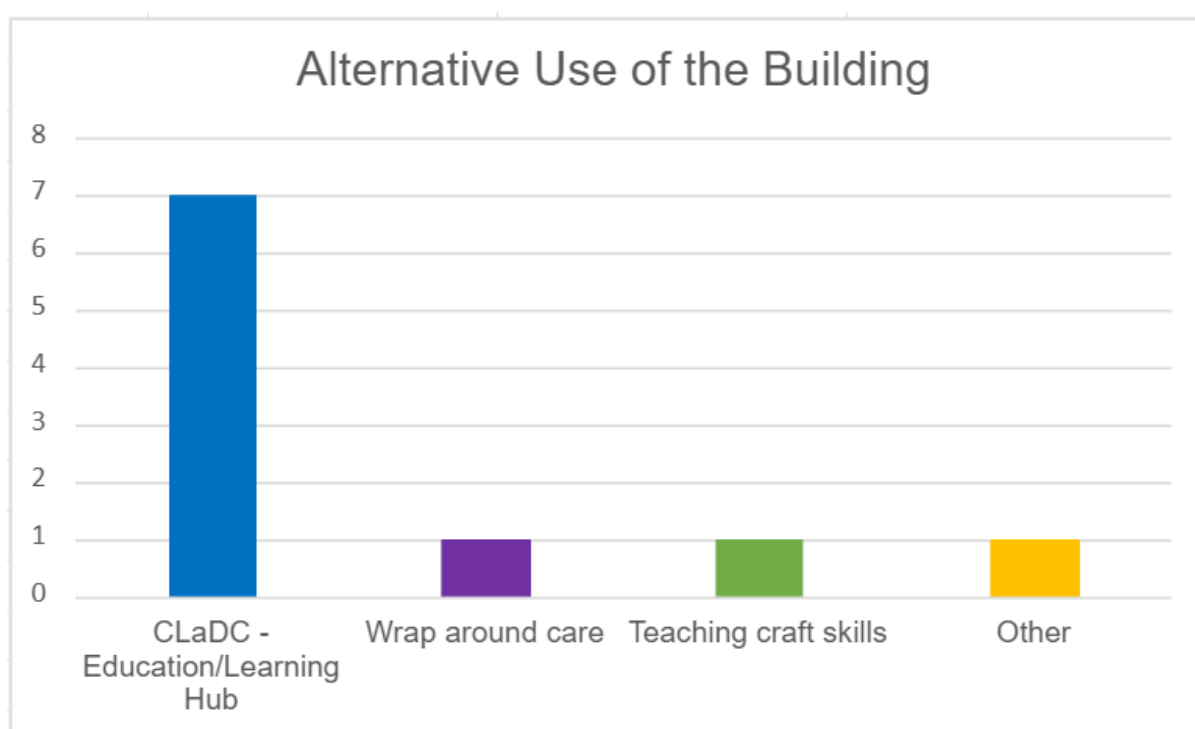
On 16 April 2025 Dumfries and Galloway Council received a formal request from Carsphairn Community Council on behalf of the wider community to respectfully request the formal closure process for Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery at the earliest appropriate opportunity. A newly established group The Carsphairn Learning and Development Committee (CLaDC) is interested in taking ownership through the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process to ensure the building does not fall into disrepair and is instead brought back into use for the benefit of the community. A community-wide survey conducted in April 2025 by CLaDC reported near unanimous support for the proposal to formally close the school, enabling future community use of the premises.

As part of the pre-engagement survey, respondents were asked on their thoughts around the potential future use of the building. A breakdown of how stakeholders responded to the proposed alternatives is listed below:

Question: If a decision was taken to close Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery, do you have any suggestions on the future of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery, including potential alternative uses for the building?

The respondents to this question, suggested a range of alternative uses as can be seen below –

Figure 9



The suggestions detailed would require the formal closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery through the statutory consultation to allow the building to be repurposed.

It is accepted that a school closure may have an adverse effect on a community, however within the village of Carsphairn is Lagwyne Hall which is used for community events and activities. This hall refurbishment works completed in 2015, it is well equipped and is provides a focus for the community, the facilities meet the needs of the community. The closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery would not have a negative impact on the community in terms of its capacity to meet, plan, collaborate and implement initiatives and activities meeting the needs to the benefit of the immediate and wider communities.

In rural communities, the challenges and opportunities are largely defined by the local area and can often best be met by community-led response. Strong community leadership is vital to articulating local priorities and driving forward change and growth. Lagwyne Hall is a prime example of what can be achieved to meet the needs of the local and wider communities with the potential to develop this offering through the aspirations of the CLaDC.

It is therefore considered that formal closure of this school could have a neutral impact on the wider community, with the Village Hall remaining as the focus for community events. The potential for the repurposing of the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery property and site may have a positive impact given the short, medium and long term aspirations of the CLaDC.

10.0 The likely effect caused by any different travel arrangements

Distance between Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and surrounding schools sourced from Google Maps are listed below:

Dalry Primary School and Nursery	9.3 miles
Moniaive Primary School	15.5 miles

It is important to note that the geography of the catchment area means that travel distances/times will be different for all pupils, which is why the information listed above is from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery to surrounding schools. A pupil in the North of the catchment area for example will have a longer journey time than those listed above but may choose to attend Dalmellington Primary School which is located in the neighbouring authority of East Ayrshire.

Implementation of the proposal to close Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery would have no effect on the current travel arrangements on staff and pupils that have been in place since mothballing of the school, or the environmental impact of travel. However, as noted in Section 3.0 above, five of the current Carsphairn Primary School catchment children in attendance at Dalry Primary School live within a mile radius of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. It is noted and acknowledged that the mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery has led to increased use of school transport and increased journey times for pupils particularly for those children living closest to Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery, specifically in the village and to the North West. Primary and Secondary pupils access the same two

buses from the Carsphairn catchment area, with a small number of parents paid to transport their children to agreed pick up locations.

There is no additional cost to Dumfries and Galloway Council for providing transport to for Carsphairn Primary School catchment pupils to Dalry Primary School as this transport operates for secondary aged pupils attending Dalry Secondary School.

11.0 Financial Impact

In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010: technical guide and financial template, a comprehensive financial analysis is provided in Appendix 1. This information gives details on the estimated cost if Carsphairn Primary School was still an occupied and operational establishment, the figures are taken from financial year 2018/19 as this was the last full year the school was fully occupied. As Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is currently mothballed, the cost for the mothballing is at £1,405 per year. Should the school be reopened, occupied and operational, the running costs per year are estimated at £90,790 (based on 2018/19 costs), this equates to £30,263 per pupil per year based on the school roll of three (census roll academic year 2018/19). Cost are likely to be in excess of figures from financial year 2018/19 to the current financial year due to increase in material costs and pay settlements for staff over the intervening years. The figures detailed do not include the staffing and operational costs of running the nursery at Carsphairn Primary School as the nursery has not operated since August 2012.

Column 2 of Table 1 at Appendix 1 shows the projected annual running costs of Carsphairn Primary School (based on previous financial year 2023/24) whilst Column 3 shows the additional impact on Dalry Primary School as the receiving school. The annual recurring savings (or costs) are shown in Column 4.

The capital one-off cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open Carsphairn Primary School would be approximately £191,000.00. The registration of the nursery would need to be in line with the requirements of the Care Inspectorate, it is likely that the space previously used would not meet the requirements of 1140hrs provision of early learning and childcare (ELC), therefore would likely require significant capital investment.

Table 1, School Costs. There are no figures included for column 3 as the receiving school does not require additional staffing to accommodate the additional pupils from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. Since Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery have been mothballed, staff were redeployed as per Dumfries and Galloway Council's policies and included as part of the annual staffing exercise.

Table 1, Building Costs. There are no figures included for column 3 as the receiving school does not require additional requirement to accommodate the additional pupils from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery.

Table 1, Transport Costs. The value against the annual cost in column 2 for home to school transport is associated with the two pupils at the school at the time of

mothballing. The pupils were both P7 and moved to S1 in Dalry secondary the following academic year.

There are currently two buses run by Dumfries and Galloway Council that transport secondary and primary school pupils from the Carsphairn Primary School catchment area, operating on the A713 and B700, these buses would likely be operational without the inclusion of primary aged children, therefore the costs of the buses cannot be disaggregated for solely the use of primary aged pupils. For academic year 2024/25 a total of £6,173.10 is paid to three families to transport their children to the school bus pick up point.

Table 3 in Appendix 3 details the annual running costs during mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and these are £1,405 per year, which would constitute an immediate saving on closure. If the school were to be formally closed, this would allow Dumfries and Galloway Council to take steps towards selling the school to a third party or transferring ownership to the local community.

Table 5 in Appendix 3 details the impact on Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE). As detailed in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010: technical guide and financial template, there are four GAE lines that can be impacted as a result of school closure. With specific regard to Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery there would be no impact on GAE if the proposal as detailed in this paper was adopted.

The financial impact of closing Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery has been assessed across key areas including operational costs, staffing, transport, and funding. Analysis of 2018/19 data highlights high per-pupil costs and a declining school roll, indicating that re-opening the school is not financially sustainable. The expected annual recurring saving is £84,447, with minimal mothballing costs and potential for future asset disposal. Overall, the proposal supports a cost-effective and sustainable approach in line with Dumfries and Galloway Council policy.

12.0 Impact Assessment

Dumfries and Galloway Council will undertake an impact assessment and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) during the consultation process in respect of this proposal, to ensure that due regard is given to whether the decisions we make are likely to impact on different groups of people across the region. The result of the impact assessment should highlight any barriers or discrimination that might affect the communities of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery, ensuring we meet our statutory duties under the Equality Act including the Fairer Scotland Duty.

13.0 Preliminary Requirements

Prior to formulating a rural school closure proposal under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended, the Education Authority must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the 2010 Act. Dumfries and Galloway Council has previously identified its reasons for formulating a possible

proposal, has considered whether there were any reasonable alternatives to the possible proposal as a response to those reasons, and has assessed each of the options in accordance with Section 12A(2)(c) of the 2010 Act. After considering a paper addressing these preliminary requirements, on 1 July 2025 Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee agreed to the commencement of the Statutory Consultation process for the closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

No decision will be taken by Dumfries and Galloway Council on the proposal contained in this paper until after the end of the consultation period. Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee will then receive a report on the consultation and will reach a view on the proposal.

14.0 Consultees

A summary of this document will be issued free of charge to all of the consultees listed at page 3 of this document and it will also be published on Dumfries and Galloway Council's website: www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations

15.0 Consultation Period

As part of a consultation process, the Education Authority must publish the proposal paper, advertise it and notify Education Scotland and all of the relevant consultees as prescribed by Schedule 2 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act, inviting them to make representations on the proposal. The consultation period will run from 3 September 2025 until 5pm on 29 October 2025, which includes at least 30 school days.

16.0 Public Meeting

A public meeting will be held on Tuesday 16 September 2025 at 6pm in Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting and participate is welcome to do so. The meeting will be convened by the Education and Learning Directorate and Officers will present reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions to be asked and comments to be made. A note will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.

17.0 Responses to the Proposal

Representations may be made on the following;

- the proposal;
- alternatives to the proposal as listed above; and
- suggestions of other alternatives.

Dumfries and Galloway Council will consider all representations and these should be received no later than 5pm on Wednesday 29 October 2025 by one of the methods detailed below;

Online Survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/RMF7fts8q>



Letter to: Statutory Consultation – Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery
Dumfries and Galloway Council
Militia House
109/111 English Street
DG1 2HR

Email to: statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk

Respondents are required to clearly state the capacity in which they are expressing their views and agree to their name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report (all other personal information will be redacted).

18.0 Meetings with Pupils

Quality Improvement Officers alongside school staff will arrange to discuss proposals with pupils (who are considered to be of a suitable age and maturity) in the affected schools. A record of questions, responses and views will be taken, and this will be published in the Consultation Report. Staff are welcome to respond through the consultation process.

19.0 Involvement of Education Scotland (HMle)

Following the close of the consultation, Dumfries and Galloway Council will provide Education Scotland with copies of the written representations submitted, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting and any other relevant documentation. This will allow Education Scotland to prepare a report on the proposal within a period of three weeks.

20.0 Consultation Report and Time for Further Consideration

After receiving Education Scotland's report, Dumfries and Galloway Council will then prepare and publish a Consultation Report in accordance with Sections 9, 10 and 13 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. Dumfries and Galloway Council Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee on 17 February 2026 will thereafter make its final decision on whether to implement the proposal. The decision will be made a minimum of three weeks after publication of the Consultation Report. If Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee makes a closure decision, Dumfries and Galloway Council shall notify the Scottish Ministers within six working days of that decision and publish the fact that the Scottish Ministers have been notified, and that representations can be made to them. The Education Authority would also be required to publish a notice on its website of the decision to implement the proposal and why it has been satisfied that closure is the most appropriate response to the reasons for formulating the proposal.

21.0 Explanation of Approach

The Proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (S.1 of the Education Act 1980); and to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education in schools that are managed by them (S.3 of The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).

22.0 Designation of Rural Schools

Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is a rural school within the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended (the school is classed as "remote rural") and Dumfries and Galloway Council has had regard to the provisions of the Act, in particular the special regard required for rural school closures. Dumfries and Galloway Council has considered the school roll and projections for Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery (see Section 4.2 and 4.3); has given detailed consideration to the viable alternatives to closure (Sections 3.0 and 3.1); to the effect of closure on the community (Section 9.0); and to the impact of travel arrangements on children who are not yet of school age but who live in the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment (Section 10.0). At present the pupils who live within the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment attend Dalry Primary School, Kells Primary School and Penninghame Primary School.

23.0 Call-in of Closure Proposal and Determination of Case

The Scottish Ministers will have a maximum of eight weeks to call in any closure decision made by Dumfries and Galloway Council in certain circumstances. This eight week timeframe would consist of an initial three weeks from the date of decision, during which representations can be made to the ministers, and a further five weeks for the Scottish Ministers to decide whether to issue a call in notice. During this period the Education Authority will not proceed to implement any closure decision.

If the Scottish Ministers call in a closure proposal, it is referred to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels. The Convener must constitute a School Closure Review Panel within seven days for determination. The Education Authority may not implement a closure decision in whole or in part until the Panel has made its determination. It will usually issue a decision within eight weeks of the Panel being constituted.

If the School Closure Review Panel refuses to consent to the closure decision, or following publication of the Consultation Report Dumfries and Galloway Council decides not to implement the closure proposal, a further closure proposal cannot be published in relation to the school for five years, unless there is a significant change in the school's circumstances.

24.0 Grounds for Call-In etc

The Scottish Ministers may issue a call-in notice where it appears to the Scottish Ministers that Dumfries and Galloway Council may have failed;

- (a) in a significant regard to comply with the requirements imposed on it by (or under) the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended so far as they are relevant in relation to the closure proposal, or
- (b) to take proper account of a material consideration relevant to its decision to implement the proposal.

25.0 Conclusion

It is proposed that education provision at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery be discontinued with effect from 27 April 2026. The catchment area of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery shall be re-aligned to Dalry Primary School and Nursery.

It has been assessed that the proposal is the most appropriate means of addressing the underlying reasons for formulating it, which are:

- Carsphairn Community Council have requested that Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is formally closed in order to facilitate a CAT (community asset transfer).
- Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery has been formally mothballed since August 2019. The number of children living in the catchment area is not predicted to rise in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18.2% fall in the 0-15 age group over the next 10 years.
- Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment.

Other Considerations

- The education benefits as set out in Section 8 to current and future primary aged children within the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment area.
- Councils have a statutory duty, introduced in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003, to make arrangements to secure Best Value.
- On 10 December 2024, Elected Members approved the 10 School Model Principles to be used as a basis for a sustainable School Estate. Applying these Principles will help ensure 'best-value' and sustainable settings, resulting in an improved learning environment for all our children and young people, whilst considering the needs and wishes of people and communities. These Principles are detailed in the Preliminary Requirements document at Appendix 3
- Dumfries and Galloway Council currently has in excess of 4,546 (32%) spaces within its current primary school estate. It must be acknowledge that the costs-per-pupil in under-occupied schools are excessively high and that underutilised schools are expensive to maintain and operate. The current condition, suitability and over capacity is unsustainable and can only be improved by reducing the school estate.

Financial Template - Actual costs last full year before mothballing

Table 1	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Row 1	Current revenue costs for school proposed for closure			
		Costs for full financial year (projected annual costs) when school was open.	Additional financial impact on receiving school - Dalry Primary School	Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)
Row 2	Name of School			
Row 3	Carsphairn Primary School			
Row 4	School costs			
Row 5	Employee costs - note 1			
Row 6	teaching staff	61482	0	61482
Row 7	support staff	5277	0	5277
Row 8	teaching staff training (CPD etc)	0	0	0
Row 9	support staff training	0	0	0
Row 10	Supply costs - note 2	828	0	828
Row 11	Building costs:			
Row 12	property insurance	284	0	284
Row 13	non domestic rates	0	0	0
Row 14	water & sewerage charges	615	0	615
Row 15	energy costs	3265	0	3265
Row 16	cleaning (contract or inhouse)	5775	0	5775
Row 17	building repair & maintenance	1196	0	1196
Row 18	grounds maintenance	463	0	463
Row 19	facilities management costs - note 6	35	0	35
Row 20	revenue costs arising from capital	0	0	0
Row 21	other	453	0	453
Row 22				
Row 23	School operational costs:			
Row 24	learning materials	988	170	818
Row 25	catering (contract or inhouse)	3230	0	3230
Row 26	SQA costs	0	0	0
Row 27	other school operational costs (e.g. licences)	257	0	257
Row 28				
Row 29	Transport costs: note 3			
Row 30	home to school	6642	6173	469
Row 31	other pupil transport costs	0	0	0
Row 32	staff travel	0	0	0
Row 33	SCHOOL COSTS SUB-TOTAL	90790	6343	84447
Row 34				
Row 35	Income:			
Row 36	Sale of meals	0	0	0
Row 37	Lets	0	0	0
Row 38	External care provider	0	0	0
Row 39	Other	0	0	0
Row 40	SCHOOL INCOME SUB-TOTAL	0	0	0
Row 41				
Row 42	TOTAL COSTS MINUS INCOME FOR SCHOOL	90790	6343	84447
Row 43				
Row 44	UNIT COST PER PUPIL PER YEAR	30263		

Appendix 1 - Financial Template

Table 2	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7
Capital costs		School proposed for closure	Receiving school
Capital Life Cycle cost - note 7			
Third party contributions to capital costs			

Table 3	Annual Property costs incurred (moth-balling) until disposal
property insurance	284
non domestic rates	0
water & sewerage charges	334
energy costs	202
cleaning (contract or inhouse)	0
security costs	0
building repair & maintenance	172
grounds maintenance	0
facilities management costs	0
other - waste	413
TOTAL ANNUAL COST UNTIL DISPOSAL	1405

Table 4	Non-recurring revenue costs
	0
TOTAL NON-RECURRING REVENUE COSTS	0

Table 5	Impact on GAE - note 5
No Impact	0
GAE IMPACT	0

Notes

1. The total costs incurred for teaching staff (row 5) and support staff (row 6) are required to be included. Column 2 should include the current costs for a full financial year for the school proposed for closure, and column 3 should include the *additional* cost to the receiving school as a result of staff transferring.

For teaching staff, this should include regular teachers, itinerant teachers, learning support teaching staff and special education (ASN) staff.

Itinerant teaching staff includes central support services such as English as additional language support, hearing, visually impaired services, educational psychology services.

For support staff, this should include classroom assistants, administration staff and janitorial staff.

For all staff the costs entered should include salary, NI and pension costs.

If the school proposed for closure has less than 3 staff members, then the cumulative staff costs only should be given in row 5 (for both teaching and support staff), so as to avoid possible disclosure of individual salaries.

Training costs should be identified separately in rows 7 and 8.

2. Supply costs to cover teaching and support staff. This may be held in a central budget, be devolved or shared across the budgets.

3. 'Home to school' pupil transport costs should include those school transport costs incurred in accordance with Council policy. 'Other pupil transport costs' will cover costs incurred for the transport of pupils for activities such as swimming etc

4. Row 30 of column 3 should include the additional transport costs related to the increased home to school transport arrangements that are put in place in accordance with Council policy. This figure is therefore likely to be considerably higher than current costs.

5. This table is to capture the impact on the revenue support grant as a result of changes to GAE. Impact on GAE should consider the issues covered in the GAE section of the guidance document that accompany this template.

6. Facilities management costs will include costs related to caretaking, janitorial and security.

7. The capital costs for the receiving school should be taken across the life cycle of the school in line with the life expectancy of that school. The capital costs for the school proposed for closure should be taken across the same life cycle period.

Statutory Consultation – Carsphairn Primary
School and Nursery
Dumfries and Galloway Council
Militia House
109/111 English Street
DG1 2HR

2 September 2025

E-mail: statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk

Dear Consultee,

Review of Education Provision Notice and Summary of Proposal for closing Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and Nursery, Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is consulting on the proposal to close Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. This notice provides a summary of the proposal; it is a requirement for you to be notified of the consultation as a consultee, in accordance with Schedule 2 Section 1 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is conducting a public consultation from Wednesday 3 September to Wednesday 29 October 2025. This is the period in which you will be able to make representation to Dumfries and Galloway Council in respect of the proposal. It is important that everyone we are consulting with tells us about their thoughts on the proposal.

This summary provides further information on where a full copy of the proposal can be obtained and also advises as to how you can make representation.

The Proposal

Dumfries and Galloway Council is proposing, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process, to discontinue education provision at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery which is currently mothballed and realign its catchment area to Dalry Primary School and Nursery.

It is proposed that education provision at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery be discontinued with effect from 27 April 2026.

Reasons for this Proposal

This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposal which are;

- Carsphairn Community Council have requested that Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is formally closed in order to facilitate a CAT (community asset transfer).
- Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery has been formally mothballed since August 2019. The number of children living in the catchment area is not predicted to rise in the near future.
- Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18% fall in the 0-15 age group over the next 10 years.
- Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment.

Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028

Councils, as an Education Authority, have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028, Education and Learning Directorate.

The Council will improve education and learning opportunities to help all our children, young people and citizens fulfil their potential. This starts with pre-school, then school, before progressing into further or higher education or transition into work. We will work with our partners to create and promote lifelong learning opportunities so everyone in the region can live a meaningful and fulfilling life and contribute to their community.

Strategic Outcomes:

- Places of learning are inclusive, sustainable and meet the needs of local communities
- We get it right for every child
- Children, young people and adults transition successfully through all life stages
- Young people and adults succeed in what they want to achieve
- Participation in creativity and play is part of early and lifelong learning experiences
- Local people can build their skills and confidence

Alternatives to the Proposal (Including the Proposal)

The proposal and alternatives to the proposal were considered as part of the preliminary requirement and are detailed below;

- a. Re-open Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery
- b. Continued mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery with the temporary catchment of Dalry Primary School and Nursery
- c. Closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and realign the catchment area to Dalry Primary School and Nursery

Representations may be made on the following;

- the proposal;
- alternatives to the proposal as listed above; and
- suggestions of other alternatives.

What we will do –

We will consult by:

- Providing a notice of the consultation and a summary of the proposal to the relevant consultees **this is that notice and summary**
- Placing an advert in the local press
- Putting information on our website - www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations
- Holding a public meeting to explain the proposal
- Ask all consultees to tell us what they think of the proposal

What to do now –

- Please read the full proposal document
- Please attend the public meeting which will be held on Tuesday 16 September 2025 at 6pm at Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn
- Let us know what you think by 5pm on Wednesday 29 October 2025 by:

Online Survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/RMF7fts8q>



Letter to: Statutory Consultation – Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery
Dumfries and Galloway Council
Militia House
109/111 English Street
DG1 2HR

Email to: statutoryconsultation@dumgal.gov.uk

Respondents are required to clearly state the capacity in which they are expressing their views and agree to their name and any statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report (all other personal information will be redacted).

What Next?

Dumfries and Galloway Council is seeking your views on the proposal during the consultation period, it does not assume that the proposal will go ahead. All points raised during the consultation period will be included in the final consultation paper before being presented to Elected Members at Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee on 17 February 2026 where a decision will be taken as to the outcome of this process.

If the proposal goes ahead, any children current and future from the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment area would be educated at Dalry Primary School and Nursery.

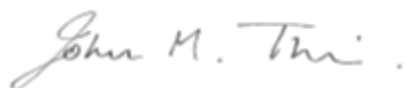
Please note that this summary document is for convenience only. Copies of the Proposal Paper can be obtained from:

- Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn
- DG Customer Services – Dalry
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Headquarters

And published on Dumfries and Galloway Council website:

www.dumgal.gov.uk/consultations

Yours faithfully



John Thin
Head of Education Resources

Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery – Phase One – Preliminary Requirement

1.0 Introduction

Dumfries and Galloway Council are committed to giving all local children and young people an equal chance to fulfil their potential. Our ambition is to be a successful region, with a growing economy, based on fairness, opportunity and quality public services, where all citizens prosper. For our children and young people, raising attainment in schools is key to who they may become and how they will contribute to society. This will require a sustainable school estate that works for everyone and is able to provide 'best-value' to the public.

The Dumfries and Galloway Learning Estate Strategy was agreed by the Education and Learning Committee on 26 January 2023. The Learning Estate Strategy (LES) sets out a holistic, long-term view to ensure all schools are well designed, well maintained and well managed and most importantly that this view is shared between all stakeholders and decision makers.

On 30 November 2023, Elected Members approved the 10 School Model Principles listed below to be used as a basis for a sustainable School Estate. Applying these Principles will help ensure 'best-value' and sustainable settings, resulting in an improved learning environment for all our children and young people, whilst considering the needs and wishes of people and communities.

To meet current and future demand, we must continue to transform services, reduce spend in unsustainable areas and be prepared to think differently about how services are delivered to make the most effective use of resources. The School Model Principles were generated from public consultation and are weighted, with the priority for review starting at the top of the list, and are listed below:

School Estate Principles

1. Pupils should be educated in facilities which are rated at least category B for each of Condition and Suitability.
2. Primary pupils should not ordinarily be required to travel for longer than 30 minutes from the nearest classified road pick-up point to school.
3. Secondary pupils should not ordinarily be required to travel for longer than 45 minutes from the nearest classified road pick-up point to school.
4. To enhance high quality social and educational experiences, primary schools should ordinarily support 3 classes and have composite classes of no greater than 3-year groups.
5. To enhance high quality social and educational experiences, secondary schools should ordinarily support a 2-form entry (2 registration classes in S1).
6. Teachers should be members of a professional learning community comprising of at least 3 FTE members based at the same school.

7. Schools should have an occupancy rate where possible greater than 60% utilisation of the capacity of the school and ideally should be operating at 80% utilisation.
8. All schools should be adaptable to children, staff, and visitors with disabilities.
9. All schools should support community use where required in the local context.
10. All schools should have key facilities including a hall, dining area, staff room, school office and grass playing fields as appropriate to the size and scale of the school.

Maintaining the engagement of stakeholders and keeping them informed is an important part of successful change. The co-operation of a variety of stakeholders will be needed, and we know that good consultation means better outcomes, and the benefits of engaging with, consulting and involving stakeholders at this early stage helps to highlight expectations and identify all the options.

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended requires that educational benefits should be at the forefront of any proposal to make a significant change to schools. It specifies that the local authority must, for all consultations, prepare an Educational Benefits Statement and publish it within the proposal paper. Only through a close partnership with our schools and stakeholders can a proposal be produced that will benefit both current and future learners.

2.0 Reason for the Proposal

An authority that is formulating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended before starting to prepare its proposal paper.

[12A Preliminary requirements in relation to rural school closure

(1) This section applies where an education authority is formulating a closure proposal as respects a rural school.

(2) The authority must—

(a) identify its reasons for formulating the proposal,

(b) consider whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposal as a response to those reasons,

(c) assess, for the proposal and each of the alternatives to the proposal identified under paragraph (b) (if any)—

(i) the likely educational benefits in consequence of the implementation of the proposal, or as the case may be, alternative,

(ii) the likely effect on the local community (assessed in accordance with section 12(4)) in consequence of such implementation,

(iii) the likely effect that would be caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required (assessed in accordance with section 12(5)) in consequence of such implementation.

(3) For the purposes of this section and section 13, reasonable alternatives to the proposal include (but are not limited to) steps which would not result in the school or a stage of education in the school (within the meaning of paragraph 12 of schedule 1) being discontinued.

(4) The authority may not publish a proposal paper in relation to the proposal unless, having complied with subsection (2), it considers that implementation of the closure proposal would be the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal.

(5) In this section and section 13, the references to the reasons for the proposal are references to the reasons identified by the education authority under subsection (2)(a).]

In particular, it must identify the underlying reasons why the future of the School is being considered, which are as follows:

1. Carsphairn Community Council have requested that Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is formally closed in order to facilitate a CAT (community asset transfer).
2. Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery has been formally mothballed since August 2019. The number of children living in the catchment area is not predicted to rise in the near future.
3. Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18% fall in the 0-15 age group over the next 10 years.
4. Along with several other rural councils, Dumfries and Galloway Council is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff.
5. Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for repairs, maintenance and capital investment.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is therefore considering the future of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. The various options are explored within this paper.

3.0 Background

Following the mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery from August 2019 when the school roll fell to zero, a full statutory consultation in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 was undertaken, it commenced in September 2022. Members of Education and Learning Committee on Tuesday 28 March 2023, agreed to stop the closure process, this decision was following the statutory consultation process. The committee report presented to members stated;

“having reviewed the submissions, note of the public meetings and Education Scotland report; and having special regard to the alternatives to closure, to the community impact and to the impact of the travel arrangements;

concludes that the proposal offers significant educational benefits and officers are still of the view that on balance the evidence supports the closure of Carsphairn Primary School, however giving special regard to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and early stages of Carsphairn community's plans to deliver housing within the Carsphairn catchment area and their aspirations for growth, it is felt that it would also be appropriate to provide time for the community to further develop their regeneration plans and establish if there is any growth to pupil numbers within the catchment area, who would seek to enrol at Carsphairn Primary School, were it to reopen. It would be amiss of Dumfries and Galloway Council to not consider this information in its recommendation nor give the Carsphairn community the time and opportunity to demonstrate the viability and early-stage implementation of their plans."

Following the decision to stop the closure process to Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery on 28 March 2023, annual reviews took place in line with Section 64 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 – Statutory Guidance, initially as targeted surveys to parents but more recently through the following routes.

The following information was shared on social media, local newspaper articles and targeted through our GovDelivery email system to almost 12,000 individual email address. This information through our GovDelivery system was distributed on 27 December 2023 and 10 January 2024 for enrolment for academic year 2025/26.

Figure 1



Education and Learning

Dumfries & Galloway

EDUCATION SERVICES

Enrolment for Infant Beginners

Children in Scotland usually start school between the ages of 4 years 6 months and 5 years 6 months old. All children who are 4 years old at the start of the school year can defer and start primary one the following year. Parents are asked to attend their catchment school to request a place at either their catchment school or to request a place at a non-catchment school for their child(ren). Parents are required to bring along proof of address and the child's date of birth, between Monday 29 January 2024 and Friday 2 February 2024.

Details of catchment schools can be found on the Council's website (www.dumgal.gov.uk). Enrolment by the appropriate date is particularly important in light of the legislation regarding parents' choice of school to be attended.

Further information regarding the enrolment process can be obtained from your catchment primary school and on the Council's website.

Parents are reminded of their right to retain their child(ren) at home until the enrolment date following their fifth birthday.

Enrolments and transfers into Ae Primary School, Carsphairn Primary School, Hutton Primary School, Tundergarth Primary School and St Ninian's RC Primary School (all temporarily closed) are accepted at this time.

John Thin, Head of Education (Learning and Resources)

Further Information and School Catchments

At Education and Learning Committee on Thursday 14 March 2024, Members were informed that one pupil had enrolled at Carsphairn Primary School; it was agreed by Members to provide a further opportunity for children of primary school to enrol or transfer to Carsphairn Primary School. A further update was provided to members of Education and Learning Committee on Thursday 23 May 2024 following a second opportunity to enrol and transfer for academic year 2024/25. Members noted that six primary aged children had requested to enrol or transfer to Carsphairn Primary School.

For academic year 2025/26 information regarding enrolment and transfer into Carsphairn Primary School was targeted to families living in the catchment area, Carsphairn Community Council, Elected Members and ward officer on 9 December 2024 and 7 January 2025 through Dumfries and Galloway Council's GovDelivery service. The information shared was as follows:

Figure 2

Carsphairn Primary School – Enrolment (P1) and Transfer (P2-P7) for Academic Year 2025/26

Carsphairn Primary School is currently mothballed (temporarily closed). Dumfries and Galloway Council will be accepting enrolments and transfers for the school for academic year 2025/26 between the dates of **Monday 27 January and Friday 31 January 2025**.

If you are interested in enrolling your child(ren) for Primary 1, please complete the attached Enrolment Form and return to **Dalry Primary School** between the dates detailed above.

If you are interested in transferring your child(ren) (currently in Primary 1 to Primary 6) please complete the attached Transfer Form and return to your **current primary school** between the dates detailed above.

Families will be contacted directly regarding the outcome of their request following this enrolment/ transfer process.

Enrolment Form

Transfer Form

For support, please email - EnrolmentandTransfers@dumgal.gov.uk

On 16 April 2025 Dumfries and Galloway Council received a formal request from Carsphairn Community Council on behalf of the wider community to respectfully request the formal closure process for Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery at the earliest appropriate opportunity. A newly established group The Carsphairn Learning and Development Committee (CLaDC) is interested in taking ownership through the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process to ensure the building does not fall into disrepair and is instead brought back into use for the benefit of the community. A community-wide survey conducted in April 2025 by CLaDC reported near unanimous

support for the proposal to formally close the school, enabling future community use of the premises.

On 22 April 2025 Members of the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee were updated regarding the enrolment and transfer opportunity. Two transfer forms (Primary Two – Primary Seven) and one enrolment form (Primary One) were received for Carsphairn Primary School; the further mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery was noted by Members for academic year 2025/26.

All primary pupils enrolled at Dalry Primary School who reside in the Carsphairn Primary School catchment have had transport provided and this will continue for any family moving into the Carsphairn Primary School catchment area.

3.1 Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028

Councils, as an Education Authority, have a statutory duty in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across their entire area for the current school population and future pattern of demand. This is reflected in Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028, Education and Learning Directorate.

The Council will improve education and learning opportunities to help all our children, young people and citizens fulfil their potential. This starts with pre-school, then school, before progressing into further or higher education or transition into work. We will work with our partners to create and promote lifelong learning opportunities so everyone in the region can live a meaningful and fulfilling life, and contribute to their community.

Strategic Outcomes:

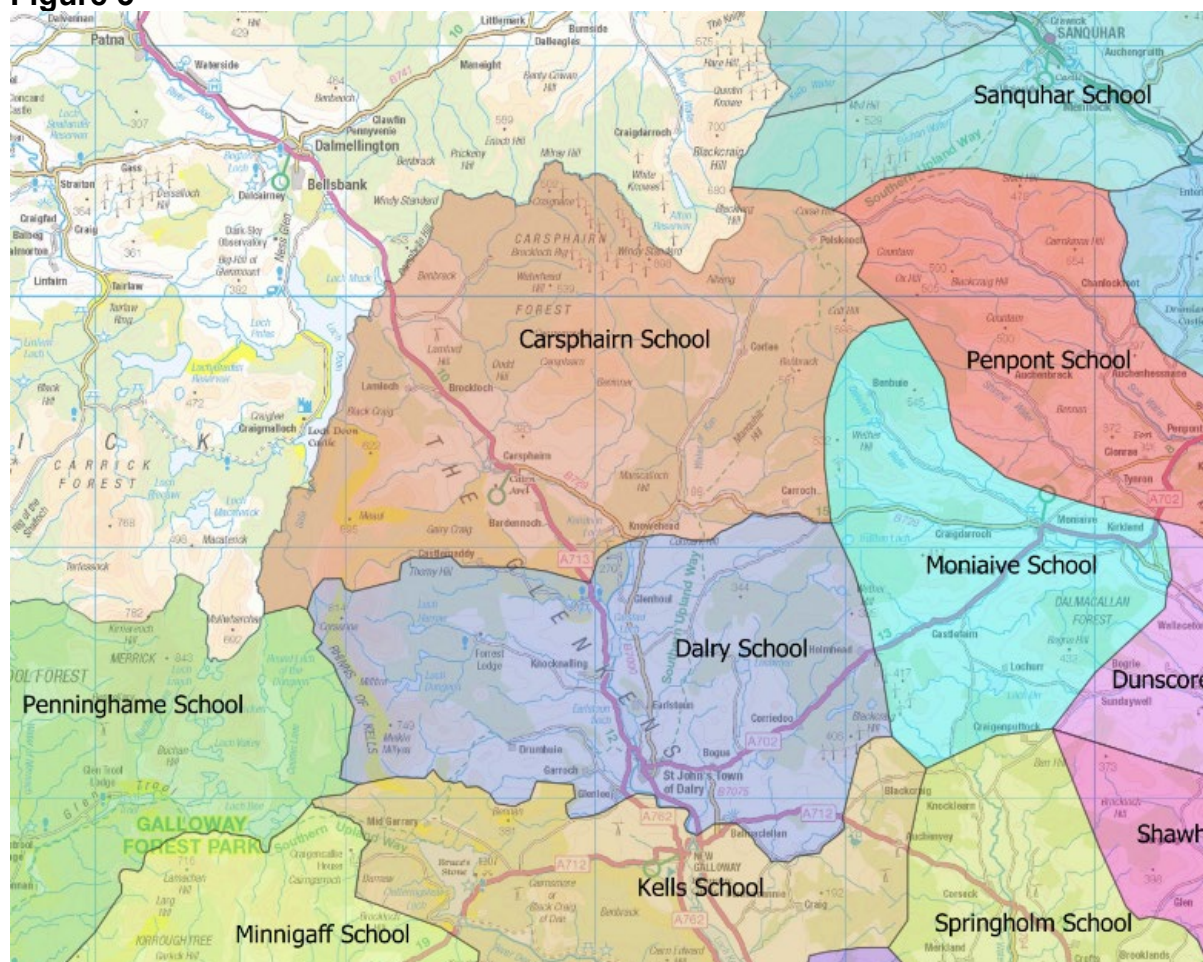
- Places of learning are inclusive, sustainable and meet the needs of local communities
- We get it right for every child
- Children, young people and adults transition successfully through all life stages
- Young people and adults succeed in what they want to achieve
- Participation in creativity and play is part of early and lifelong learning experiences
- Local people can build their skills and confidence

3.2 Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery

Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is classified as a being in a remote rural area, Scottish Government defines a remote rural area as – areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more. Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is located within the village of Carsphairn, approx. 9 miles from the village of St John's Town of Dalry and approx. 25 miles to the centre of Castle Douglas the nearest town.

Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment borders the catchment areas of Penninghame Primary School, Dalry Primary School, Moniaive Primary School, Penpont Primary School, Sanquhar Primary School and the neighbouring authority of East Ayrshire as detailed in Figure 3 below. The catchment area of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery covers a wide area.

Figure 3



Distance between Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and surrounding schools sourced from Google Maps are listed below:

Dalry Primary School and Nursery	9.3 miles
Moniaive Primary School	15.5 miles

It is important to note that the geography of the catchment area means that travel distances/times will be different for all pupils, which is why the information listed above is from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery to surrounding schools. A pupil in the North of the catchment area for example will have a longer journey time than those listed above but may choose to attend Dalmellington Primary School which is located in the neighbouring authority of East Ayrshire.

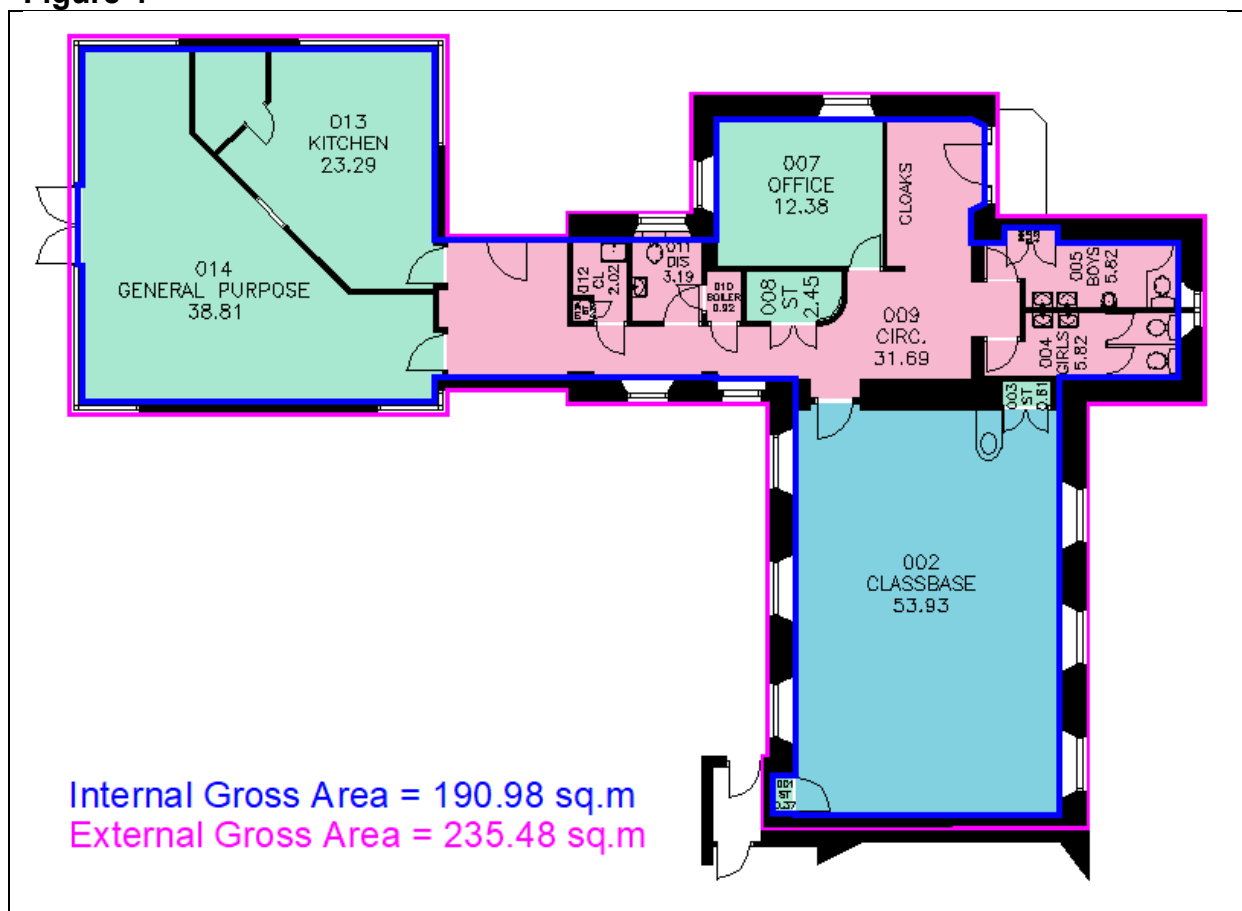
Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery site and school building are owned by Dumfries and Galloway Council. Confirmation of any title restrictions are currently

with legal services, there is no record of the building, or any part of the building being listed with Historic Environment Scotland.

The school has a capacity of 25 pupils. It is a single storey building, the accommodation comprises of entrance cloaks area, shared office and staffroom, classroom, general purpose room, kitchen and accessible toilet. Externally there is a playground to the rear of the building. The school is located on the main road in Carsphairn.

The school floorplan is shown below:

Figure 4



The school has a servery which provided meals that are prepared daily at nearby Dalry Secondary and Primary School and transported to the school.

Carsphairn Primary School delivered primary education from P1 to P7. The nursery when operational utilised the general-purpose space at the rear of the building. The current nearest nursery is Dalry Primary School Nursery.

Information relating to the Extent, Condition, Sufficiency and Suitability of the school estate is reported by Dumfries and Galloway Council to the Scottish Government on an annual basis, this is known as the Core Facts Return. Condition is concerned with the current state of the fabric of the school and with safety and security, it is undertaken by external surveyors impartial to Dumfries and Galloway Council and follows scoring methodology defined by Scottish Government for all schools.

Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery was assessed in November 2024 and the overall condition rating for the property was B, satisfactory – performing adequately but showing minor deterioration. However, whilst the overall condition is B, there are some internal areas, for example the ceilings mechanical and electrical that were graded as C or D, (C: poor – showing major problems and not operating optimally. D: Bad – Economic life expired and/or risk of failure).

Suitability is a measure of whether a school building and its grounds are fit for the purpose of delivering the education curriculum. The suitability of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery was carried out in 2014, the school was graded as C. The suitability survey has not been carried out recently as this exercise is undertaken with the building users.

3.3 Housing Development

LDP2 (Local Development Plan) was published in 2019 superseding LDP1 published in 2014. Carsphairn remained identified as a Local Centre in the Stewartry area in the Council's LDP2 as per LDP1. Due to the significant flood risks highlighted in the Main Issues Report (<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/18994/LDP2-Main-Issues-Report/pdf/MIR.pdf?m=636217275492870000>) the previously allocated housing site North of McAdams Way was removed from the plan.

LDP 2 can be viewed here: https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/21885/Adopted-Local-Development-Plan-2/pdf/Adopted_LDP2_OCTOBER_2019_web_version.pdf?m=637771647699370000 information relating to Carsphairn can be found on pages 116-117.

Whilst LDP2 does not identify a site within the settlement boundary for housing development, it supports infill development “Infill proposals will be considered favourably provided they comply with other policies contained in the Plan” and the planning objective for Carsphairn was to “Consolidate and enhance Carsphairn’s role as a Local Centre within the settlement hierarchy”.

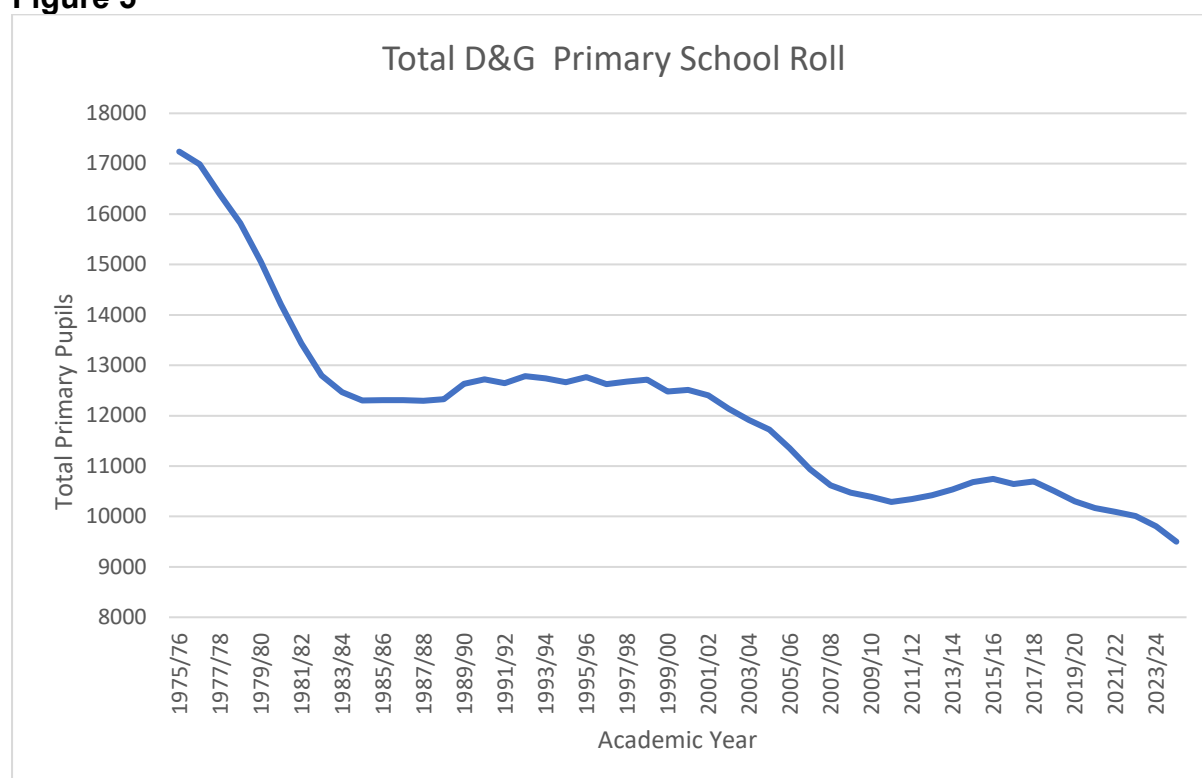
There have been long standing aspirations within the community of Carsphairn to provide additional housing. In March 2023 Carsphairn Community Council commissioned housing need and demand survey report was published, this report was produced by SoSCH (South of Scotland Community Housing). This report is available at Appendix 3.

3.4 Demographics and Pupil Numbers

National Records of Scotland predict the number of children and young adults in Scotland aged 0 to 29 years will decrease between mid-2022 to mid-2047. Over this 25-year period it is predicted there will be -79.9k fewer children aged 0-15 and -57.4k fewer young adults aged 16-29. By 2047, children will make up only 14% of the population.

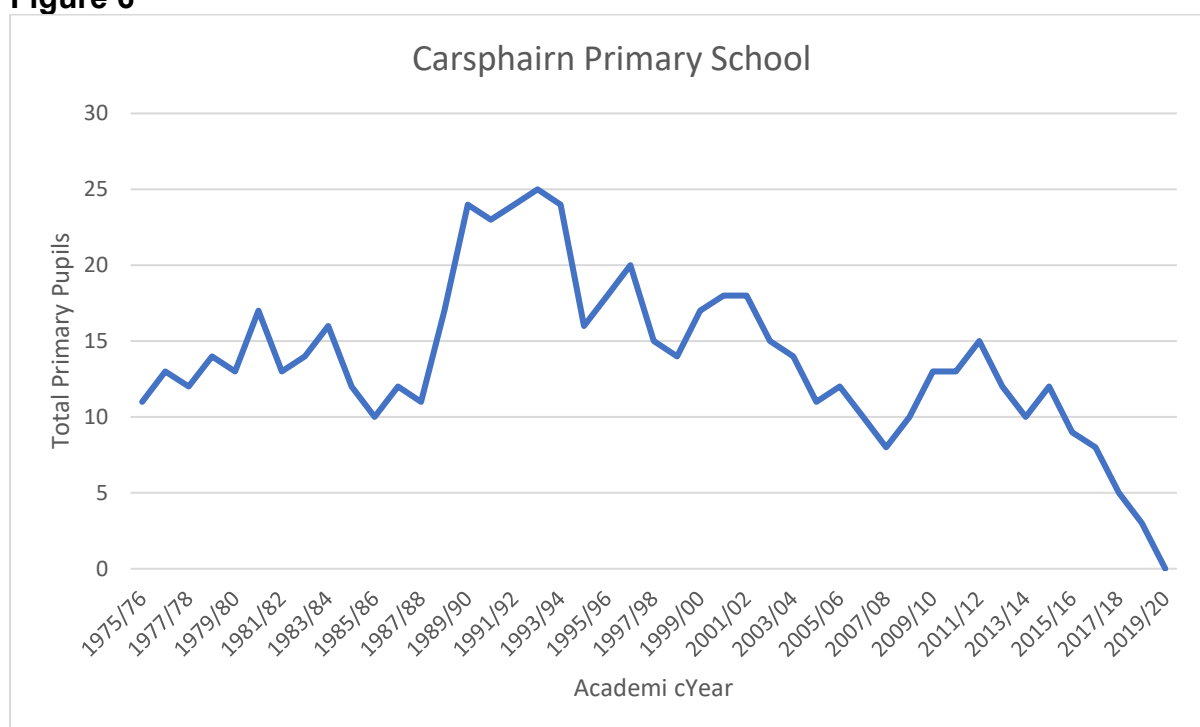
Dumfries and Galloway Council holds electronic records of school rolls back to academic year 1975/76. Dumfries and Galloway is currently experiencing a significant and sustained fall in pupil numbers with the National Records of Scotland predicting a further 18% fall in the 0-15 age group over the next 10 years. Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery roll has not exactly mirrored that of Dumfries and Galloway as a region, there has however been a steady decline since academic year 2014/15. These historical school rolls are detailed in figures 5 and 6 below.

Figure 5



The historical school roll Carsphairn Primary Schools is detailed below:

Figure 6



There are currently 9 children of P1-P7 age (academic year 2024/25) residing within the catchment area of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery (SEEMiS data May 2025). The tracked catchment children are detailed in figure 5 below, this table does not represent the number of pupils who have expressed a desire to attend Carsphairn Primary School. Numbers may differ from one year to the next due to the movement of children in or out of the catchment area. Where children have deferred entry into Primary 1, they are included in the figures for the year they started school. The current primary aged children (academic year 2024/25) all attend Dalry Primary School.

Figure 7

Academic Year	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
2022/23	1	1	2	4	1	3	2	14
2023/24	1	1	0	1	4	1	2	10
2024/25	1	1	1	0	1	4	1	9
2025/26	4	1	1	1	0	1	4	12
2026/27	0	4	1	1	1	0	1	8
2027/28	1	0	4	1	1	1	0	8

Dumfries and Galloway Council are also aware of an additional child who attends Dalry Primary School from the Carsphairn Primary School catchment area for a short period of time each year.

If all current catchment pupils were to attend Carsphairn Primary School, the utilisation of the school would be 48%. This is significantly below the desired occupancy levels as described in School Model Principle 7 (Schools should have an occupancy rate where possible greater than 60% utilisation of the capacity of the school and ideally should be operating at 80% utilisation). Such a low occupancy level is unsustainable. This is also dependant on all catchment children attending the school. Data from the last seven years the school was operational (academic years 2012/13 – 2018/19) shows an increasing trend towards pupils attending other schools in the area, this was coupled with a declining primary school aged population.

3.5 Pupil Enrolments

Information relating to the annual review of pupil enrolments and transfers can be found in Section 3.0 of this report.

The information below details the numbers by year group for each academic year of review since the previous statutory consultation.

Figure 8

Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Primary 1	0	0	1	2
Primary 2	0	0	0	0
Primary 3	1	0	0	0
Primary 4	2	2	0	0
Primary 5	1	3	1	0
Primary 6	1	0	3	0
Primary 7	1	0	1	1
Total	6	5	6	3

Following this enrolment and transfer opportunity for academic year 2025/26 two families of three catchment children submitted enrolment and/or transfer forms to attend Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery.

4.0 Community Engagement

Council Officers from the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate conducted the following engagements with the communities of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery to keep them fully informed and to explore potential options for the future of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery.

- 6 May 2025 – Information shared regarding a public drop-in along with a link to the public survey
- May 2025 – An online survey was made available from 6 May until 28 May 2025, paper copies were also made available as well as the option to write to

the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate, contact information was made available at the public drop-in.

The survey questions and a summary of submitted feedback is appended to this report (Appendix 2)

- 13 May 2025 – Public drop-in at Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn 3:30pm – 6:30pm. Opportunity to discuss the community aspirations, seek feedback and explain the statutory consultation process and Community Asset Transfer process.

5.0 The Proposal and Reasonable Alternatives to the Proposal

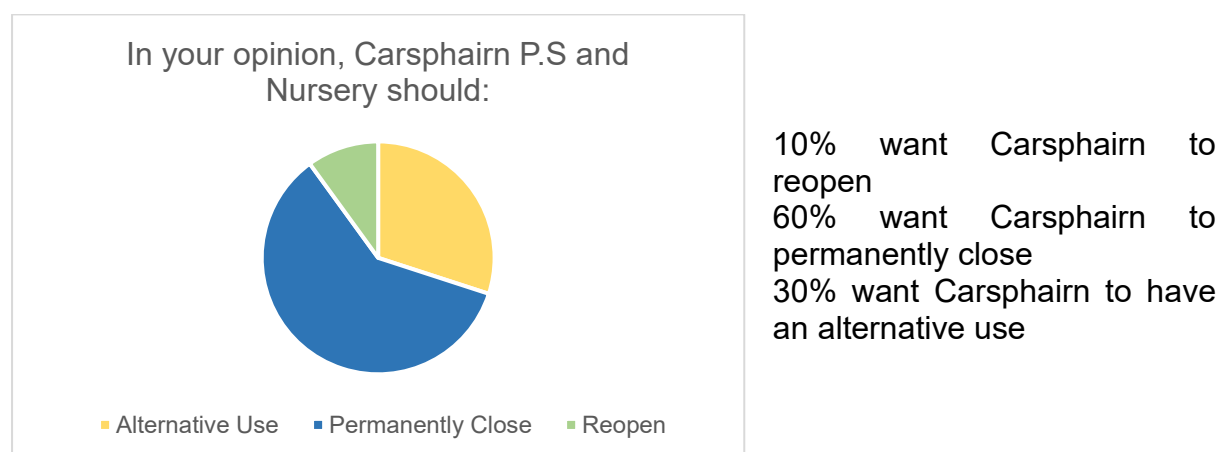
In line with Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 Dumfries and Galloway Council must identify any reasonable alternatives to the proposal which might also address the reasons for the proposal.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is required to consider the future of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. The following options are explored further within this paper:

- a. Re-open Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery
- b. Continued Mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery with the temporary catchment of Dalry Primary School
- c. Closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and Realign the Catchment Area to Dalry Primary School

Following the community engagement, a breakdown of how stakeholders responded to the proposed alternatives can be found in Figure 9 below;

Figure 9



These results suggest the strongest consensus lies with closure with support for community use, while there was no endorsement of continued mothballing. No additional alternatives were proposed by respondents to the survey. Further detail can be found in the individual option appraisals below.

6.0 Option A: Re-open Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery

This option proposes that Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery re-opens for the delivery of primary education. If implemented, the school would resume with a projected roll of up to six pupils, all of whom would be taught within a single, multi-composite class by one teacher, managed by a partnership Headteacher.

Reopening the school under these conditions would reinstate educational provision within the village. However, this option would require ongoing commitment of staffing and resources despite critically low pupil numbers and minimal projected growth over the next three years. It would also reintroduce operational challenges common to single-teacher schools, particularly regarding curriculum breadth, peer socialisation, staff workload, and equity of learning experience when compared with schools with higher rolls in the region.

While reopening would respond to the wishes of a small number of parents who expressed a desire for local access to education, it must be considered within the broader statutory context. The education authority has legal duties under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of school education, and under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 to secure continuous improvement and raise standards. Re-opening with such a limited cohort may conflict with these obligations, particularly where better-resourced alternatives are available within a very short distance.

In appraising this option, it is necessary to weigh the community value of reopening a school in the village against the practical and educational implications for learners, staff operating within a minimally populated, single-classroom model and the desires of CLaDC.

6.1 Community Feedback

The majority of responses 90% (9 respondents) to the survey were not in favour of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery reopening. The families of four primary aged children and one pre school aged child respond to say they would not consider enrolling their children at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. The main reasons are summarised below;

“Established friendships”

“The community cannot generate the numbers required to create a stable school roll

“The school would be too small if reopened.”

One respondent was in favour of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery reopening however they also stated their support of the work of CLaDC.

“Agree that the building should become a hub for education and learning”

6.2 Pupil Numbers

For academic year 2025/26 information regarding enrolment and transfer into Carsphairn Primary School was targeted to families living in the catchment area, Carsphairn Community Council, Elected Members and ward officer on 9 December 2024 and 7 January 2025 through Dumfries and Galloway Council's GovDelivery service. The information shared is detailed in Section 3.0 Figure 2.

On 22 April 2025 Members of the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee were updated regarding the enrolment and transfer opportunity. Two transfer forms (Primary Two – Primary Seven) and one enrolment form (Primary One) were received for Carsphairn Primary School; the further mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery was noted by Members for academic year 2025/26.

There is currently only one nursery aged child and 12 primary aged children living in the catchment area for academic year 2025/26.

Pupil numbers are not projected to rise over the next 4 years as detailed in Figure 7, with academic year 2025/26 an anticipated peak in numbers.

6.3 Financial Information

The education authority has a statutory duty to ensure that adequate and efficient provision of school education is made for its area (The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 s.1(1)).

The total recurring revenue cost to reopen Carsphairn Primary School would likely be in the region of £170,00.00 this is based on up to date costs for a school of a similar size and pupil roll. The staffing costs for the nursery would be in the region of £122,00.00 due to a minimum requirement of two staff required as a minimum up to a maximum of 16 children. This is in excess of the total running costs for the school for academic year 2018/19 due to inflation, staff wage rises, and the inclusion of the nursery staffing based on 1140hours operational model.

The capital one-off cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery would be approximately £191,000.00. The registration of the nursery would need to be in line with the requirements of the Care Inspectorate, it is likely that the space previously used would not meet the requirements of 1140hrs provision of early learning and childcare (ELC)

The transport costs for those pupils living within Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery's catchment area from financial year 2028/19 was £6,642.00. This figure is not reflective of the current catchment children and where they reside within the catchment area. There are currently three children living within the catchment area that would be eligible for transport in line with Dumfries and Galloway Council's transport policy. The cost for these three pupils is unknown as none have previously attended Carsphairn Primary School.

6.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

6.4.1 Community Impact

The reopening of the school would enable the premises to be used by the community however the community has a well-supported village hall, which is the main focus for most of the community activities. However, the community aspirations to utilise the school building could not be realised in the school was reopened. The presence of a school may make the area a more attractive place to live, therefore encourage families with school aged children or pre-school aged children to move to the area. Section 3.3 of this report details the housing development, a small number of respondents to the survey spoke of the lack of affordable housing in the area and the long standing desire of the community to progress these aspirations:

“The village needs investment to encourage local employment opportunities and affordable housing to encourage families to look here. This is being addressed and will progress soon..”

“D&G Council should invest money in the area and build more Social housing with the purpose of attracting families into the village and surrounds.”

If the school were to reopen as an educational establishment there would be an economic impact with respect to the considerable expenditure needed to bring the building up to an acceptable standard. There would also be costs relating to staffing, and ongoing maintenance. The reopening of the school and the potential relocation of families may have a positive effect on the wider economy of the community.

6.4.2 Travel arrangements

The travel distance from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery to Dalry Primary School and Nursery is 9.3 miles via the A713. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes (Source: Google Maps) It is important to note that the geography of the catchment area means that travel distances/times will be different for all pupils. The travel arrangements have been in place since August 2019. If Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery was to reopen there could be a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of pupils who are able to walk or cycle to school, of the current catchment primary aged children three live within the village along with two nursery aged children. Staff would either travel to the school by car, or if they lived locally could walk or cycle. There may be a positive environmental impact as the use of vehicles to transport pupils may decrease but for the majority a car would still be required but for a lesser distance. Conversely, there could be increased car usage by staff which may mean these travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact along with the transport of meals to the school on a daily basis. Further to this, the pupils currently attending Dalry Primary School from the Carsphairn Primary School catchment area would lose their entitlement to transport in line with Dumfries and Galloway Council school transport policy, this would have a significant impact of those families particularly if their preference was to remain at Dalry Primary School.

The Dumfries and Galloway School Transport Policy 2023 states:

2.2 Dumfries and Galloway Council is required, by law, to arrange transport for pupils living out with a specified statutory distance from their catchment school. Parents are responsible for the first 2 or 3 miles of travel (depending on the age of the child) to the designated pick-up point for onward transportation to their catchment school.

Free school transport is awarded from the pick-up point for onward transportation:

- To pupils under 8 years old who live more than 2 miles from their catchment school by the shortest walking route.*
- To pupils who are 8 years old and over who live more than 3 miles from their catchment school by the shortest walking route.*

And:

2.4 There is no requirement on the Council to provide transport for pupils who have been granted a placing request to attend a school other than the school in whose catchment area they reside

Known pupils who are enrolled for the next school year have a current home address that is either within 0.9 miles of Palnackie Primary School (or shorter) or live outside the catchment area, so no current pupil for 2022/26 would be entitled to school transport if the school were to re-open/remain open.

6.5 Educational Benefits

Curriculum for Excellence recognises the unique communities and contexts in which all our schools sit. It recognises the professionalism of Headteachers and their teams and allows them the flexibility to design a coherent curriculum that develops the knowledge, skills and attributes that their learners need to adapt, think critically and flourish in an ever-changing global society. Individual Headteachers and schools are empowered to design and provide an enriched curriculum that is flexible, adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners and one which reflects the uniqueness of their local community and their context.

There are no specific educational benefits to reopening Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery as all schools implement Curriculum for Excellence ensuring effective learning and teaching which is matched to the needs of the children.

Carsphairn Primary School has been mothballed for almost six years due initially as a result of the school roll falling to zero. Forecasts do not show any rise in the number of catchment pupils. If the school were to re-open, numbers would remain critically low, indicating a lack of stability for the school and wider school community, which may have a negative impact on staff, pupils and families.

6.6 Summary

Just one respondent 10% to the survey was in favour of the school reopening. If the school were to reopen for academic year 2025/26 the school roll would be three

based on the latest data gathered through the opportunity for families to enrol or transfer and presented to Members of the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee on 22 April 2025. There is currently only one nursery aged child living in the catchment area for academic year 2025/26.

There are financial implications if the school is to be reopened. The total values are detailed in section 6.3 of this report.

The reopening of the school may encourage families with school age children to move to the community, which may make the community more sustainable, however with a lack of affordable properties to rent or purchase, opening the school alone will not remove this barrier to young family's aspiration to move into the area. The registration of the nursery would need to be in line with the requirements of the Care Inspectorate, it is likely that the space previously used would not meet the requirements of 1140hrs provision of early learning and childcare (ELC)

The travel distance from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery to Dalry Primary School and Nursery is 9.3 miles via the A713. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes (Source: Google Maps). The travel arrangements have been in place since August 2019. Adverse weather can be a factor; the A713 is a primary gritting route and the B7000 a secondary gritting route, both roads link Carsphairn to St John's Town of Dalry. Should the school reopen, there may be a positive environmental impact as the use of vehicles to transport pupils may decrease. Conversely there could be increased car usage by staff and those families wishing to remain at Dalry Primary School, which may mean these travel arrangements have a negative environmental impact. The positive and negative impact may balance.

When considering the above alongside projected low numbers, the challenges in recruiting staff and the investment required to bring the building up to an acceptable standard, the preference of families to choose other schools in the area, reopening Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is not considered a reasonable option.

7.0 Option B: Continued Mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery with the temporary catchment of Dalry Primary School

Mothballing is defined as the temporary closure of a school without triggering a formal statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. It is only considered appropriate in limited and specific circumstances - typically where a school roll has fallen to critically low levels, rendering the school temporarily unviable, but where there is a reasonable expectation that pupil numbers in the area may recover in the future.

The Statutory Guidance for the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended, in relation to mothballing states "the maximum length of its duration is likely to depend on the location of the school and the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open a school there, but it is unlikely that it should exceed 3 years in areas that are not very remote."

Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery was mothballed in August 2019 when the school roll fell to zero. In 2022 a statutory consultation in line with the Schools

(Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 was undertaken, with the closure process stopped by Members of the Education and Learning Committee on 28 March 2023. An annual review has taken place to understand the level of interest in the school reopening, numbers expressing a desire have remained low and as a result a further academic year of mothballing was agreed for Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery by Members at Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee on 22 April 2025.

7.1 Community Feedback

There were no responses to the survey in favour of the continuation of mothballing. The community was clear that the aspirations are to utilise the building for the betterment of the community.

7.2 Pupil Numbers

For academic year 2025/26 information regarding enrolment and transfer into Carsphairn Primary School was targeted to families living in the catchment area, Carsphairn Community Council, Elected Members and ward officer on 9 December 2024 and 7 January 2025 through Dumfries and Galloway Council's GovDelivery service. The information shared is detailed in Section 3.0 Figure 2.

On 22 April 2025 Members of the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee were updated regarding the enrolment and transfer opportunity. Two transfer forms (Primary Two – Primary Seven) and one enrolment form (Primary One) were received for Carsphairn Primary School; the further mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery was noted by Members for academic year 2025/26.

There is currently only one nursery aged child and 12 primary aged children living in the catchment area for academic year 2025/26.

Pupil numbers are not projected to rise over the next 4 years as detailed in Figure 7, with academic year 2025/26 an anticipated peak in numbers.

7.3 Financial Information

The current annual revenue cost (2022/23) to Dumfries and Galloway Council of the mothballed Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is approximately £1,400.00. This includes water and sewerage charges, energy costs, repairs and maintenance and waste.

The capital one-off cost to bring the property to an acceptable standard to re-open Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery would be approximately £191,000.00. The registration of the nursery would need to be in line with the requirements of the Care Inspectorate, it is likely that the space previously used would not meet the requirements of 1140hrs provision of early learning and childcare (ELC)

There are currently two buses run by Dumfries and Galloway Council that transport secondary and primary school pupils from the Carsphairn Primary School catchment area, operating on the A713 and B700, these buses would likely be operational without the inclusion of primary aged children, therefore the costs of the buses cannot be disaggregated for solely the use of primary aged pupils. For academic year 2024/25 a total of £6,173.10 is paid to three families to transport their children to the school bus pick up point.

7.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

7.4.1 Community Impact

If pupils are to continue their education in other primary schools whilst Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is mothballed there would be no change to the current impact on the community. All families that responded to the survey indicated that they would not enrol their children at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery.

The continued mothballing of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery was not supported by the community. The school grounds have remained accessible to the community and has been well utilised as a safe playspace for all of the community during the period of mothballing.

“With the mothballing policy being 10 children currently and it potentially changing in the coming months, I’m not sure that Carsphairn will ever be able to reach that number to be sustainable..”

During this period of mothballing the school building unlike the school grounds has not been accessible. The Carsphairn Learning and Development Committee (CLaDC) aspires to see the school building put back into operation as a hub for education and learning in the area. The continuation of mothballing would not enable the plans of CLaDC to progress.

7.4.2 Travel arrangements

There is no change to the travel arrangements that are currently in place nor to the environmental impact from these. The travel distance from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery to Dalry Primary School and Nursery is 9.3 miles via the A713. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes (Source: Google Maps) It is important to note that the geography of the catchment area means that travel distances/times will be different for all pupils. The travel arrangements have been in place since August 2019. The continued mothballing would have little effect on current staff travel.

The Dumfries and Galloway School Transport Policy 2023 states:

2.2 Dumfries and Galloway Council is required, by law, to arrange transport for pupils living out with a specified statutory distance from their catchment school. Parents are responsible for the first 2 or 3 miles of travel (depending on the age of the child) to the designated pick-up point for onward transportation to their catchment school.

And

Free school transport is awarded from the pick-up point for onward transportation:

- To pupils under 8 years old who live more than 2 miles from their catchment school by the shortest walking route.*
- To pupils who are 8 years old and over who live more than 3 miles from their catchment school by the shortest walking route.*

For school year 2025/26, there is expected to 9 pupils currently living in the Palnackie catchment area who would be eligible for transport to Dalbeattie Primary School from August, with one child not eligible who currently resides 2.3 miles from Dalbeattie Primary School (over 8 years of age).

7.5 Educational Benefits

Curriculum for Excellence recognises the unique communities and contexts in which all our schools sit. It recognises the professionalism of Headteachers and their teams and allows them the flexibility to design a coherent curriculum that develops the knowledge, skills and attributes that their learners need to adapt, think critically and flourish in an ever-changing global society. Individual Headteachers and schools are empowered to design and provide an enriched curriculum that is flexible, adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners and one which reflects the uniqueness of their local community and their context.

Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and Dalry Primary School and Nursery are both accessible rural schools (Scottish Government classification). There is a secondary school providing education from S1-S4 on the same site as Dalry Primary School and Nursery. Pupils transfer at S5 to Castle Douglas High School. Children from the Carsphairn Primary catchment area, attending Dalry Primary continue to benefit from a curriculum design which supports their rural location and the skills and attributes to meet their individual needs and rural context.

Dalry Primary School consists of two multi-composite classes where children are with peers from more than one year group. The children benefit from a social context where they can build relationships, develop social skills, exercise responsibilities, meet challenges and develop resilience as members of a wider social group. At each stage in Dalry Primary School and Nursery there is more than one pupil. As a result, they are able to build relationships with peers which in turn can support their transition into secondary education. Children also benefit from a PE and HWB curriculum appropriate to their age and stage.

7.6 Summary

The members of the communities of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery that completed the survey were clear that there was no support for the continuity of mothballing.

Whilst there are sufficient children in the catchment area to reopen the school, there is insufficient interest from families with a forecast decline following academic year 2025/26, the numbers do not indicate support the continuation of mothballing.

On the basis that pupil numbers are not expected to increase, the aspirations of CLaDC, the schools mothballing is not of benefit to the community or Dumfries and Galloway Council, therefore continued mothballing is not viewed as a reasonable option.

8.0 Option C: Closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and Realign the Catchment Area to Dalry Primary School

On 16 April 2025 Dumfries and Galloway Council received a formal request from Carsphairn Community Council on behalf of the wider community to respectfully request the formal closure process for Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

A newly established group CLaDC is interested in taking ownership through the CAT process to ensure the building does not fall into disrepair and is instead brought back into use for the benefit of the village.

A community-wide survey conducted by CLaDC in April 2025 demonstrated near unanimous support for the proposal to formally close the school, enabling future community use of the premises.

The representative from Carsphairn Community Council stated:

“The community is keen to work collaboratively with the Council to secure a positive and sustainable future for the site, and we would welcome guidance on the next steps required to progress this matter.”

Dumfries and Galloway Council following acknowledgement of the request received on the 16 April 2025 have commenced the preliminary requirements set out in section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as detailed in this document.

8.1 Community Feedback

As detailed in Figure 9 within Section 5 the majority of respondents, 90%, were in favour of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery closing or having an alternative use. In order for the building to have an alternative use and for there to be a formal community asset transfer (CAT) the statutory consultation in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Schools) Act 2010 must be concluded. The families of four primary aged children and one pre school aged child respond to say they would not consider enrolling their children at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. The main reasons are summarised below;

“Established friendships”

“The community cannot generate the numbers required to create a stable school roll

“The school would be too small if reopened.”

One respondent was clearly against the reopening of the school stating:

“I don’t want to hear children or young people as I moved to the area for peace and quiet.”

“Any influx of young people and the ensuing noise would impact those residents who have relocated here simply because there are very few children and young people.”

There is already interest within the community for the school building to have an alternative use. The CLaDC, consists of interested community members who wish to bring the school back into use as an education and learning hub with a view to initially provide holiday clubs to support children, young people and parents/carers. Education would focus initially on primary children, provision for secondary students would follow.

8.2 Pupil Numbers

Pupil numbers are not projected to rise over the next four years as detailed in Figure 7. It is however recognised that the numbers living within the Carsphairn Primary School catchment area are greater than the anticipated school roll, with a peak in primary aged children in the catchment area for academic year 2025/26, conversely the number of nursery age children is just one.

The anticipated roll of Dalry Primary School, including those pupils currently living in the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment area are detailed in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10

Academic Year	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total
2024/25	6	6	7	1	7	9	6	42
2025/26	4	6	6	7	1	7	9	40
2026/27	9	4	6	6	7	1	7	40
2027/28	5	9	4	6	6	7	1	38

The school roll for academic year 2025/26 is actuals, subsequent years are forecasted numbers.

Daly Primary School Nursery is registered for a maximum of 20 children at anyone time. The nursery currently provides ELC to 16 across a week. For academic year 2025/26 there are 16 children enrolled.

8.3 Financial Information

The current annual revenue cost (2022/23) to Dumfries and Galloway Council of the mothballed Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery is approximately £1,400.00.

There are currently two buses run by Dumfries and Galloway Council that transport secondary and primary school pupils from the Carsphairn Primary School catchment area, operating on the A713 and B700, these buses would likely be operational without the inclusion of primary aged children, therefore the costs of the buses cannot be disaggregated for solely the use of primary aged pupils. For academic year 2024/25 a total of £6,173.10 is paid to three families to transport their children to the school bus pick up point.

8.4 Assessment of Rural Factors

8.4.1 Community Impact

As detailed in Figure 9 within Section 5 the majority of respondents, 90%, were in favour of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery closing or having an alternative use. In order for the building to have an alternative use and for there to be a formal community asset transfer (CAT) the statutory consultation in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Schools) Act 2010 must be concluded. The families of four primary aged children and one pre school aged child respond to say they would not consider enrolling their children at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. The main reasons are summarised below;

“Established friendships”

“The community cannot generate the numbers required to create a stable school roll

“The school would be too small if reopened.”

One respondent was clearly against the reopening of the school stating:

“I don't want to hear children or young people as I moved to the area for peace and quiet.”

“Any influx of young people and the ensuing noise would impact those residents who have relocated here simply because there are very few children and young people.”

There is already interest within the community for the school building to have an alternative use. The CLaDC, consists of interested community members who wish to bring the school back into use as an education and learning hub with a view to initially provide holiday clubs to support children, young people and parents/carers. Education would focus initially on primary children, provision for secondary students would follow.

8.4.2 Travel arrangements

There is no change to the travel arrangements that are currently in place nor to the environmental impact from these. The travel distance from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery to Dalry Primary School and Nursery is 9.3 miles via the A713. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes (Source: Google Maps) It is important to note that the geography of the catchment area means that travel distances/times will be different for all pupils. The travel arrangements have been in place since August 2019. The closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery would have little effect on current staff travel.

8.5 Educational Benefits

Curriculum for Excellence recognises the unique communities and contexts in which all our schools sit. It recognises the professionalism of Headteachers and their teams and allows them the flexibility to design a coherent curriculum that develops the knowledge, skills and attributes that their learners need to adapt, think critically and flourish in an ever-changing global society. Individual Headteachers and schools are empowered to design and provide an enriched curriculum that is flexible, adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of individual learners and one which reflects the uniqueness of their local community and their context.

Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and Dalry Primary School and Nursery are both accessible rural schools (Scottish Government classification). There is a secondary school providing education from S1-S4 on the same site as Dalry Primary School and Nursery. Pupils transfer at S5 to Castle Douglas High School. Children from the Carsphairn Primary catchment area, attending Dalry Primary continue to benefit from a curriculum design which supports their rural location and the skills and attributes to meet their individual needs and rural context.

Dalry Primary School consists of two multi-composite classes where children are with peers from more than one year group. The children benefit from a social context where they can build relationships, develop social skills, exercise responsibilities, meet challenges and develop resilience as members of a wider social group. At each stage in Dalry Primary School and Nursery there is more than one pupil. As a result, they are able to build relationships with peers which in turn can support their transition into secondary education. Children also benefit from a PE and HWB curriculum appropriate to their age and stage.

8.6 Summary

Respondents to the survey in the main were supportive of the closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. The majority of respondents, 90%, were in favour of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery closing or having an alternative use. A small number of respondents 10% (1 respondent) were supportive of the school reopening but also cited their support of an alternative use. In order for the building to have an alternative use the school would need to go through the statutory consultation process in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.

There were no families through the survey that expressed their desire to re-open Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and enrol their children.

There is already interest within the community for the school building to have an alternative use. The CLaDC, consists of interested community members who wish to bring the school back into use as an education and learning hub with a view to initially provide holiday clubs to support children, young people and parents/carers. Education would focus initially on primary children, provision for secondary students would follow.

The travel distance from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery to Dalry Primary School and Nursery is 9.3 miles via the A713. Travel time is approximately 14 minutes (Source: Google Maps) It is important to note that the geography of the catchment area means that travel distances/times will be different for all pupils.

Dalry Primary School and Nursery currently accommodates pupils from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery, the school roll of Dalry Primary School and Nursery is not expected to rise and therefore has the capacity to continue to accommodate the projected pupil numbers from Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery's catchment area.

At Dalry Primary School, children benefit from a curriculum design which supports their rural location and the skills and attributes to meet their individual needs and rural context. In addition there are more opportunities for personal and social development.

This has been identified as a reasonable option for further consideration.

9.0 Conclusion

Three alternative options have been reviewed in considering the future of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery. For each option, information was collated, and consideration given to:

- Community feedback;
- Pupil numbers;
- Financial Information;
- Assessment of rural actors, including community impact, and travel arrangements, and
- Educational benefits.

An authority that is formulating a rural school closure proposal must satisfy the preliminary requirements set out in section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended before starting to prepare its proposal paper. After consideration of the preliminary requirements, as set out in the Act, and the options, and having regard to the specific reasons identified in this report closing Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and realigning its catchment area to Dalry Primary School and Nursery is considered to be the most reasonable option in order to address the reasons for the possible proposal.

Following a detailed appraisal of the three options -reopening, mothballing, or permanently closing Palnackie Primary School to seek an alternative use for the

building - it is recommended that the statutory consultation in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 be undertaken for Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery.

Members are asked to:

- Note the request received from Carsphairn Community Council.
- Note the Statutory Guidance on repeating school closures.
- Note the community engagement undertaken.
- Agree to the commencement of the Statutory Consultation process for the closure of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery.

These recommendations will go to Education and Learning Committee on 1 July 2025.

Appendix 1

Public Drop-In: Summary

On 13 May 2025, a drop-in was held at Lagwyne Hall, Carsphairn.

The drop-in was open to all, with catchment families, community councils and elected members directly contacted to advise them in advance of the drop-in.

The drop-in was facilitated by 3 Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate Officers from education and communities. The drop-in was attended by eight community members, including four parents.

Discussions were focussed around the following key themes;

- Building condition
- Opportunities for enrolment
- Community asset transfer process
- Number of children in the area

Appendix 2

Online Survey Summary

An online survey was available between 6 May until 28 May 2025, paper copies were made available at the public drop-in as well as information on how to write directly to Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate.

All comments have been analysed and redacted to prevent identification of any individuals and are summarised below:

Demographics

- 10 responses total, 9 living in Carsphairn Primary School catchment
 - 5 community members
 - 4 parent/carers with school/pre school age children
 - 1 past parent

Parent/carers with school/pre school age children

- 4 parent/carers responded, representing 5 primary school and 2 nursery aged children
- It is recognised that this response does not represent all families living in the catchment area.

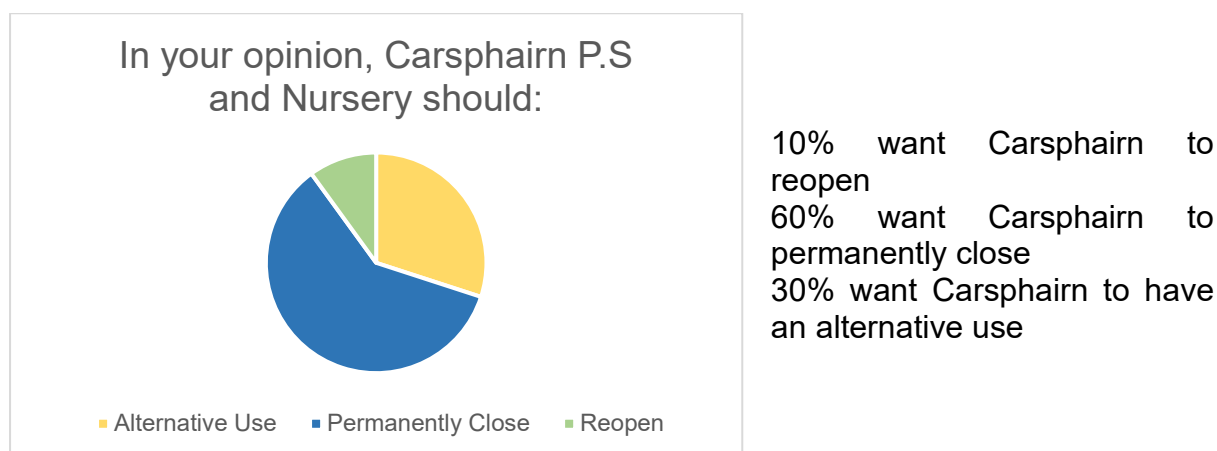
None of the parents/carers who responded to the survey indicated they would enroll their children at Carsphairn Primary School or Nursery.

Of those who indicated they would not enroll their child/children at Carsphairn Primary School or Nursery, the following reasons were given:

- Children have formed friendships in their current school.
- Children happy at the school they attend.
- Not enough pupils for it to be viable.
- School roll would not be stable.
- If reopened the school roll would be too low.

Stakeholder Views on the Future of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery

Question: In your opinion should Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery?



Question: Is there anything you think Dumfries and Galloway Council could do to encourage families to enroll at Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery and help the school to reopen?

There were a range of comments to this question, which are listed below –

- The village needs investment to encourage local employment opportunities and affordable housing to encourage families to look here. This is being addressed and will progress soon.
- With the mothballing policy being 10 children currently and it potentially changing in the coming months, I'm not sure that Carsphairn will ever be able to reach that number to be sustainable.
- I don't want the school to reopen
- We are past this point now - best to move onto next chapter.
- Dumfries and Galloway Council have taken every step to make sure Carsphairn Primary School is non-viable and have to date, made no effort to encourage families to enrol at Carsphairn. This included closing enrolment for Carsphairn and forcing prospective parents to choose Dalry instead with no option to select Carsphairn, which would have allowed potential pupil numbers to be accurately gauged. The Council have allowed the building to fall into poor repair over a number of years and then have cited this as a reason why the school cannot re-open.
- Allow a provisional enrollment. At present there is no way parents can show interest or enroll children at Carsphairn school in spite of the growing number of school age children in Carsphairn area.
- D&G Council should invest money in the area and build more Social housing with the purpose of attracting families into the village and surrounds. The school needs updating and refreshed to allow children to enjoy the beautiful area they could live in.

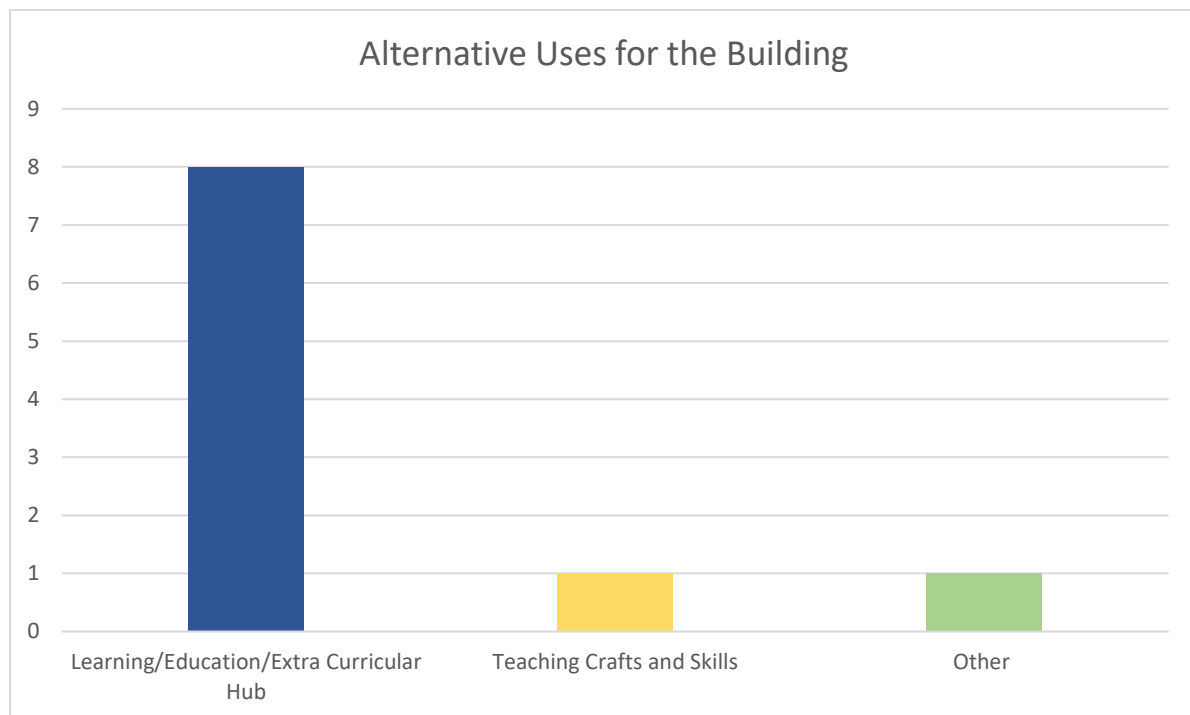
- D&G Council have, and continue to work to destroy rural education in the Glenkens and wider county. There has been very poor community engagement and the council have done nothing to try and increase the school roll for Carsphairn. The strategy seems to be ensure that education is centralised in order to reduce costs, while using student experience as an reason - small schools can and do work. It is too late now to change the future for Carsphairn Primary.

Question: If a decision was taken to close Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery, where should the Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery catchment be realigned to?

All respondents agreed that Dalry Primary School and Nursery would be their preference for a realigned catchment area.

Question: If a decision was taken to close Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery, do you have any suggestions on the future of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery, including potential alternative uses for the building? please detail them below. (Dumfries and Galloway Council understand that the Carsphairn Learning and Development Committee have aspirations for the school building to become a hub for education and learning for the area)

The respondents to this question, suggested a range of alternative uses as can be seen below –



Question: Please detail below any other significant factors impacting the local communities of Carsphairn Primary School and Nursery that Dumfries and Galloway Council should be made aware of.

Responses to this question were as follows –

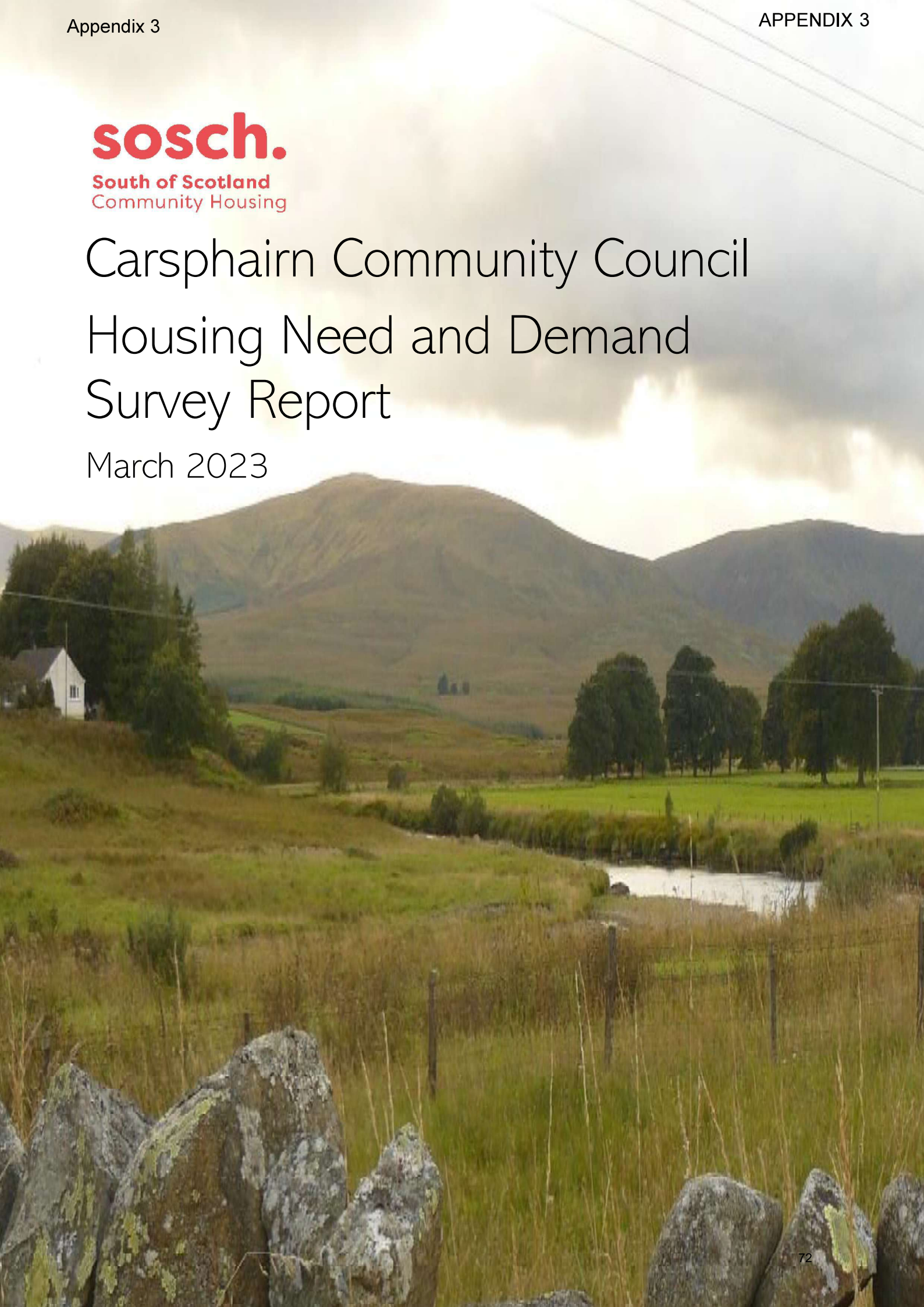
- High school offering (Dalry only offers limited availability) is too far away and the most preferred school currently is Kirkcudbright. The council should support this decision and fund transport so families don't have one hundred mile journeys each day.
- Any influx of young people and the ensuing noise would impact those residents who have relocated here simply because there are very few children and young people.
- Lack of childcare - CLaDC proposal addresses this.
- There is no childcare in this area. The children have no access to extra curricular activities. Everything is centred around Dumfries. Children, and the Community need more inclusion in the Carsphairn area.
- Having locally based education is vital to Carsphairn's long-term viability. Reducing the community's ability to attract all generations to live here means that Carsphairn is unable to fulfil many of the aspiration in the recently published LPP.
- Several Carsphairn parents have shown interest in enrolling at carsphairn but this has now been made impossible
- Although the situation in Carsphairn has forced the community to give up on trying to work with DGC, and to now request school closure, it should be noted that this causes significant damage to our community, affecting our aspirations to grow the community in order to ensure a sustainable future. DGC need to work with the community to help us to make our community viable long term.

sosch.

South of Scotland
Community Housing

Carsphairn Community Council Housing Need and Demand Survey Report

March 2023





Background to the project

Carsphairn Community Council is an active community organisation covering the village of Carsphairn and surrounding area. Carsphairn is a remote village of approximately 169 residents located in the rural northern reaches of Galloway within the Dumfries and Galloway Region. Carsphairn Community Council are keen to ascertain the need and demand for affordable housing to address population decline and the associated impact on sustaining the community and village services.

Carsphairn Community Council is concerned that due to a lack of younger people and families with children in the area, that without more immediate action, the viability of the last remaining services and facilities within the community will be affected. Concerns about the future of Carsphairn Primary School, which is currently mothballed due to the school roll having fallen, has galvanised the community into considering solutions to reverse the population decline and the community's ability to support existing services. The Community Council engaged with the education services at Dumfries and Galloway Council to represent the community at a well-attended public community meeting in September 2022 to address the threat of permanent school closure. Dumfries and Galloway Council had mothballed the Primary School in 2019 due to the decline of the school roll, with primary age children now being enrolled at Dalry Primary School some 9 miles away. Following a further school closure consultation exercise at the end of 2022, where the council sought to permanently close the school for future use, the outcome resulted in a further mothballing extension of 2 years from February 2023.

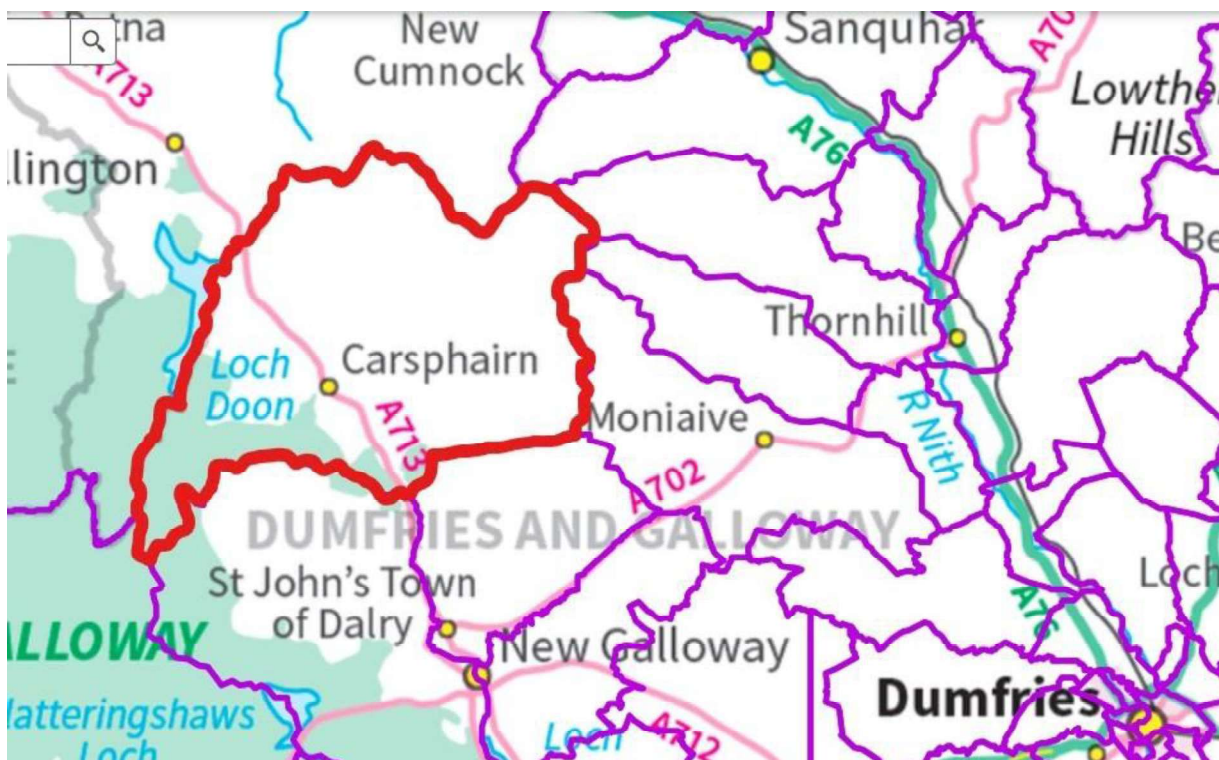
At present, the village sustains a thriving village hall where regular events are held and a variety of community groups meet. The village shop and tearoom provide essential groceries, a café service for the community and visitors with seasonal opening hours, as well as hot evening meal takeaways. There is also a Parish Church. The Community Council are concerned that without a younger population demographic, existing services will be unsustainable if the area becomes no more than a settlement for an ageing population, holiday homes, short-term holiday rentals and empty, deteriorating properties.

The Carsphairn Community Future Plan 2016, commissioned by the Carsphairn Community Trust, highlighted the provision of housing as a priority to attract more families to the area. The updated Future Plan of 2021 once more identified that housing provision should be strongly prioritised to attract newcomers and young families to address the changing demographic shift towards an ageing village population.

The Future Plan highlights the area's low wage economy and that to ensure the future sustainability of Carsphairn, it will require suitable, affordable housing provision for accommodating those whom they wish to attract to Carsphairn.



The Community Council wish to address the decline in the number of young people and families within the community, to halt the progressive fall in population numbers and services, by considering a rural repopulation agenda. The hope of attracting more families with primary age children, as well as young people of working age, will help to ensure that the village maintains and increases the existing level of service provision and the continuation of a vibrant rural community. The increased provision of suitable, family-sized, community-led housing is one solution to reverse the ageing demographic of Carsphairn, to ensure the long-term sustainability and vitality of the community.



Carsphairn Community Council Boundary Map



Background to the Survey

Carsphairn Community Council engaged with South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH) in 2022 whilst exploring potential solutions in seeking to address the lack of young families in the Carsphairn area and the pending threat of closure of one of the last services in the village- Carsphairn Primary School.

Due to a lack of available, suitable, and affordable housing to attract a younger demographic, developing affordable housing was viewed as a solution to repopulate Carsphairn and therefore ensure the sustainability of community services, such as the school. To access sources of funding to develop a housing project, evidence of local need and demand for



housing within the Carsphairn area would be required. The Community Council commissioned SOSCH to undertake a Housing Needs and Demands Assessment (HNDA) on its behalf.

The purpose of the HNDA survey was to establish the views of those living in and around Carsphairn, as well as those who would wish to relocate to Carsphairn, relative to housing needs, present and future, to consider type, size, and tenure of any potential community-owned housing project.

Community Engagement

Working with Carsphairn Community Council, SOSCH developed a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) survey which was launched on the SurveyMonkey platform as a fully digital means of gathering evidence. During the earlier COVID restrictions, online surveys became a successful way to gather responses without physical engagement and therefore it was proposed to undertake an online survey as the primary means to gather information relative to housing. Paper copies of the housing survey, for those not online, were available on request.

During the Survey period, SOSCH attended a community meeting at the request of the Community Council to support the school closure consultation discussion and make representation relative to potential community housing projects increasing the population.

The housing survey was also promoted on social media platforms with posters posted locally in the village. Articles covering affordable housing and the highlighting the housing survey were published in the local bi-monthly Glenkens Gazette from November 2022 to March 2023.

The online survey ran from December 2022 to March 2023 and received a total of 39 responses representing 101 people within the 39 households. 85% of respondents lived in the Carsphairn Community Council area representing just over half of the total population for the area. With this level of overall community engagement, SOSCH would consider the response rate to be excellent. As such, the evidence can be considered as a viable insight into the housing needs of the community.

Members of the Community Council were able to contribute their local knowledge on housing movement and property occupation, as well as local landowners who came forward to take part in further discussion during the Call for Sites which ran concurrently with the housing survey.



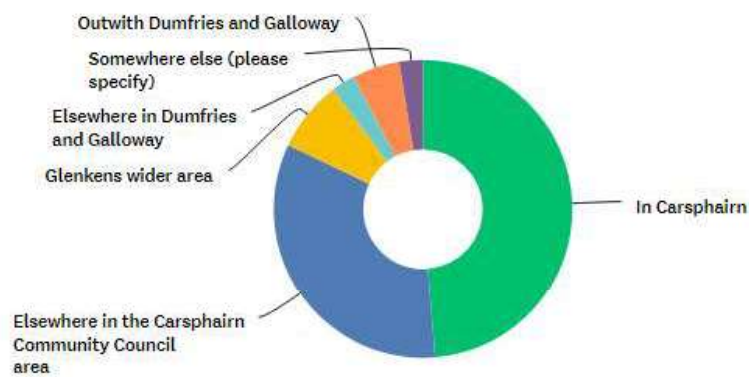
Key survey outcomes

Demographics

- From the respondents to the survey 49% lived in the village, 33% lived in the wider Carsphairn Community Council area, with 8% in the wider Glenkens, 3% in the wider region and 7% outwith Dumfries and Galloway.

Where is your main residence?

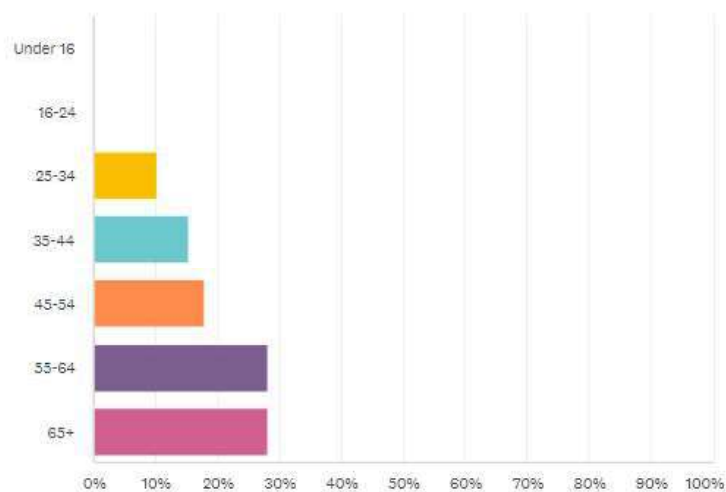
Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



- More than half (56%) of respondents were aged 55 and over. 18% were aged 45-54, 15% were aged 35-44 with 10% aged 24-35. No-one aged under 25 responded to the survey.

Which age range are you part of?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0

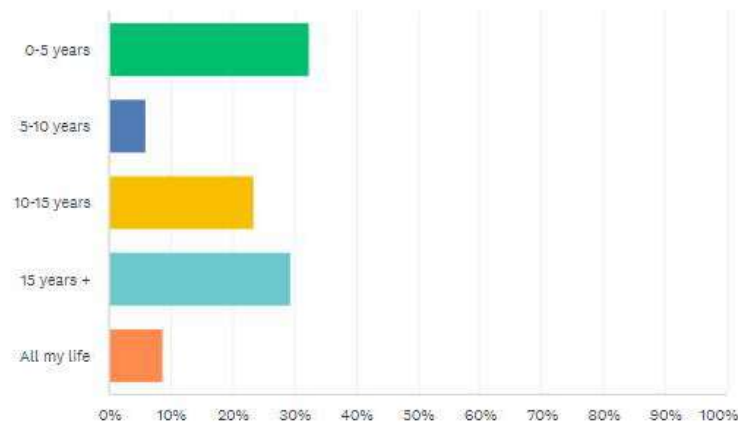




- 9% of respondents who lived in Carsphairn were life-long residents, with 29% living here for 15 years or longer. The largest group of respondents (32%) were relative newcomers to Carsphairn having lived here for less than 5 years.

If you live in Carsphairn, how long have you lived here for?

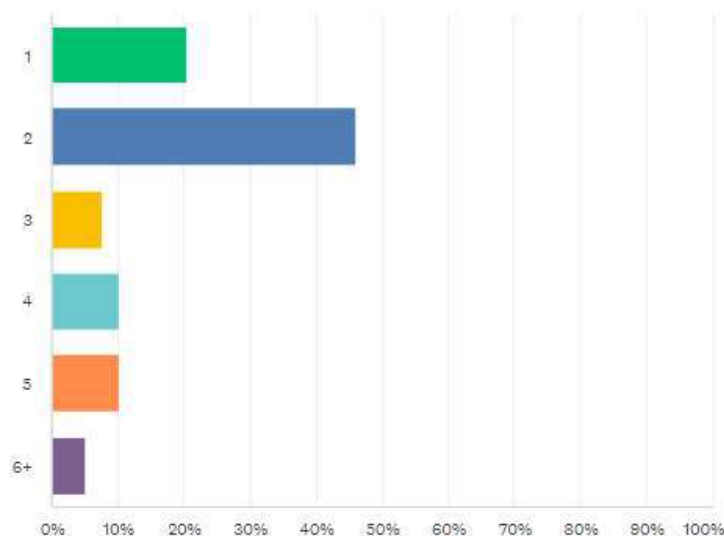
Answered: 34 Skipped: 5



- Survey results indicated households comprising only 2 occupants represented the largest occupancy number group at 46%, with 21% of households having only one household member, 8% of households had 3 occupants, 10% households had 4 members and 15% of households had 5 or more members.

Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0

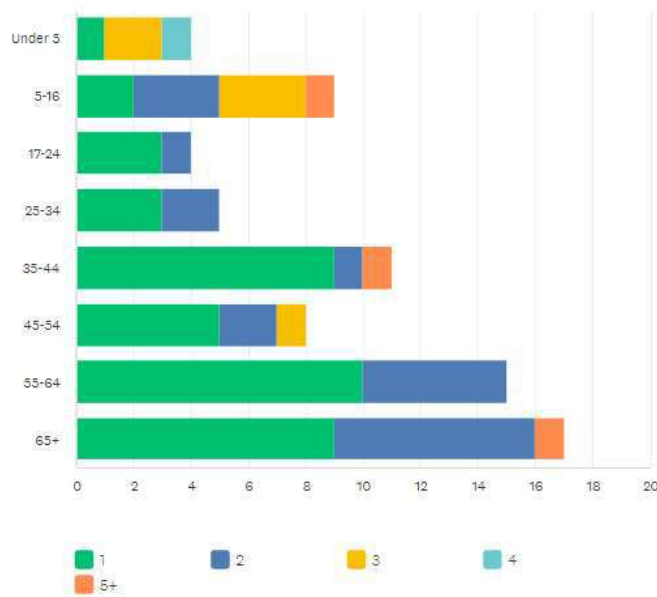




- The ages of the other residents within households, indicated many (31%) comprised households with occupants over 55 years of age. There were 4 families who contained 9 children under 5 years of age.

What age are members of your household, including yourself? (Please tick the number in each age range)

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0

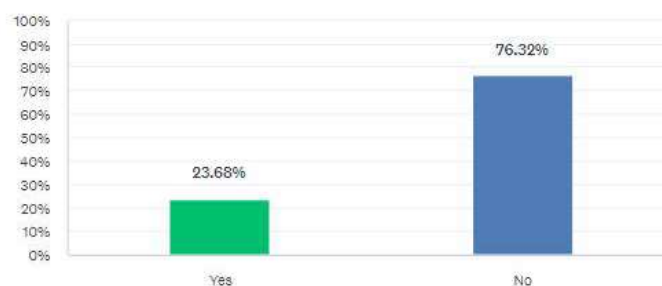


(The number of households are shown horizontally with the number of household members in each age group shown in colour block segments)

- Whilst the survey does not represent the entire population of Carsphairn nor residents within the Carsphairn school catchment area, 6 respondents living within the Carsphairn Community Council area stated they have children of primary and pre-school age.

Do you have pre-school or primary school age children in your household?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 1

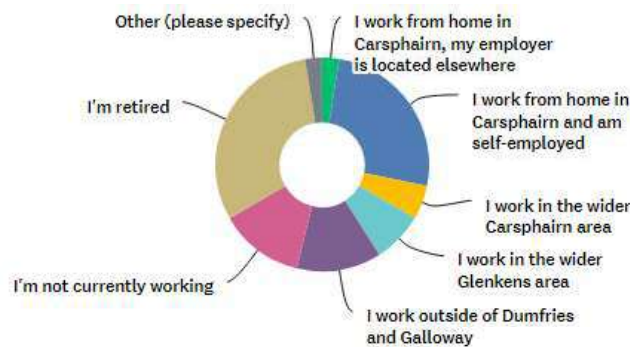




- 34% of respondents worked in Carsphairn and its wider area with most of those being self-employed. 31% of respondents were retired, 13% worked outside Dumfries and Galloway and 13% were not currently employed. 8% work in the wider Glenkens area. One 'other' revealed they did in fact work in the Carsphairn area.

Do you currently work in the region, either from home or at a place of work?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



When asked what attracted them to the area, the most common words used in response to this question appear in the 'word cloud' below, with the most often used of these words being in the largest text:





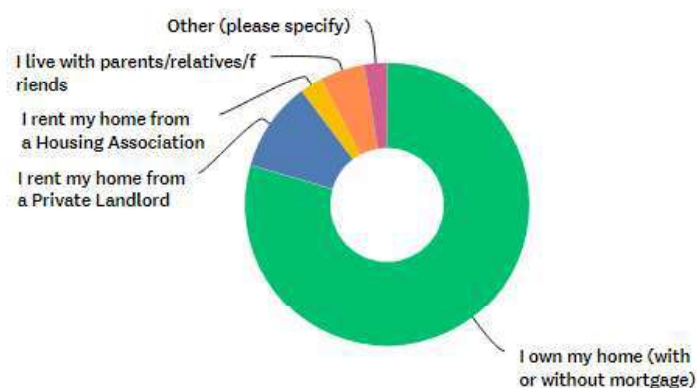
It is evident that people feel that Carsphairn is an attractive place to live and work and is considered an area of high amenity value. The sense of community and the peaceful, scenic rural location all contribute to the sense of place that local inhabitants value highly.

Housing

- As with many rural areas of the Dumfries and Galloway region, most respondents were homeowners (79%), with 10% living in private rented accommodation, 3% renting from a housing association, 0% in a home tied to employment, with over 5% living with family and friends. One respondent in 'other' stated they had a daughter who lived with them but she required her own accommodation. Some respondents stated elsewhere that they were living in a caravan but did not consider this as 'temporary accommodation' in this question.

What is your current tenure?

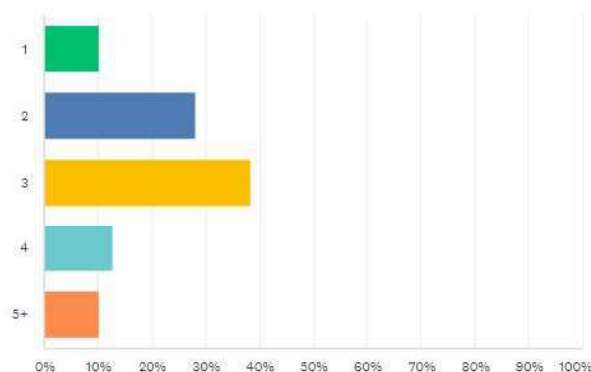
Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



- 39% of respondents currently occupied homes which had 3-bedrooms, 28% with 2-bedrooms, 10% with 1-bedroom and 23% with 4 or more bedrooms.

How many bedrooms does your current property have?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0

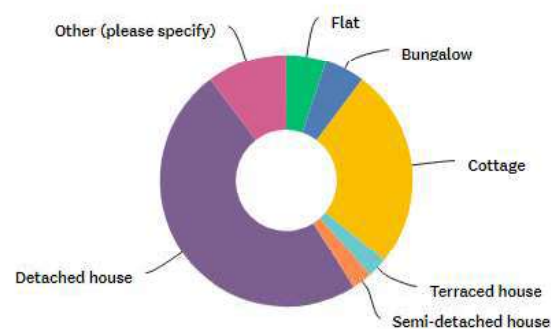




- Nearly half (49%) of respondents live in detached houses, with 26% living in cottages. There are much lower numbers of households occupying flats (5%), bungalows (5%), terraced houses (3%) and semi-detached houses (3%). Just under 10% lived in caravans which were not entered as 'temporary accommodation' as an option in the previous tenure question above. No-one responded to living in tied accommodation.

What kind of property do you currently live in?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



Special Interest Questions

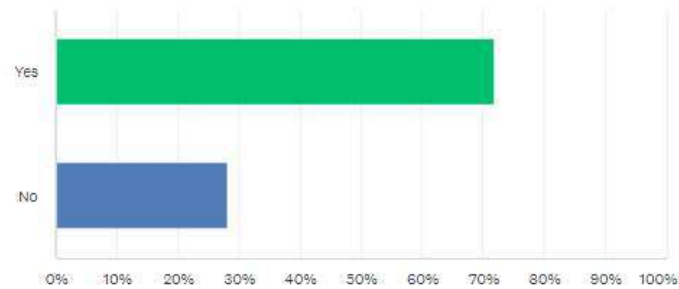
SOSCH are always keen to work collaboratively on our housing needs and demands approach, seeking the views and concerns of the community groups we work with whilst creating our Surveys. We have developed some special interest questions for inclusion which are particularly significant for the types of rural communities in the South of Scotland that we are working with. These questions relate to fuel poverty, energy efficiency, and working from home, all of which are now coming into sharper focus because of the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been a shift in workplace patterns, with the rise of working from home continuing post-pandemic, as well as an impact from the current energy crisis and cost of living linked to rising inflation on household finances. All these factors have a bearing on how our homes meet our needs and allow households to live affordably. Carsphairn Community Council were interested in feedback from questions relating to the school with a view to its re-opening in the future.



- When asked if their current property met the needs of everyone in the household, 28% responded that it did not.

Does your property meet the needs of everyone in your household?

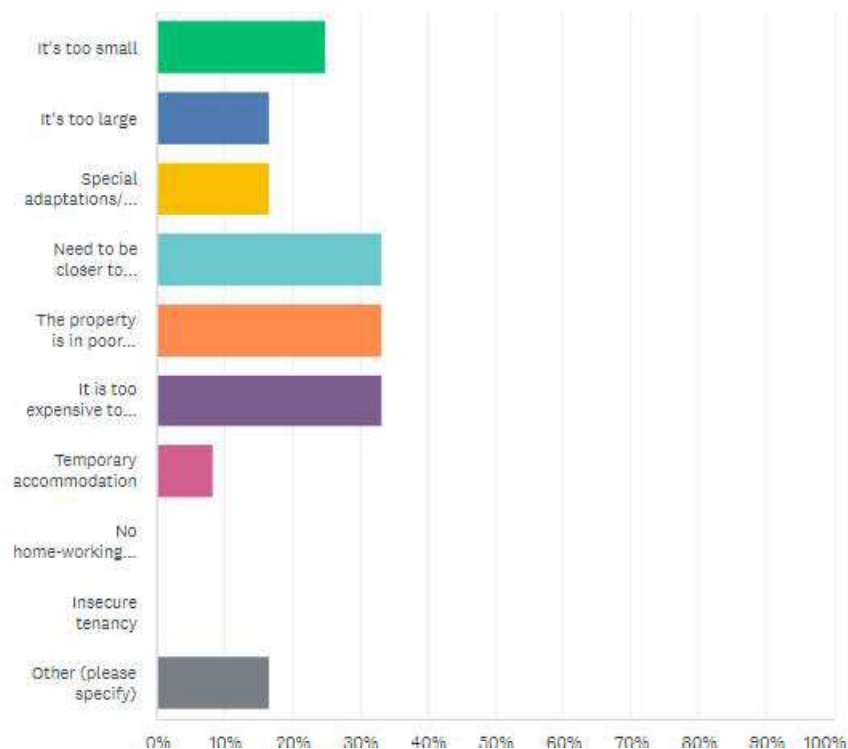
Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



- Where respondents felt that their property did not meet household needs, most considered their home too small, too expensive to run or in poor condition. Comments in the 'Other' category included overcrowding, cold and small.

If you chose 'no', what needs does your property not meet? Tick all that apply

Answered: 12 Skipped: 27

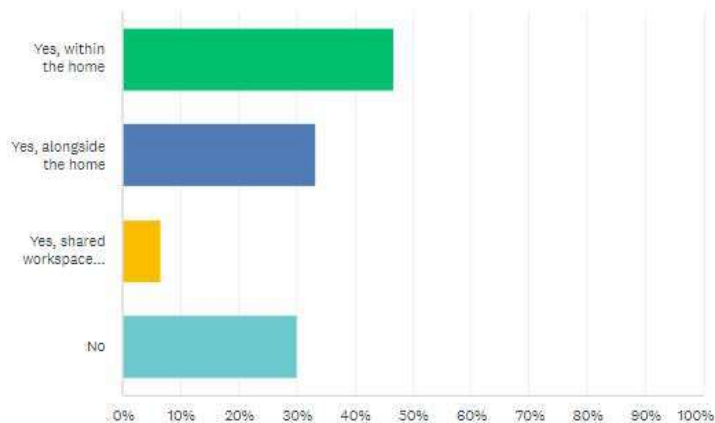




- When asked if anyone in their households require space to work from home, 70% responded that they would require some type of workspace.

If you plan on moving, would you require workspace?

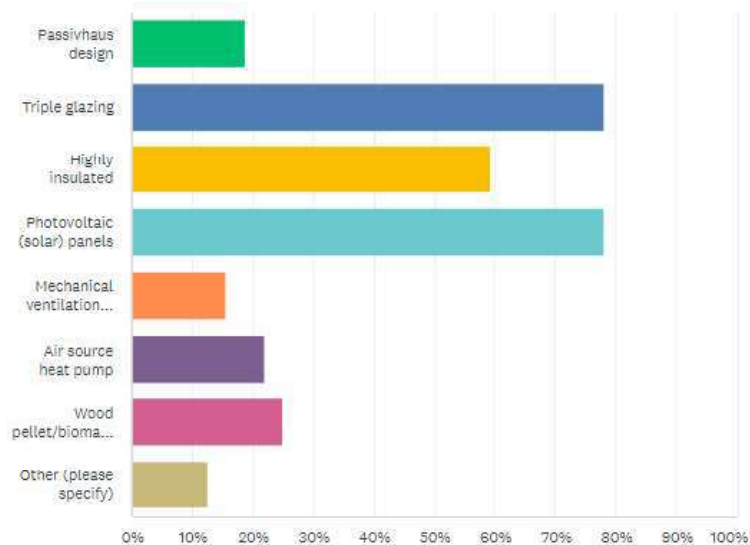
Answered: 30 Skipped: 9



- Given options on measures that respondents considered would make their homes more affordable to run, solar panels, triple glazing and properties which were highly insulated were considered the best options to reducing running costs.

With fuel poverty and energy efficiency in mind, are there any measures that would make running your household more affordable? Tick all that apply.

Answered: 32 Skipped: 7

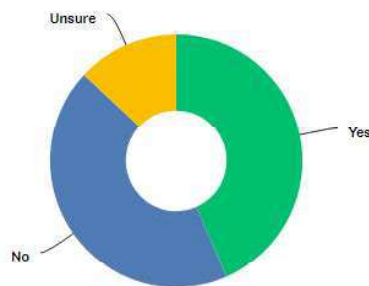




- In relation to the mothballing of the local primary school and the link to housing availability, need and demand, the community council were interested to collect information within the housing surveys. 20 respondents had themselves, or have family members, who attended the primary school in the past. Of the 23 respondents to the question of whether they would send their children to the school should it re-open, although a small percentage (13%) were unsure, there was an even split between those who would and wouldn't send their children to the primary school if it re-opened.

If Carsphairn Primary were to re-open, would you send your children to the school?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 16

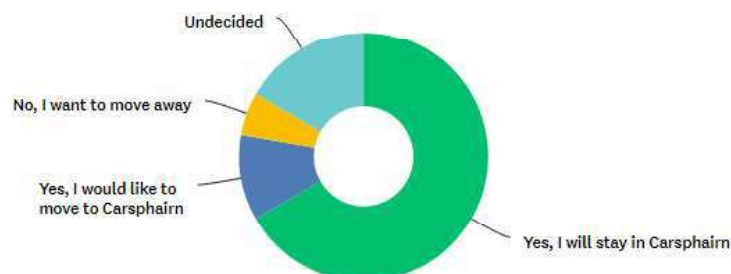


Future Housing Needs

- 67% of respondents said they plan to stay in Carsphairn, with 6% proposing to leave. 11% indicated that they would like to move to Carsphairn with a total of 17% indicating that they were undecided.

Do you intend to stay in or move to Carsphairn in the future?

Answered: 36 Skipped: 3

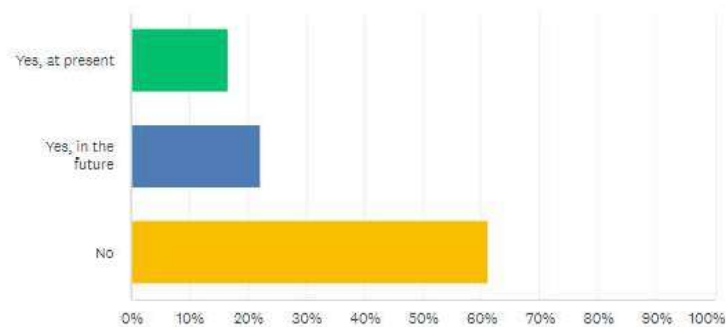




- Overall 39% of respondents said they were currently in need of affordable housing or that they, or someone else in their household, may be in need within the next five years.

Are you, or is anyone else in your household, currently in housing need or likely to be in the next 5 years?

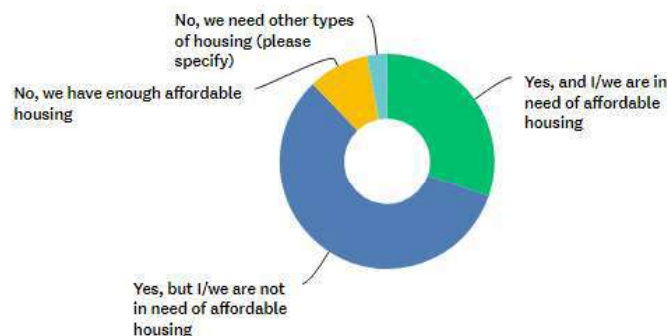
Answered: 36 Skipped: 3



- When asked if they thought there was a need for affordable housing, 30% of respondents said they were in need of housing in Carsphairn with a further 58%, although not in direct need themselves, felt there was a need for affordable housing in the village.

Do you feel there is a need for affordable housing in Carsphairn?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 6

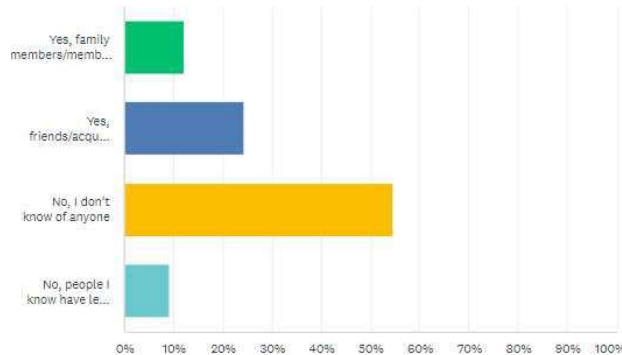


- 36% of respondents knew of someone who had left Carsphairn due to the lack of housing options. Moving due to declining facilities and transport services were the main written responses for leaving Carsphairn. Comments reflected that as the population had declined, services had declined, with an insufficient population to maintain services.



Do you know anyone who has left Carsphairn due to lack of affordable housing?

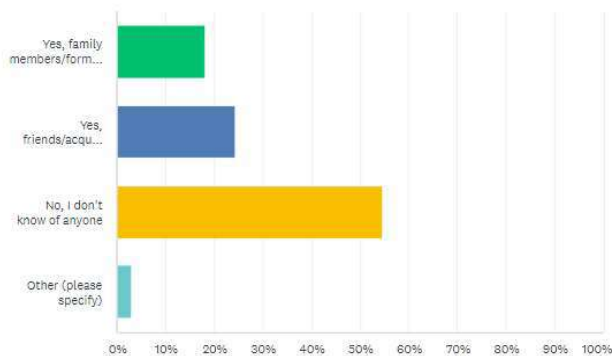
Answered: 33 Skipped: 6



- When asked if they knew of anyone who would need affordable housing in order to move to Carsphairn, 42% responded yes, they did.

Do you know of anyone who would need affordable housing in order to move to Carsphairn?

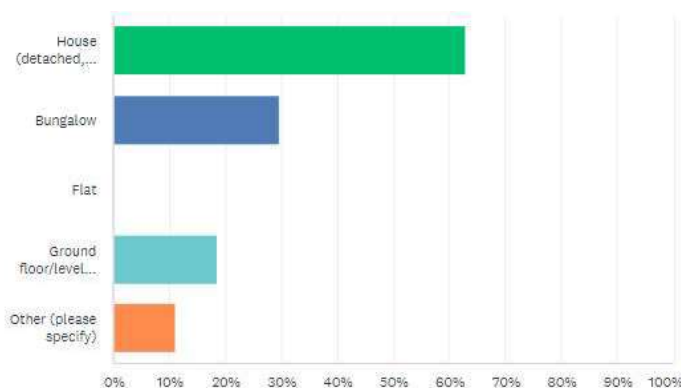
Answered: 33 Skipped: 6



- When asked what type of accommodation best suited their needs, 63% of respondents felt that a house (detached, semi-detached or terraced) would be their preferred choice of house type, with bungalow (30%) being the next preferred option.

What type of accommodation would best suit your needs? Tick all that apply.

Answered: 27 Skipped: 12

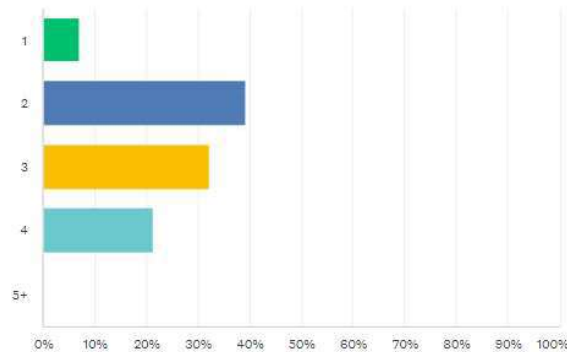




- When asked how many bedrooms they would require, 39% indicated that 2-bed properties were the option most sought after, followed by 3-bed properties (32%), 4-bed properties (21%) and 1-bed properties (8%).

How many bedrooms do you need?

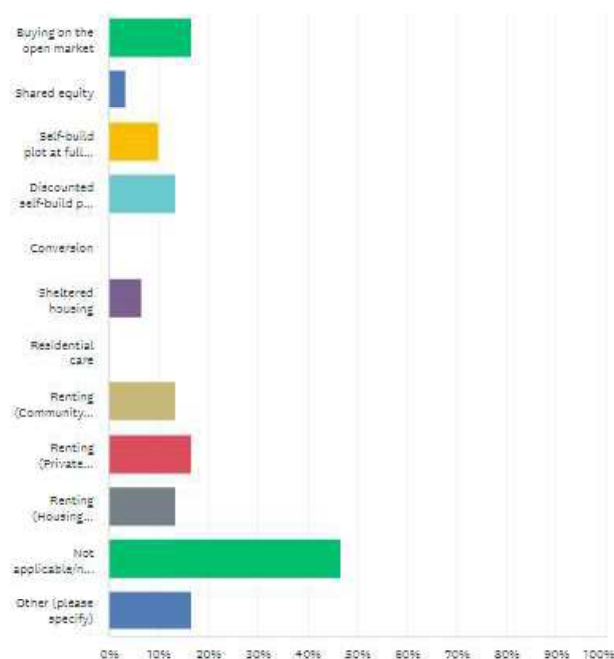
Answered: 28 Skipped: 11



- Asked about the type of tenure they would prefer, 13% would prefer to rent from a housing association, 13% from a community organisation, 17% from a private landlord with 17% indicating they would want to buy on the open market. From the other options: 3% would consider shared equity, 10% self-build, 0% conversion, 7% sheltered housing and 0% residential care as best suiting their needs. Written responses in the 'Other' option included respondents who expressed that they did not wish to move from their present house therefore the question was not applicable to them, one who would like to move in with their parents and a one respondent who would like to consider forest crofting.

If you are thinking about moving, within or to Carsphairn, what would best suit your needs? Tick all that apply.

Answered: 30 Skipped: 9

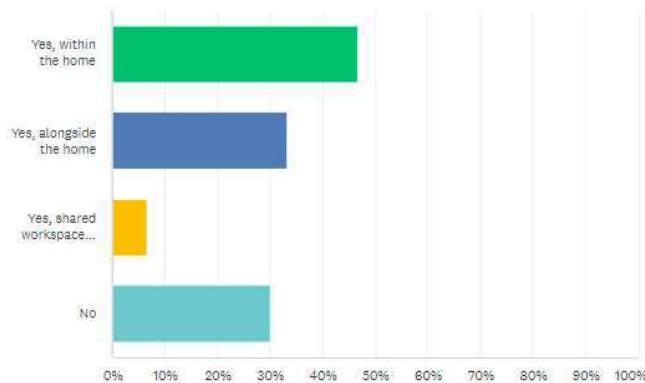




- If they planned on moving, asked if they needed workspace within, alongside the home, or a shared workspace, overall two-thirds of respondents said they would require workspace within the home, alongside the home or a shared workspace nearby.

If you plan on moving, would you require workspace?

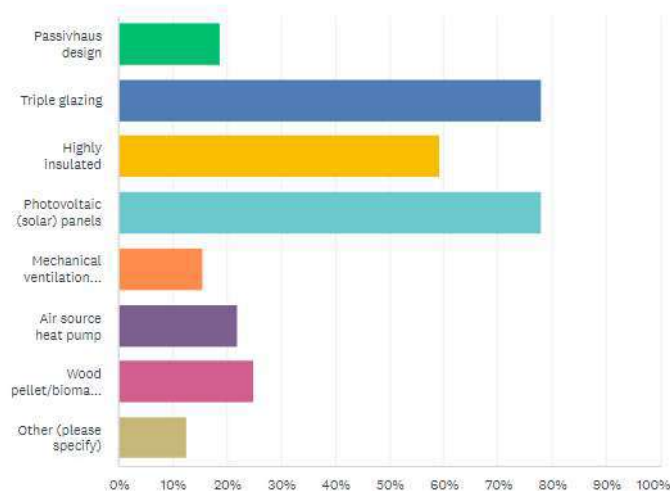
Answered: 30 Skipped: 9



- Considering measures to increase the energy efficiency of households and thereby reduce running costs, most respondents felt that measures such as solar panels, high levels of insulation and triple glazing would be most beneficial to achieve these aims.

With fuel poverty and energy efficiency in mind, are there any measures that would make running your household more affordable? Tick all that apply.

Answered: 32 Skipped: 7





Evidence from Housing Waiting Lists

While there are several Housing Associations operating in Dumfries and Galloway, information on waiting lists is only readily available from the Common Housing Register which includes DGHP, Home Group, Irvine Housing and Cunninghame Housing Association properties. Loreburn Housing Association operates its own list.

A breakdown of property type for the settlement of Carsphairn for properties on the Common Housing Register, shows that the total number of applicants is 59 for 4 properties in March 2023. There are three, 1-bedroom properties with a waiting list of 40 applicants and one, 2-bedroomed property with a waiting list of 19 applicants. There have been no new tenancies in the last 12 months.

Carsphairn

Dwelling type	Beds	Dept	Number of Properties	No. Applicants on Homes4D&G Waiting List	Number New Tenancies in last 12 months
BUNGALOW	1	HSG	3	40	
BUNGALOW	2	HSG	1	19	

Whilst the housing association lists indicate that most demand is for 1-bedroom bungalows, this size and type of property is predominantly the highest in demand across the entire region. Housing association lists can contain individual applicants who have put their name on every settlement list across the region, and as one-bedroom properties are in short supply region-wide, waiting lists may not provide an accurate picture of direct housing need within a community. The housing association lists only show demand for available property and not the demand for larger sized houses as these are none available here. The community housing survey therefore provides a more accurate picture of need within the survey area.

Carsphairn Community Trust, which covers the Carsphairn area, own one house for rent in the village.

Anecdotal evidence and future considerations

Over the last century, Carsphairn's population has been impacted by many changes: land use practices shifting from labour intensive farming practices pre-war, to forestry with its increased mechanisation reducing local employment. The subsequent abandonment, deterioration and demolition of many agricultural homes and buildings during the 20th century have been referred to as the 'forestry clearances.' Carsphairn, once a largely self-contained community where available services included 2 shops, a post office facility, visiting



mobile food vans, 3 pubs and a variety of trade services available within the local population is now reduced to one shop, a community hall, a parish church, and a mothballed primary school. With a population of 500 prior to the Second World War spiralling down to 170 in the 2020's, Carsphairn continues to be impacted by social and economic change. The demographic pressure on the community of Carsphairn now comes from factors impacting the housing market rather than from land use change and practices, some of which are outlined below:

- Rising house prices continue to affect the ability of those living in a regional low-wage economy to secure an affordable home. The impact of people migrating from a high price housing market area elsewhere and relocating to a lower price housing market has led to increased competition for local housing and inflated house prices. Those living in an area of traditionally low wages can find it impossible to compete. Those of retirement age who have financially benefitted from selling up in a heated housing market elsewhere, can find cheaper housing in lower priced rural areas an attraction to aid their retirement living costs.
- Changes in the EPC rating minimum standard requirements, introduced in 2023, for private long-term rented properties (all private rental properties must be at least EPC D from March 2023 for new tenancies and March 2025 for existing tenancies) has recently added to the pressure on the housing market in many rural areas. It is anticipated that many private landlords will choose not to bring their properties up to meet this minimum EPC standard, as they will incur costs to do so. Landlords may choose to sell properties rather than improve properties to meet these standards and further housing stock would be removed from the private rental sector, therefore further decreasing the availability of local housing to rent.
- There is also local concern that rental housing stock is moving into the more lucrative holiday rental market or being bought as second homes (currently exempt from the minimum EPC minimum standards for private rentals as outlined above). In a low-wage economy, this would potentially further exacerbate the situation for housing availability and affordability for local needs as well as leading to an increase in homes with non-permanent residents within a community.
- The Carsphairn Community Council are aware of properties with absentee owners, lying vacant within the village with the building fabric deteriorating, as they lie unoccupied and not maintained. These empty households do not contribute to the sustainability of village life and local services.
- The recent, rapid rise in mortgage rates presents another factor impacting on the housing market, not only for households with existing mortgages but also those seeking their first mortgage. In addition, landlords who themselves may have a mortgage on a rental property may now find it hard to cover their overall costs in the provision of a rental property. Again, landlords may choose to sell or move into the more lucrative holiday market if their rental income is not sufficient to cover their costs.



- Rural areas tend to have older housing stock which, if not modernised, have higher running costs. Fuel poverty is increasing as energy prices have risen rapidly during 2022-2023, creating additional financial challenges for those on low incomes.
- Since the Covid pandemic of the early 2020's, the attraction of living in rural areas has become increasingly popular. This region has historically been an area of lower national house prices, especially in rural areas, however, these are the very areas most attractive to holiday let and second-home buyers in terms of location and lower house prices. The impact of properties removed from the rental market and into the holiday and second homes market is therefore more acutely felt in these areas. Since Covid, with the shift to homeworking and their employer located elsewhere, many employees are now able to work from home and also make lifestyle choices as to where they wish to live. Good Broadband connectivity in rural areas now makes this choice more possible than ever before, with many households considering the potential of not being bound to an office location in a town. Home-working households can relocate to almost anywhere they choose.
- The availability of land for housebuilding, restrictive planning policy, taken alongside the impact of Brexit, war in Ukraine with the resultant shortage and rising cost of materials and labour to build housing, has meant that house building has had increasing challenges not only for those who wish to self-build but for housing associations and private housebuilders wishing to increase housing supply.

Other perceived issues and factors relative to housing in Carsphairn were provided by respondents to the survey. The comments as summarised below:

- Affordable family housing both to rent and buy is required in Carsphairn.
- People buy houses and then leave them empty and deteriorating when they could be used for local people.
- We need housing for young families who will work and support the local service economy.
- Modern housing should be built to lower fuel bills.
- The Community Trust should be supporting the provision of more housing that is affordable.
- More affordable housing is needed to attract and keep young people in Carsphairn.
- Landowners should make land available for working the land alongside housing.
- More housing would attract families with children and perhaps the school would re-open- I want to send my children to the village school.
- Affordable building plots for self-build should be provided.
- We may move from Carsphairn as there is no suitable and affordable housing to move to.
- Holiday homes are denying the local population rented accommodation choice.



- More housing is not required as it would ruin Carsphairn, there are not enough services and we don't need more people. I like it as it is.
- Increasing the provision of affordable housing would sustain the community, boost the existing services, perhaps allow the school to re-open.
- Although remote, Carsphairn is within reach of major road networks and airports.
- Recently sold properties in Carsphairn have been out of the reach of low paid workers- we need affordable rented accommodation that is energy efficient.
- Holiday homes are taking away the chance of living as a resident.
- Woodland crofts should be considered as a progression to the smallholdings policy.
- Empty houses which are not maintained are creating a blight, such as the empty Salutation flats.

Carsphairn Community Council recognise that this multitude of factors have affected the demographic of the village and wish to address the population situation of Carsphairn by exploring housing solutions to repopulate and sustain a vibrant and age diverse village.

Conclusion

There is at present an increasingly difficult situation across much of rural Scotland in terms of accessing suitable, available, and affordable housing. Carsphairn Community Council are seeking to provide solutions in terms of housing to address population decline to ensure the future of Carsphairn's vibrant and sustainable community.

A diverse demographic within the population of smaller, rural communities is vital to the sustainability of such increasingly fragile communities. Where young people and families are unable to find suitable housing, the decline of families of working-age within ageing communities can impact further on the sustainability of existing services, which will deteriorate further if not addressed.

The Community Council recognise that due to the lack of families with children to support the school, the school roll had fallen to such an extent that it precipitated the school mothballing proceedings by Dumfries and Galloway Education Department. The community Council believe that with the provision of suitable, affordable housing offers the community will turn around the threat of the school closure and sustain the vitality of the community.

The provision of suitable family-sized accommodation will be of importance to achieve this objective. Overall, 88% of respondents felt that there was a need for affordable housing in the community. The survey evidenced a demand for housing across the tenures of full market price self-build plots, discounted self-build plots, buying at full market price and renting. Homeworking space within the home, alongside the home or shared space nearby, was considered a requirement by two-thirds of respondents to this question. Housing that is affordable, fuel efficient and low cost to run, whether re-developing existing property or new build is considered of high importance. Detached houses and bungalows were the preferred type of housing. Respondents highlighted the need for more energy efficient homes.



Measures such as higher levels of insulation, incorporating triple glazing and other energy efficient measures, would help tackle fuel poverty and work towards net-zero aims.

The majority (67%) of households contained one or two people. With most (56%) of respondents over the age of 55, and 31% of all household members in total within this age group, this would evidence an ageing demographic.

With numerous factors currently impacting on housing needs and affordability, as outlined in the future considerations section, community-led organisation housing provision allocated with a local needs policy in place can offer a solution to ensure that housing is provided in perpetuity for local needs and offer security to tenants. Increased provision of such housing will help to ensure the sustainability of communities as thriving and vibrant places to live and work.

Whilst people are familiar with housing associations and what housing provision they can offer, community-led housing developments are emerging as a solution to local housing issues. Increased community empowerment policies afford community organisations more say in the type of housing offers they can provide within the local community for local needs and develop their own housing solutions. Community-led development can offer affordable, secure tenancies with a local needs allocation policy.

When asked if there was anything else to add about housing options and availability of housing in Carsphairn, the following Word Cloud was produced:

