



**Enabling and Customer Services Committee
10 February 2026**

APPENDIX 3

MAILBOX REPRESENTATIONS

The following Appendix presents a redacted version of the consultation feedback received.

The full, unredacted responses were provided to Elected Members.

For publication, limited redactions have been applied to remove offensive language and to protect personal data or information that could identify individuals.

All comments received by the council including emails to Yourbudget@dumgal.gov.uk email inbox and letters

3.1 – INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS

Good Morning. I heard more money is being put into mental health funding, but yet you are wanting to withdraw funding for families than use local services to receive respite. This service helps families mental health as they get a break but it also gives people in the local community extra work and therefore more money going back into the community. I see many more cost cutting than I would prioritise before services that affect mental health and absence from work due to illness and exhaustion.

Hi , I think you should charge the public a small fee , as I think it's great that we have this on our door step

Dear Team,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my significant concern regarding the budget consultation drop-ins, particularly the apparent lack of availability in more rural locations. These communities, which will be directly impacted by proposals such as small school closures, may not have the opportunity to voice their opinions. This is especially worrying as these closures predominantly affect rural areas, which rely heavily on such institutions.

Furthermore, rural residents face unique challenges that impede their ability to provide feedback online. Issues such as poor internet connectivity and fuel poverty are prevalent, making it difficult for many to participate in online consultations. Research has shown that rural areas are disproportionately affected by these factors, further exacerbating their exclusion from the consultation process. Moreover, for those with children who have additional needs, travelling to distant drop-ins poses significant difficulties, preventing many from attending these meetings or submitting their feedback forms online.

It is crucial to ensure that these communities are given equal opportunities to participate in the consultation process. I urge you to consider organising additional drop-ins in more rural areas or providing alternative methods for these residents to effectively contribute their feedback. Such measures would not only ensure inclusivity but also align with the Equality Act 2010, which mandates equal opportunities for all individuals.

Additionally, I believe it is essential to consult children, particularly those attending small schools with up to 50 pupils, to ensure their voices are heard. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 12 emphasises that children have the right to express their views on matters affecting their education. By including their perspectives, we can better understand the impact of these proposals on their educational experience.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how we can better support our rural communities.

[further correspondence from respondent]

My response was too long for the text box, so could you please submit the following on my behalf:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to any further reduction or closure of small rural schools in Dumfries & Galloway.

Across the region, repeated attempts to rationalise the school estate have left many communities uncertain and demoralised. Every few years the same proposals return under the language of “sustainability” or “bravery,” but in practice, these changes have damaged communities rather than strengthened them.

When small schools close, the evidence from our own region is clear. In Drummole, the recent loss of the Early Learning Centre was described locally as a “catastrophic betrayal of rural education.” Families warned it would begin a “death spiral,” as removing nursery provision undermines the viability of the primary school and drives young families away. Carsphairn saw similar effects: after its school was mothballed, children faced long, tiring commutes and parents reported increased stress and reduced ability to work. St Ninian’s RC Primary has sat empty and decaying for years, costing the council thousands annually in insurance and maintenance while its community lost a vital hub. In each case, the pattern is the same — closures do not save money; they simply shift costs elsewhere and erode the social fabric of the area.

The human impact of these decisions can be profound. My son, [REDACTED], was one of the children displaced when his first small school was mothballed. The disruption, loss of familiar adults and uncertainty about his place had a devastating effect on him. At just five years old he required emergency mental health support after expressing suicidal thoughts. [REDACTED] is autistic and has both speech and literacy difficulties. In his current small school he has flourished. Staff have already identified his literacy challenges and created a plan to assess and support him at the appropriate age. He receives focused learning that builds his confidence and, despite a speech impediment, he now feels secure enough to represent his peers on the Rights of the Child team. Without the support and environment of a small school, [REDACTED] would likely need a specialist learning centre placement — an option that would cost the council many times more each year than his current small-school education. For children like [REDACTED], small schools are not a luxury; they are a lifeline.

The perception that small schools are financially unsustainable is misleading. Their costs are largely fixed. A single-teacher school with one support assistant and running costs of around £105,000 per year looks expensive with ten pupils (£10,500 each) but costs £5,250 per pupil with twenty, and £4,200 with twenty-five — less than the average in larger schools. The issue is not inefficiency but under-enrolment, caused partly by repeated threats of closure. Promoting and celebrating these schools as calm, inclusive environments would increase rolls, reduce average costs, and ease pressure on urban schools.

True bravery in education policy lies in creativity, not closure. Dumfries & Galloway promotes itself as a region of balance, opportunity and rural quality of life, yet these proposals risk dismantling the very communities that embody those values. Small schools could instead be reframed as inclusive learning hubs — spaces that support children who struggle in larger environments, and that sustain rural families who contribute to our wider economy and public services.

The supposed savings from closure rarely materialise. When small schools close, other public costs rise sharply. Children who can’t manage in large settings often need one-to-one support or specialist placements costing £30,000–£60,000 per child per year. Attendance and welfare services are stretched. Referrals to CAMHS increase. Parents leave work to manage long journeys or distressed children, resulting in lost income, higher benefit dependency and greater carer burnout. These are not savings — they are hidden costs borne by other departments and families.

Small schools save money by preventing these crises. They provide early identification of needs, stable relationships, and a calm environment that supports attendance. They reduce the need for expensive interventions, specialist placements and mental-health referrals. They embody the preventative-spending principle that both COSLA and the Scottish Government claim to prioritise.

Research consistently supports this. The Scottish Government's Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education found that small schools achieve equivalent or higher attainment than larger ones once context is considered. Education Scotland highlights that small schools have higher attendance, lower exclusion rates and stronger relationships. The OECD praises small rural schools for their inclusivity and personalised learning. These are not nostalgic claims — they are evidence-based.

Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is sometimes presented as a positive outcome after closures, but without sustained financial and technical support it often moves the burden rather than solving it. It looks good in a report — a “saving” for the council and a “success” story of community empowerment — yet in practice it can leave small volunteer groups responsible for large, ageing buildings they cannot afford to heat or repair. What appears as empowerment can become managed decline, where risk and cost are shifted from the public purse to already over-stretched residents. True partnership would mean shared responsibility, ongoing guidance, and access to energy-efficiency funding so these buildings can genuinely thrive rather than quietly deteriorate.

The argument that closures create savings ignores these realities. Vacant buildings still require upkeep, urban schools cannot downsize, and transport and carbon costs rise permanently. The only genuine efficiency comes from using what we already have more intelligently — keeping small schools open, well-promoted and multi-purpose.

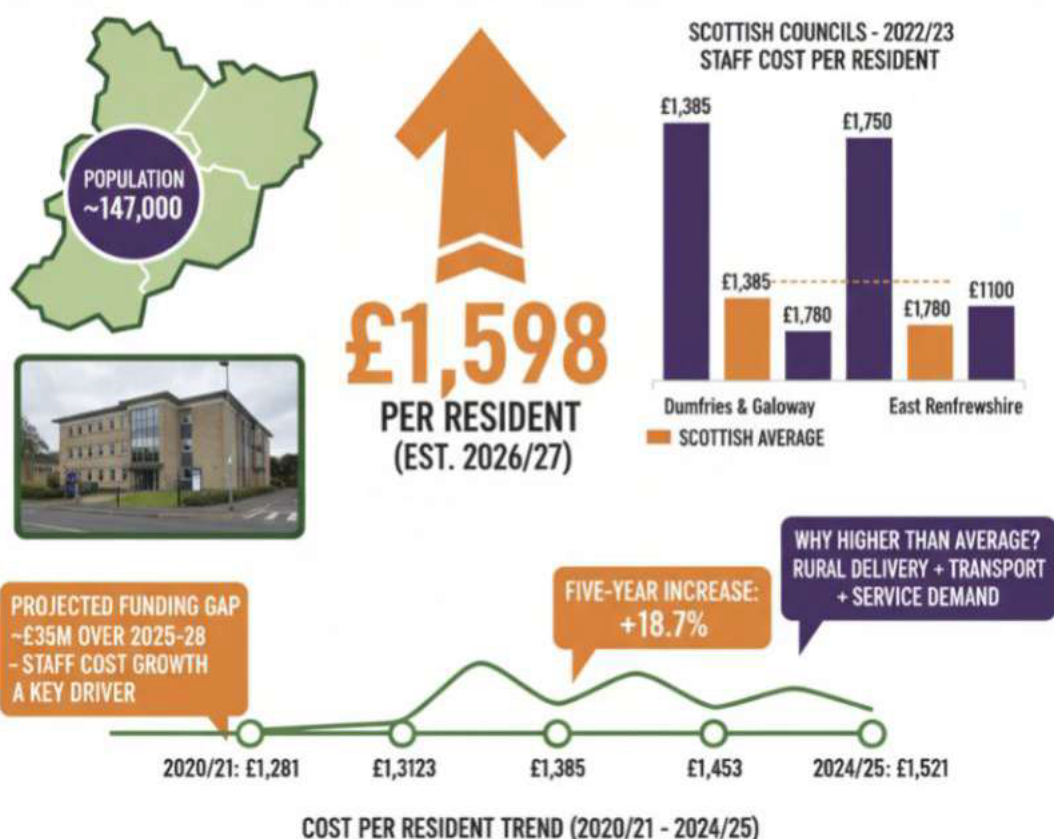
Small schools give far more than they take. They provide inclusion, stability, early intervention and equality of access — the foundations of a fair education system. They keep parents in work, sustain local economies and preserve the sense of belonging that defines Dumfries & Galloway's identity. These are not inefficiencies to be removed; they are assets to be protected.

The measure of a sustainable education system is not how little it costs, but how well it cares for the people it serves

Good afternoon (that's [REDACTED] CPN) I'm sending this email on behalf of [REDACTED] she has a learning disability also mental illness and mobility issues her taxi card is important for her to go to every hospital appointments without having to call the ambulance service, before removing the taxi card please take in consideration as it's very necessity also it's important avoid call the ambulance for the multiple hospitals appointments thank you

Addressing the question of benchmarking comparisons of the annual Cost of Delivery - even within like rural administrative areas. Should this area of budget be allowed broader discussions with residents as it constitutes the largest area of a...

COUNCIL STAFF COSTS PER RESIDENT: DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY (AND SCOTTISH BENCHMARK)



DATA SOURCES: LGBF, ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT, COUNCIL BUDGET PAPERS. ALL FIGURES ESTIMATED/ACTUAL FOR Dumfries & Galloway Council.

Why do you not introduce paying for parking at white sandscreating scratch cards which can be purchased at council buildings will create revenue for the future

Kindest regards

Dear Sirs,

With regard to your ongoing consultations I understand the closure of the Whithorn tip is a consideration. Firstly let me say that this is an incredibly short sighted move, the Southern Machars have a need of this facility, it is a long journey to Newton Stewart which is not as user friendly and certainly with the added mileage of multiple users not a green option. It is hard enough to convince people to dispose of waste in a proper manner without a disincentive of a long journey. This I have no doubt would lead to more fly tipping which will in the long term cost the council a considerable amount. Secondly there is also a proposal to shift the "black bin" collection to a three weekly cycle, something also more likely to end up in fly tipping.

As a frequent visitor to the Whithorn facility I commend the people running the site for their helpfulness, as a council tax payer I will be more than dissatisfied if this vital amenity is removed.

Regards

I'm sad to hear about the proposed closure of the recycling facility at Whithorn.

I have completed the on-line survey but would particularly like to comment on this proposal.

Whilst I understand the need to look closely at budgets to cut costs in these difficult times I think closing this amenity will seriously disadvantage the rural communities in the surrounding area.

I believe it this closure can only lead to an increase in fly tipping, blighting the surrounding countryside and will, in the long run, end up costing Dumfries and Galloway council more in cleaning up the mess left behind. Not to mention the potential hazard it could cause to local wildlife and to farm animals.

The staff manning Whithorn are brilliant, helpful and always professional and polite, and speaking from a personal perspective, when we moved into our house in Port William just over 2 years ago our lives would have been made much more difficult and expensive if we hadn't had the Whithorn facility to use.

I hope that the Council will reconsider the proposed closure of Whithorn.

Dear sirs,

I am writing to object to plans to close the recycling centre at Whithorn. I live on the Isle of Whithorn and getting to that centre is a reasonable car journey of 11.2 miles round trip taking approximately 30 minutes for the round trip. I use the site regularly as living in a rural area I am reliant on online deliveries which leads to an excess of cardboard packaging. Too much for my blue bin to cope with.

Bin collections are already only once a fortnight for grey bins and once a month for blue and red bins. Any less than that would be unmanageable. I have family members who regularly visit that have health conditions that lead to extra household waste so it is unhygienic and difficult to dispose of refuse. I also have a cat who uses a litter tray so any reduction in bin collections or reductions in bin size would impact me negatively.

If the site at Whithorn was closed it would mean a round trip of an hour and 15 minutes, travelling almost 45 miles if I needed to get rid of extra household waste. I do not drive so as it stands I have to wait for a visiting relative to kindly give me a lift to Whithorn with my waste. Can you imagine asking someone to kindly take you on a journey of an hour and fifteen minutes to get rid of waste? If I offered to compensate them at mileage rates set by the inland revenue at 0.45 pence per mile it would cost me £20.25 for such a trip. The increased pollution from all these car journeys should also be taken into account. As well as the obvious increase in fly tipping, which would undoubtedly follow such a closure.

I don't understand why you are considering closing this facility when it will lead to fly tipping which is costly to clean up and difficult to control? Tourism is one of the biggest revenue streams for a rural area like ours, and to encourage fly tipping by closing the only recycling centre within 20 miles is short sighted. If cuts need to be made, perhaps it should be open less often, so that the staffings costs can be reduced. Either for less hours on a given day or for less days in a given week. That could be a compromise.

Living in a remote part of the County means I do not have access to a lot of council facilities that other residents do. I still pay the same council tax as those who have access to libraries, swimming pools and leisure centres. The only council facility I use is that recycling centre so I would be really angry if that was closed. My share of the council tax should be more than enough to cover the one service I utilise on a regular basis.

I have also heard rumours that you might reduce bin collections to less than fortnightly for the grey bins. If you do this at the same time as closing recycling centres you really are asking for trouble.

I hope you will consider these points during the consultation period and decide AGAINST closing Whithorn recycling centre.

I would also like to point out that the consultation is taking place in Newton Stewart, the closure is in Whithorn and the consultation should have been organised for a local venue, not one more than twenty miles away. I'm assuming this is to discourage us from being able to attend the consultation. Very underhanded indeed!

Yours faithfully,

Dear Sir or Madam

It is good to have an opportunity to be able to join this consultation. Thank you.

I have just two points to make:

1 I can see that your proposals involve selling off/relinquishing some physical assets. (I am already receiving messages from various interest groups who do not want to lose their - or others' - venues.) My main reservation here is that the town, and the county just become meaner places - and less attractive to visitors and residents. But that is permanent: closed schools, museums, social venues cannot ever be recovered.

Reduction of services (buses, refuse collections) presumably achieves savings by reducing staffing costs. That may achieve Council savings, but those costs will have to be borne by other bodies and authorities - eg employment supplements for laid-off workers to make up their pay.

I know that these considerations will be on everyone's mind. I would like to think that savings in these areas would be made as an absolute last resort.

2 Abandon the proposed flood-defence scheme for the Whitesands. I cannot remember the figures here - might it be a £15M - £20M contribution from D&G Council? That would make a very big contribution to the savings that are needed. I understand that we would then have to forego the contribution from the Scottish Government. Residents and businesses on the Whitesands would have to contend with the occasional flooding, as they have always had to do. (Besides, there have always been vocal oppositions to any such scheme!)

I might also mention that the headline in a recent D&G Standard must have puzzled many: that £250,000 was to spent on (yet more) consultants to look into improving bus services. Some may see that as profligacy, and perhaps it is under the present circumstances.

Sincerely,

Hello there,

I would just like to express my wish that the recycling centre in Whithorn remains open.

Its a very valuable resource for us as we live near Portwilliam and the other centres are far away.

Kind regards

Hi. Just a short message re proposal to close whithorn recycling centre. This would drastically increase the journey to dispose of unwanted items and rubbish to an hours round trip to newton Stewart. I feel this would lead to more fly tipping or increase burning and burial of rubbish. No matter what way you look at it ALL worse for the local environment.

I have just read on the Wigtown community page about the possibility of closing Whithorn recycling site to help save money.

I would strongly object to this proposal although a reduction of opening hours would be acceptable.

I fear our hedgerows, farm land and coast being littered by fly tippers. The costs to landowners and the council to clean up these illegal dumping I'm sure will exceed any savings made by cutting these services.

Do not close the recycling center at Whithorn, it is used every day. Those of us who live in the far end of the Machars would have to travel 20 miles to get to Newton Stewart so that is a 40 mile round trip even further is you live in the Isle of Whithorn. This week I have had my hedge cut that means 6 large bags of green waste to go to the tip, I have a small car I can only get 2 bags in at a time so 3 trips. I am an OAP so I am not going to drive 40 miles 3 times to recycle. I don't have a large bin I have bags as I have no back entrance to my property. May I remind you that is the councils fault you are broke not us! Find something in Dumfries to close.

Yours

Dear Sirs

I have taken part in your survey/questionnaire about the 2025/26 budget and while I agree with many of the savings proposed and ambivalent about others there is one I must protest about. This is the proposed closure of the civic amenity site (tip) at Whithorn.

It may be small but it functions very well for the residents of the Machers and the possible alternatives are a goodly distance away. The closure would be a huge inconvenience to us all. The assistants at the site (who are exceptionally helpful and always cheerful) tell me that they regularly get around 40 and as many as 60 visits per day --not a bad performance for a site that is basically only open half days for five days a week.

The downside for the authority is the inevitable rise in fly tipping which will surely happen if people have to go tens of miles to visit a tip--and the costs of clearing this and the visual blight it will bring.

I would ask that the authority removes this item from its agenda of closures / cutbacks.

Hello

I have already completed the budget 2026/27 on-line consultation. However, the format is one chosen by yourselves and doesn't really allow for additional information.

I have already said that closing Whithorn recycling centre would be short-sighted and certainly not a saving as employees would have to be relocated, with salaries still to be paid and a potential increase in fly-tipping that just pushes the cost to another council department.

Closure would open the door to unlawful waste companies starting to operate in the area - rogue traders are always aware of potential opportunities!! I attach a news article that should set alarm bells ringing [document logged]!!

Having read the proposed budget cuts I'm very concerned as to how it will affect my family. You propose to make very hefty savings in adult and social care services budget yet none of the areas to vote on seem to reflect savings in adult and social work services!

My son with learning disabilities attends the ARC adult resource centre in Stranraer 3 days a week. This service is a lifeline to both my son and our family. It provides a safe environment to give him some time away from me his primary carer. During his ARC sessions he is encouraged to be physically active and engage in meaningful activities. These activities are life skills relating to doing basic gardening making cakes and physical maintenance tasks such as power washing. These skills give him a very small insight into independence, not that he'll ever live without constant support which we as a family provide. The ARC is essential for both his physical and mental health. Please consider the impact of making cuts to disabled families ! By cutting one service you move the focus to another service, these services are already over subscribed under funded and under staffed. The knock on effect to these families will be devastating!

Regards

I understand closure of the rubbish and recycling facility at Whithorn is under consideration. I think this would be a mistake leading to rubbish being fly tipped on the roadsides which will cost more to clear away or lead to the county becoming less attractive to visitors. The recycling facilities are also of value to the council encouraging segregation of rubbish into processable loads.

I hope this proposed closure does not go ahead.
Many thanks.

Hi, I am writing in response to changes mentioned in letter received by me. I do not agree with any cuts to summer play schemes. These are a vital part of children's development in that they are so important for contributing to their physical and mental wellbeing. The improvement of the roads is vital and ongoing especially with regard to potholes that are dangerous for motorists to navigate. The council should consult with rural communities as to how best deliver their public transport. The assisted food programme should continue to be maintained and there should be a way that can be found to do so. Thank you for all your help with these matters. Kind Regards,

FAO [REDACTED] CHIEF EXECUTIVE DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL.
Enquiry is relating to budget consultation that are currently going on .

Is [REDACTED] and Local Councillors aware that the Roads department are about to advertise up to 8 new posts across the region for Road Inspectors (each with a starting wage of 25k rising to 33k - so an outlay of £200k to start) . Where is this money coming from in the current climate of cuts ?? Also there are at least 7 individuals already trained and have been carrying out this role across the region for years , previously was 9 inspectors cut to 7 to make a saving, now Roads are about to advertise and create additional posts for another 8 new people, that are not needed!

Roads department need more men on the ground (roadworkers) not create new jobs that are already been undertaken well by the current staff.

Why not cut the council pensions, that would save everything you need too.

I am contacting you to raise an objection against the closure of the above facility. The loss of this facility will cause extra journeys and considerable inconvenience to local residents. While it may seem fiscally opportune to close this facility, it must be remembered that Dumfries and Galloway is a large rural county and on occasion it is necessary to preserve a service for the good of the community. There is also a fear that closure would lead to unwelcome fly tipping which would cause more problems.

Good afternoon,

On reading the potential closure of Whithorn's recycling and waste center, I feel the need to write in my support of its continuing operation.

I do find it somewhat staggering that the money that is presently wasted through various councils, some of which horrify me, come before something like the simple matter of waste disposal.

We are all aware of the importance of such centres, I use it where I can and I know many in my area who do the same.

It is a valuable asset that we have to our local community, and of course the large area that it also facilitates.

Shutting this down would obviously mean a very large area of folk having to travel greater distances to the next nearest operational waste recycling site.

On one hand we hear of the importance of lowering our carbon footprint, and then on the other - we hear that is no longer important.

Hundreds of people use this site throughout the year, and the extra miles that they will "chalk up" on their overall carbon footprint will be staggeringly higher than that they would have used in regards to their local site.

I receive notifications from Delivery companies stating that - 'if I collect my parcel from a local centre I will lower DPD/DHL etc carbon footprint instead of delivering to my address directly.

Are they that deluded that they forget that I then have to go in my car to the local depot, so the carbon footprint is added to my side as opposed to theirs!!

It is ridiculous, and for some reason unable to be seen by those who make the necessary rule changes as that above.

These are the type of ridiculous decisions made by people in authority, and we wonder why we have problematic issues throughout the UK on most levels.

Although this does not apply to me, but I would imagine that there will be more that the usual amount of rubbish by the roadside and in ditches, fields etc, that is just dumped because they have nowhere local to take it.

That will happen, and those considering this closure-also know it will happen, but that is something that they will deal with at the time, and cost more money clearing that up than it would've done to keep the site open in the first place.

I won't go into details, but I share the opinion of many that the money wasted with complete and unnecessary expenditure, could go to more important elements of the community structure.

So even considering closing such a useful facility as the Whithorn waste Centre, is questionable in itself.

The fact I had to sit and write this email in regards to that matter, makes me feel very insecure in the council that have decided that this is a viable option to consider in order to save funding.

I have looked at the links that would take me to the "discussion papers", but quite frankly there was no easy way to find anywhere to add an opinion, almost as if there was a purpose for that to be the case, I may be wrong of course.

Nevertheless I would appreciate greatly if you would kindly forward this email to the relevant department so my comments are noticed in regards to this, and I would appreciate some form of confirmation That would comfort me to know that my objections to the closure of the Whithorn site are being seen and considered by those relevant to the public opinions.

Thanking you in advance,

Yours,

Budget consultations are presented as a tool for local democracy, involving both elected representatives and the public in financial decisions.

In Dumfries and Galloway Council's 2026-27 exercise, both councillors and ratepayers are invited to consider officer-proposed strategies for balancing priorities and safeguarding essential services (Dumfries and Galloway Council, 2025). Limitations of Survey Design.

A key challenge of the survey is its reliance on pre-selected options that reflect officer priorities, not open community deliberation. The fixed-format approach limits participants to either affirming or rejecting specific savings or revenue-raising measures, rather than co-creating alternatives (Dumfries and Galloway Council, 2025). This design can produce what Loughlin et al. (2012) identify as "framing bias"—engagement shaped by institutional boundaries, rather than authentic, citizen-driven agenda-setting. Feedback is highly structured, with most input confined to ticking boxes for pre-determined choices.

Open, qualitative commentary is relegated to the survey's end, likely reducing the impact or volume of new ideas (Dumfries and Galloway Council, 2025).

This pattern reflects issues of passive acquiescence in public consultation raised by Cowie and Marsh (2014).

Omitted Policy Dimensions

Several critical issues are not included in the consultation:

Minimal scope for innovative or progressive income generation, such as new partnerships or investment models (Dumfries and Galloway Council, 2025). No prompts for respondents to define what "essential services" means—this restricts the ability for communities to surface genuine local priorities (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). Little explicit mention of equity impacts, even though vulnerable populations and rural communities could be disproportionately affected (Dumfries and Galloway Council, 2025).

Truly inclusive consultation must foreground underrepresented experiences and needs (Quick and Feldman, 2011). There is a lack of clear performance or impact data tied to each saving option, limiting councillors' and the public's ability to make evidence-

informed choices (Sinclair, 2008). Implications for Policy and Local Democracy

The consultation's value as a policy-influencing tool is blunted by these design choices. Councillors might interpret the results as broad public acceptance of the limited officer-framed options, though the survey does not capture community nuance or innovative proposals (Dumfries and Galloway Council, 2025). For residents, the process risks being seen as perfunctory—supporting findings about public participation and "tokenism" by Rowe and Frewer (2000).

Recommendations

For greater legitimacy and stronger local democracy, future consultation should: Allow citizens to play a role in agenda-setting and open prioritisation (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). Use broader question types to explore new ideas and explicitly seek equity and inclusion perspectives (Quick and Feldman, 2011). Provide accessible impact and contextual information next to each savings option to support informed, evidence-led feedback (Sinclair, 2008).

References

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Since making schools inclusive for children with special needs, the overall level of education has suffered. A teacher cannot successfully help children to reach their goal of good grades when having to sit and explain on a one to one basis to a Send child. I support Send children attending a school but not mainstream school. These children need intensive support and should have a dedicated school to enable this. Rather than spending the budget on Teaching Assistants to help the children, use it on a dedicated school for them. This way mainstream children will have more engaging lessons and better grades.

Dear Sir/Madam

I understand that there is a proposal to close Castle Douglas Art Gallery as part of the current round of considered cuts to Council spending.

I am fully aware of the need to operate within increasingly tight budgets. However I feel that the following issues should be considered:

The Art Gallery was gifted to the people of Castle Douglas. This bequest should be respected.

The Art Gallery is in a prime position to attract visitors and thereby add to the experience of spending time in the town.

I have noticed that neither the fact that the Gallery can be hired as an exhibition space nor the exhibits put on there have been well advertised. I have found this to be the case even when I have looked in the relevant sections of the Council Website. I am sure that this has adversely affected both the rental uptake and visitor numbers.

The Gallery has not been well maintained, no doubt due to budget constraints. Should it be closed it will surely deteriorate rapidly and become a target of vandalism.

Yours sincerely

Dear Councillors,

I have recently completed the budget consultation. At the time I didn't raise concerns over specific cuts being proposed, apart from ticking the boxes yes or no and adjusting the slider. Now I want to add to the consultation by emailing you directly.

Please protect Museum Services from budget cuts. [REDACTED] and her team are making a significant contribution to improving the profile of Dumfries and Galloway as a fascinating destination with a dynamic and varied past.

Her transformation of museum services is exceptionally uplifting in these difficult economic times and should not be underestimated by the Council.

She brings a deep love and generous enthusiasm, sharing the region's untold treasures and stories especially with younger generations who can learn to value the past in order to help build a resilient future.

After Dumfries and Galloway Council have put so much effort into revitalising and supporting this service it's a tragedy to now propose making cuts.

I support Museum Services, please find another way to balance budgets that does not affect our cultural heritage or any other educational services.

The young are our life blood.

Treasure them.

Yours sincerely,

Hello, I have completed the online budget consultation but also wanted to raise my personal concerns as part of that process.

I am a parent/carer of a young woman with learning difficulties and I am concerned that any budget savings would impact on her quality of life. She currently receives a personal budget which we use to employ a Personal Assistant who supports her to access various opportunities in the local community. This gives her a good quality of life, helps her build confidence and relationships, and promotes independence. This also gives me as her carer an opportunity to pursue my own things and also look after my 87 year old mum who also lives with us.

If cuts were made to personal budgets my daughter's quality of life would be negatively affected and my caring responsibilities would be stretched. My daughter would become socially isolated again (this was a big problem following COVID) and would become depressed and withdrawn. Carers currently actually save the Council/Government an incredible amount of money and should be supported to continue to do so. Cutting any direct/indirect support to individuals with additional support needs and/or their carers could actually create an increase in social care costs in the not too distant future.

A lot of families choose to care for their loved ones themselves and are grateful for any support/breaks they get. If this was to be removed they may then feel unable to continue with their caring role and may need to take the decision to step back and ask for the Council to step in; which would be significantly more expensive than supporting families to continue in their caring role.

I am now retired but have worked in social care sector most of my life; at the beginning of my career I was involved in the closure of long stay institutions for people with additional support needs and moving people into 'care in the community' settings and it's been so nice to see people taking their rightful place in their local communities and have good quality of lives. My worry is that as budgets get tighter and tighter the 'warehousing' of people will be seen as a good cost effective alternative to providing individual person centred care.

Regards,

Hello Folks

I have already completed the questionnaire suggesting possible cost savings for the county, and did at least touch on saving the household waste and recycling centre at Whithorn. I firmly believe the facility should be retained.

I live in Whithorn and make good use of the tip. I have friends who live close to the tip and frequently walk our dogs along Bishopton Road and the lane to the tip itself. The dogs love to run in the wooded area alongside. Now, whilst the traffic we see is not to motorway density, there is surprisingly a significant amount. The tip's catchment area is obviously sizeable and has lots of waste! If the tip were to be closed, ideally everyone would drive to the Newton Stewart facility. However, in practice, the extra journey distance would dramatically increase time and fuel costs, possibly to the point where unscrupulous people might just dump their waste in ditches, fields or hedge bottoms. Often, one bit of dumped waste encourages more people to add their own waste.

I'm sure that cleaning up fly-tipping is very costly.

The council should also consider that many longer individual journeys will consume more fuel and release more emissions. This would not align with any net zero policy.

Please help save the planet and environment by saving our household waste tip
Fingers crossed

Dear Sir or Madam,

I regularly use the recycling centre and to close it would be a major loss to the community, if it does close I will be campaigning for a reduction in council tax due to the major inconvenience of taking waste to Newton Stewart.

*Less than 1/2% of UK households
live more than 30 mins drive from a HWRC (a).*

In determining which options to pick in the consultation I would have selected, in the main, the non essential in favour of basic chore services. I would have also chosen options that could easily be returned when the financial situation improves. More options could have been ticked but these would have had provisos or needed more detail.

Although there are many other issues arising from the consultation I have used the Whithorn HWRC closure option as a benchmark. I have been a regular user of the site for 14 years and have worked there for the last 10. Thus I think I can provide a valuable insight into the site itself and the people it serves. No apologies for the long response as its not possible to communicate the concerns with a few lines of text or a tick box survey..

The consultation infers the closure of the Whithorn site is aimed at saving costs so will consider this first. The council estimate up to a 60k saving by closing the site. A relatively small amount in relation to the savings that need to be made. In the event of

closure this 60k saving may will be reduced further by a number of consequential costs if they have not been factored in.

1\ The waste (3-10 skips a week plus sundries) will still have to go somewhere so we must assume either Newton Stewart or Stranraer. These often very busy sites will need to increase capacity which in turn will increase their costs. Weekends in particular will be tricky as its hard to get skips uplifted outside of the working week with current arrangements. At times all the sites struggle with capacity especially at weekends

2/ Southern England is a good example of a direct link between fly tipping and poor, difficult to access waste facilities . Currently fly tipping is not a major problem in the Whithorn area. This suggests that waste provision is about right. Without a local recycling site that will not continue and council clear up costs for regular fly tips will escalate. Not to mention the impact this will have on the environment, tourism, health and quality of life.

3/ The Whithorn HWRC has two main site operatives (myself included) Both are long term council employees and manage the site well with minimal problems. Will the council incur further costs if their positions are lost

4/ With no viable place to off load rubbish locally, household waste will need to be stored (or dumped). Further costs will be incurred dealing with the rise in pests and vermin along with the resultant mess and health implications. For reference Whithorn HWRC does not suffer from these problems.

Closely related to cost is the notion of value. Visitor numbers are measured by the booking in system (5), yet user numbers will exceed this data on sites for a number of reasons. Specific to Whithorn HWRC are the following examples:

- Much of the time the site has just one operative. This is cost effective and despite best efforts during busy times users can be missed and ad-hoc visits unrecorded.
- Users using different cars or incorrect number plates add to work load. Frequently we are faced with the choice of monitoring the bookings and number plates or assisting users with practical help and encouraging recycling/ reuse.
- Non UK registered car number plates can not be recorded
- Regular locals who usually book but sometimes struggle with phone and internet. connections, especially when they are away from home so may not have a booking.
- For those without internet long waits to book on the phone service and no way of booking outside of office hours.
- Likewise the site itself suffers a poor signal and staff monitoring is largely dependent on a reliable broadband connection and the tablet being close to the cabin.
- Following bad weather rural areas are often the last places for electricity and phone systems to be restored. The booking system will be very difficult to access at a time when it is needed most. Likewise, cyber security issues (eg. Vodaphone recently) add small numbers to the list of unrecorded visits.
- Difficulties logging persistent non bookers. Not enough consideration given to how staff deal with persistent ad hoc visits. Judgements need to be continuously made. Do we treat an 80 year old lady with a landline the same as a 30 year old man in a van on a Sunday afternoon. Site operatives will make good judgements most of the time but it will impact on data.
- On a daily basis site users take waste to the site for neighbours and friends. In effect two local residents supported for one booking.
- As the booking system slots fill up unbooked visits increase. Busy staff have to decide to manage users and reuse/ recycle rates or monitor bookings.
- I pad difficult to use (and easily lost) in a working environment. Troublesome in cold or wet weather and when wearing gloves.

Each example may only involve small numbers but together add significantly to the numbers logged by the booking system. This adds an unseen value and also adds significantly to the impact of site closure.

Of equal concern is the council confidence in the user numbers logged on the booking system. As discussed numbers will always be higher, especially on smaller sites. Is the council adding these unseen visits to the logging in data sufficiently? If not the data can give a feel of what is going on but should not be considered reliable. Its worrying when this same data is used to set targets and compare site performance. The issues escalate when that same questionable data is used to shape policy and budgets.

In addition and having worked on three HWRC sites on a regular basis. They would all suffer capacity issues if the booking system slots were all filled on a regular basis.

Amongst other issues recycling/ reuse rates would go down, add-hoc visits go up and data recordings would suffer(1).

Also consider the Waste, Recycling and Reuse Strategy 2023–2030 (6). Worthy aims are addressed, significant infrastructure investments in Dumfries are outlined.

Improving reuse, recycling rates at HWRC's are stated as core themes. Yet there is no mention of rural site closures. In contrast to the quote by Councillor Andy Ferguson there is little evidence that;

"Our communities are central to this journey", if you live in the Machars (3).

and others need to be reminded that Whithorn HWRC is situated in a rural location. Although population levels are low, the area covered is large so offers a rare local facility that encourages responsible waste management whilst supporting the green agenda in many ways. People living in low population areas are a distinct minority group in there own right. They should have similar levels of service. Residents of Dumfries have a choice of several HWRC's . Here we have just one viable site. If a site really does need to close refer to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee report (9) and review the cluster of sites around the new Dumfries Zero Waste Park first.

H WRC Site Locations

I'm left wondering just how many people at the budget table are familiar with Whithorn HWRC on a regular basis. If they were they might meet some of the Whithorn regulars on their unavoidable weekly visits. Some will physically struggle with the gantry at Newton Stewart or the drive to Stranraer. Its unlikely that the site operative at Newton Stewart will be able to help these people every time. Is it right that even a small number of people are suddenly excluded from core council services? When according to the councils own figures the cost of running Whithorn HWRC amounts to less than £1 a year from every household in Dumfries and Galloway,

With many people living quite remote lives the site acts in a small but important way as a social hub. Post Covid many local people actually look forward to visiting the site and the social experience. This becomes increasingly important as more social spaces face closure. In the right environment recycling becomes a positive, even pleasant activity rather than a hassle and chore in already busy lives.

For those that are able and willing, site closure will force hundreds of council tax payers to undertake 30-40+ mile round trips. Using simple maths and accepting each round trip costs the user £10 and is undertaken 15 times a year that equates to a 10% rise in band D council tax for users in one specific area (check the booking data there are many people that fit this description).

A number of regulars have large families or gardens. Some live in inaccessible properties. Many more are dependent on online shopping with its resultant packaging. Current household waste collections do not meet their needs so they make regular trips to HWRC sites with their waste. A further cut is forecast in this sector. If bin

collections are reduced more people will find themselves in this position. Is it realistic to expect people to drive 40 + miles every week. Do 'carbon footprints' still matter? How does the council rationalise site closure when a key pledge from Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS) promises: *'the ability to customise services to meet the unique needs of all citizens, regardless of their household type or location'* (10). Could you look there for funding?

We now live in a world where over consumption is having a direct effect on the environment both locally and globally. Recycling and waste management is a key factor in reducing the impact (10). Sadly some people can be lazy or lead busy lives. To make recycling work it needs to be made easy to do (1).

Personal Case Study

When we purchased our near derelict house 12 years ago a big advantage was a local builders merchant and a recycle centre. In the early days of the renovations I made countless trips to the site I now work on. A local HWRC encourages new people to the area. They bring with them new skill sets, new money and invariably improve local housing stock.

More recently I travelled 50 miles supporting a local business to purchase a new washing machine. Whilst I was fitting the new machine my wife cleared out and tidied 2 large cupboards. The resulting waste saw our car loaded up twice. With the loss of the Whithorn HWRC I'd have been forced to travel twice to Newton Stewart. so 3 hours and 68 miles! With a large garden, regular small building projects and potentially a reducing bin collection service this journey would be far from practical on a regular basis. My home also has a wide drive frontage on a quiet road. I have genuine concerns about just where peoples sofas, rubble and washing machines will end up. My home is roadside. Behind it along a long private road lies 5 further households. Their bins live close to my living room window. Its not ideal but its always been that way. For our own sake and as a goodwill gesture I keep an eye and regularly take surplus waste for my neighbours to Whithorn HWRC. This could not continue if I had to travel to Newton Stewart. It would be an issue for 6 households and one the council has failed to resolve in the past. Potentially I could have 15 full bins outside my home for weeks on end. Would you find this acceptable?

These problems and more would be shared by many other home owners in the catchment area. Dumfries and Galloway has a large rural population. Supply of services to these areas will always be more difficult and costly. But these communities are an asset of increasing value that need to be budgeted for.

Fly tipping will also be a problem for local farmers and land owners. They will be responsible for clearing their own land. Where does the time and money come from to do this and where do they move the fly tipped rubbish too. Although not a simple solution, could the council consider a dedicated and chargeable trade waste facility. The infrastructure is perhaps already in place at Stranraer and assuming a profit could be made it would help reduce overall waste management costs in a number of ways (1).

Consider charges for overly frequent bookings/ Could 'car park technology' be used to monitor site bookings? This would have many benefits including producing accurate data and free up staff from the task. There is a direct link between staff availability and recycle rates (1).

Perhaps rethink the potential of a profit generating service that collects waste from small trade jobs and larger DIY projects. Introducing charges would not be popular but less so than site closures. Reducing waste volume by the public at HWRC's will also, again have a positive impact on recycling/re-use rates (1). Rural site closures will have the opposite effect.

At Newton Stewart and Whithorn the Reuse Shop has containers for saleable goods. Although this has had a successful and positive outcome. It adds to site operatives

work load. Its hard to decide if the Reuse Shop is a charity or a business but it does appear to be financially viable. Why haven't the council done something similar? Or do you at least make a charge for the containers, locations and the labours of site operatives? Should essential chore services suffer for the benefit of arguably the well funded and non essential during times of savage budget cuts? Or is ticking the ZWS reuse box more important?

Its easy to just cut localized core services but a balance needs to be found between accessibility, costings and consequences. The Machars expect more from their well paid senior management team than conflicting rhetoric and simplistic cost cutting measures.

More specifically at Whithorn HWRC site closure will be a mistake and save very little money relative to the impact on peoples lives and the wider environment. Perhaps a compromise could be found. Perhaps the decision makers in Dumfries could look at their booking data and spread sheets again. You may find, especially in winter, the time between 4pm and 6pm has a low turn out. Likewise Mondays can be a slow day. Many regulars would like an earlier opening (12.15pm to 1.30pm is usually busy). Rural people rarely work regular hours or the 9-5. Easier access will make the site more efficient and consistently busier. Standardised opening hours across all the HWRC sites ignores the unique character of each site and doesn't work. Its also unnecessary if the council insist on a booking system. To again borrow a quote from [REDACTED] (8): *'small changes can make a big difference'*.

Perhaps also look at running costs. I have some experience of off grid systems. The introduction of a solar/battery system and rain water harvesting would cut the costs of running the site and make us far less dependent on a diesel generator. It would also allow the use of camera surveillance and reliable internet and phone connections. Costs are not high and very flexible. Running a recycling centre on green energy could only be a publicly positive step. Potentially paid for by a review of opening hours, introduction of selected charges and the savings made by not closing the site.

Many of the ideas above have already been identified by the waste management team. Lets see them actioned before we even begin to vocalise cuts to chore rural services. The small size of a rural HWRC provides the council with a cost effective location to engage staff and the community with the bigger picture and move waste management forward. Testing instead of just talking about new ways of working. Rather than closure we should be looking at investment. Perhaps even the money could be found for the signage I've been asking for over the last 8 years.

Lets be honest no one comes to Dumfries and Galloway to enjoy the transport infrastructure, the town centre shopping or well paid employment. Most stay for the landscape, the coastline, space and a slightly slower pace. Council budgets need to reflect this. Value it with support and funding for the small rural communities that make this increasingly rare, fragile place special. To much change, to many poor decisions will in the end break it.

In the last decade and near future consider the waste management investments and costs in Stranraer, Newton Stewart, Castle Douglas, Locharmoss, and Dumfries not to mention the *'ill fated'* Kerbside Waste Scheme reported in 2019 (7). More recently we also have the roll out of the new green waste collection service. I believe 30000 or more green bins were ordered, Yet the target for subscribers in the 2nd year is only 9000 (9). Despite significant advertising the service did not cover costs this year and is unlikely to break even next year too (9). Independent of how these schemes are funded the council play their part in the results. Its hard not to be sceptical (see footnote b). Could and should a small percentage of that money be diverted to update the smaller rural sites that are no less important than the facilities in the bigger towns. To my knowledge, Whithorn HWRC has benefited from a new cabin to replace a dilapidated shed and 6 magnetic signs in the last 10 years. I struggle to think of much else beyond maintenance. Despite the limited investment Whithorn HWRC may well

process a similar amount of waste per year as the new kerbside green waste collection service this year (8).

In a world muddled by statistics, targets, themes and strategy its easy to forget value, utility and the quiet voice of small rural communities. Just because things are hard to quantify they should not be ignored.

Further argument against closure comes from the council's own

Economy and Infrastructure Committee Report (9). Are the council going to ignore their own criteria when they state:

'4.10.2.1 The WRAP guidance cites recommendations for minimum levels of HWRC provision....a maximum catchment radius of 7 miles in rural areas (covering the great majority of residents) • a maximum drive timeof 30 minutes for rural areas (with a preference for 20 minutes where practicable' .

The above quote and the ZWS pledge should be enough to over rule the 5 narrow key components identified earlier in the same report (4.10.1.2) and make the 3000 plus words I've just typed unnecessary.

Summary and main points to consider.

The council's confidence in the HWRC booking system data. Currently it provides a flavour of what is going on but in its current form, should it be used extensively to shape policy or budgets?

Questions regarding how the 60k closure saving was calculated. Were consequential costs of closure considered?

Currently what are the council costs related to fly tipping? Do you think this will increase if waste provision is scaled back?

What will be the impact and consequences on the locality and population with a lack of viable alternatives. Does the council expect rural communities to resort to the norms of the 1950's. Landowners hiding waste in holes. Householders dumping or burning at the end of their gardens. What will SEPA , COSLA, ZWS have to say?

Are the council's ideological frameworks ignoring the potential of small, local HWRC's and how they can support current agendas in favour of bigger sites. Is there a possibility that Motion 16 and the 5 rather narrow key components set out in the Economy and infrastructure report (4.10.1.2) are targeted at the closure of Whithorn HWRC? Would it be fair to say Whithorn HWRC has been in the council's firing line since the opening of the Newton Stewart site? Previous attempts to close Whithorn HWRC have failed. Does this explain the lack of investment at Whithorn?

Is a rural site closure in conflict with the key pledges of Zero Waste Scotland and key WRAP guidelines?

Finally Are any of these concerns considered valid? It would be appreciated if the council could respond with feedback and corrections to some of the assumptions.

Framing all this is a view shaped by rural frustration, I wonder just how many people involved in the decision making process live in a remote rural community. Many will benefit from pavements and street lights that lead the way to nearby services. Rural communities generally accept less in the locations they choose to live. But as with any minority group there are limits!

We all seem to be living in an era driven by themes, strategy, fancy charts, and questionable statistics. This is perhaps unavoidable as we seek to address the bigger picture. But its often at the expense of the local, the individual and the subjectivity of value.

As I type away in my rural home. My laptop feels as if nobody hears. The closure of Whithorn HWRC would confirm it.

Foot note

(a) According to the HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE GUIDE REPORT March 2025 published by The Waste and Resources Action Programme.

Less than ½% of UK households (661 households) live more than 30 minutes drive from a HWRC. If the Whithorn HWRC closes that UK wide figure could be set to more than double.

(b) With reference to the Kerbside green waste collection. If the total of bins purchased is correct (30000) and each green waste bin costs £25 (another guess at roughly 50% of retail cost of a replacement grey bin) Then the cost of 21000 surplus green bins could be over half a million pounds plus storage costs for at least 2 years. That's enough money to upgrade Whithorn HWRC, pay running costs for years and give the site staff a significant pay rise. There may also be enough left over to retrain the person or committee who decided that nearly 50% of the households in Dumfries and Galloway would need a green bin. Perhaps the training could begin by working out the exact tonnage and environmental impact of 21000 unnecessary plastic bins.

Sources

1/ [Household Waste Recycling Centre \(HWRC\) Guide | WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme](#)

2/ [Dumfries and Galloway \(Council Area, United Kingdom\) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map and Location](#)

3/ [Council to Receive Update on Waste Strategy | Dumfries and Galloway Council](#)

4/ [Customer booked nearly 250 visits to Dumfries and Galloway recycling centres in a year | STV News](#)

5/ Site visit statistics [Waste Strategy - Appendix 2 - Final.pdf](#)

6/ Waste, Recycling and Re-use STRATEGY 2023-30 [Waste Strategy - Appendix 1 - Final.pdf](#)

7/ [Dumfries and Galloway Council's ill-fated kerbside...](#)

8/ [Dumfries And Galloway Council's Garden Waste Collection Service Grows Greener](#)

9/ WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE REPORT - REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF FACILITIES WASTE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICE.pdf

10/ [Charter for Household Recycling | Zero Waste Scotland](#)

Roads are dangerous

Roads are not painted

Roads are full of holes

Lots of branches 1 m over roads

Thanks

Firstly, I don't underestimate the Financial challenges facing our Council. My attempt at the online form kept crashing hence this email

In terms of the potential savings re refuse collections I would ask for consideration be given to any longer scheduling of the main bin. In particular these bins will be used for disposable incontinence pads and indeed baby nappies . Any delays in pick ups would lead to increase smell and potential infection to community as well as the refuse staff. Appreciate Council will be trying to encourage non disposable nappies for babies but adult incontinence pads are bulky and can be smelly and a source of infection.

Dear D&G

I wish to formally register my opposition to the proposed cuts listed below:

- 1.07 End funding for Information and Advice services provided by Citizens Advice
- 1.08 End funding for Representation and Engagement services provided by third sector groups

These services are essential for disabled people in Dumfries and Galloway and will have a disproportionate impact on their ability to take part in daily life.

I also oppose the following cuts because they will disproportionately affect disabled people:

- 1.01 Remove Instrumental Music Instruction Service
- 1.02 Remove funding for school-based Police Officers
- 1.03 Reduce spending on external Children and Families services in Social Work
- 1.04 Reduce winter road treatment
- 1.05 Reduce grass cutting on 60mph roads
- 1.06 Reduce the council's subsidy of business rate reliefs
- 1.09 Reduce funding support for major festivals and events
- 2.01 Introduce fixed enrolment dates and capacities for nurseries
- 2.02 Change how out of hours social work calls are handled
- 2.03 Reduce spending on children's direct payment support
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- 2.05 Undertake a "Digital Re-design" to automate processes
- 2.06 Share services with other organisations
- 2.07 Reduce live-streaming of council meetings
- 2.08 Go paperless for council committees
- 2.09 Review how we purchase staff training
- 2.10 Review of customer experience across services
- 2.11 Stop using a separate IT system for Housing/Homelessness service
- 2.12 Collect general household (grey bin) waste less frequently
- 3.01 Consult on the closure of small nurseries
- 3.03* Consult on school closures – 20 or less pupils
- 3.04* Consult on school closures – 25 or less pupils
- 3.05* Consult on school closures – 50 or less pupils
- 3.06 Close four seasonal museums and attractions
- 3.07 Close Hillview Leisure Centre, Kelloholm
- 3.08 Close the Midsteeples Box Office, Dumfries
- 3.09 Reduce the number of council office buildings
- 3.10 Review local services and buildings in each area
- 3.11 Close Whithorn Household Waste Recycling Centre

The above cuts to essential services will have a devastating impact on disabled people, their families and Carers.

I urge the Council to reconsider these proposals and explore alternative options, such as making savings on non-essential services, an earnings cap and a hiring freeze.

I request that my objection be registered as part of the formal consultation process.

Please acknowledge receipt of this correspondence.

Regards

MERZ currently has five artists in residence who would like to visit the Tolbooth when next you have an inspection or maintenance visit.

The Tolbooth has been a focus for research and engagement by many of the 150+ international artists who have been in residence at MERZ since 2018.

The international visitors stay from a few weeks to several months and it is a disappointment that the Tolbooth is not open at least for a few days a week in the winter months.

In the past the museum's staff have engaged with artists. The benefits of a local museum is that it forms a hub around which local history and stories can be explored and understood in the wider natural and social context and for international comparison.

I recall a meeting a few years ago in which UNESCO's broader integration of the museum and artifacts into contemporary local experience was anticipated!

The engagement of schools for holiday pursuits built out from museum's artefacts are as important - if not more important - in addressing rural isolation and so 'events' should not be limited to the central museum in Dumfries.

MERZ has a strong international reputation for bringing the local and global together. This work has a significant impact on the local economy and indirectly on a narrower tourist definition.

It would be devastating if the Tolbooth were to close or reduce access - when we are building long term visits of one to three months that explore and develop cultural ties and understanding.

We work with Erasmus to provide mentoring for young artists and writers who seek to engage their own communities on the basis of work, experience and study undertaken at MERZ.

The knock-on effect of rural museum closures - here and in the other outlying locations - needs further study.

It appears to be overlooked that the pursuit of savings is self-contained without understanding how this might prejudice local income streams and existing investment that has developed Sanquhar into a creative global visitor setting.

Thank you

Good morning.

Thank you for your email about the possible closure of the Tolbooth Museum.

I must admit I was very surprised to read this. In my opinion it would be a real shame if this were to close. For me it is really the most prominent site in Sanquhar and gives the town its proper sense of being. It is also a very unusual and beautiful architectural focus point where you can find many historical interesting facts about the town, its people and the surrounding area.

As Project Director of our Company, [REDACTED] since 2019 I have linked with the Museum for local interest in our International Summer Schools and we have had mornings where people from around the world have visited and unanimously

been able to enjoy all it has to offer. We have also built many of our projects around some of the exhibits, for example, James Critchon, a recent video made this summer will be presented at an online European Dance Research conference. Other themes included Robert Burns Learning to Dance, Medieval Sanquhar, when we had a day with [REDACTED] with Medieval Dance and Music just outside the museum and a costumed procession along the High Street to the Castle.

I have a number of photos I could send you of us interacting with this museum. Our Company would be very sad to see this museum close. Please keep it open if at all possible.

I am away at the moment from Sanquhar otherwise I would certainly be there on 23rd November. If there is anything I can do to help keep the Museum open please let me know. If there are any online discussions please let me know.

I object to proposed alterations to council tax that would impact adversely on Lockerbie Ice Rink.

I regularly help coach up to 50 young people on a Tuesday at a regular after school coaching session. This activity for the young people helps to improve their physical health as well as giving a huge boost to their ability to interact with their peers. In addition there is a Coaching session on a Monday and Friday during lesson times for young people from schools in the area. If your proposals go through, all of this will be put in jeopardy as the ice rink will face perhaps unsustainable additional expenses. In addition to all of this there is a huge benefit to Folks from Annandale and Eskdale who regularly use the facilities offered by the rink.

I wish to formally register my opposition to the proposed cuts listed below:

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- 2.10 Review of customer experience across services

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I urge the Council to reconsider these proposals and explore alternative options, such as making savings on non-essential services, an earnings cap and a hiring freeze.

I request that my objection be registered as part of the formal consultation process. Please acknowledge receipt of this correspondence.

■■■■

Hello

I wish to advise you that I oppose the proposal to reduce the amount of rates relief at the Lockerby Ice rink.

With the high cost of energy, the rink struggles to function, but if you want to put them out of business and deprive local people of this sport then your proposal will certainly achieve this goal.

I travel 40 miles to the rink and I am not prepared to travel any further than that.

Yours faithfully

To whom it may concern.

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- 3.10 Review local services and buildings in each area
- 3.11 Close Whithorn Household Waste Recycling Centre

Also the cuts being proposed on the taxi service card/voucher given each April this is used to aid In transportation to and from vital medical appointments.

The above cuts to essential services will have a devastating impact on disabled people, their families and Carers.

I urge the Council to reconsider these proposals and explore alternative options, such as making savings on non-essential services, an earnings cap and a hiring freeze.

I request that my objection be registered as part of the formal consultation process. Please acknowledge receipt of this correspondence.

I wish to formally register my opposition to the proposed cuts listed below:

- 1.07 End funding for Information and Advice services provided by Citizens Advice
- 1.08 End funding for Representation and Engagement services provided by third sector groups

These services are essential for disabled people in Dumfries and Galloway and will have a disproportionate impact on their ability to take part in daily life.

I also oppose the following cuts because they will disproportionately affect disabled people:

- 1.01 Remove Instrumental Music Instruction Service
- 1.02 Remove funding for school-based Police Officers
- 1.03 Reduce spending on external Children and Families services in Social Work

- 1.04 Reduce winter road treatment
- 1.05 Reduce grass cutting on 60mph roads
- 1.06 Reduce the council's subsidy of business rate reliefs
- 1.09 Reduce funding support for major festivals and events
- 2.01 Introduce fixed enrolment dates and capacities for nurseries
- 2.02 Change how out of hours social work calls are handled
- 2.03 Reduce spending on children's direct payment support
- 2.04 Reduce emergency assistance payments through the council's Children and Families
- 2.05 Undertake a "Digital Re-design" to automate processes
- 2.06 Share services with other organisations
- 2.07 Reduce live-streaming of council meetings
- 2.08 Go paperless for council committees
- 2.09 Review how we purchase staff training
- 2.10 Review of customer experience across services
- 2.11 Stop using a separate IT system for Housing/Homelessness service
- 2.12 Collect general household (grey bin) waste less frequently
- 3.01 Consult on the closure of small nurseries
- 3.03* Consult on school closures – 20 or less pupils
- 3.04* Consult on school closures – 25 or less pupils
- 3.05* Consult on school closures – 50 or less pupils
- 3.06 Close four seasonal museums and attractions
- 3.07 Close Hillview Leisure Centre, Kelloholm
- 3.08 Close the Midsteepie Box Office, Dumfries
- 3.09 Reduce the number of council office buildings
- 3.10 Review local services and buildings in each area
- 3.11 Close Whithorn Household Waste Recycling Centre

The above cuts to essential services will have a devastating impact on disabled people, their families and Carers.

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Good Afternoon

Having been notified of the proposed budget consultation.

Your plans to remove rates relief from a number of charities including Lockerbie Ice Rink, as a council tax payer I would strongly object to this.

There are few enough sporting options in Lockerbie and other outlying areas, with the rate relief being withdrawn, this would impact on the viability of the venues.

Only yesterday I was coaching a group of children from the academy, to see their enthusiasm and enjoyment was heart warming.

I do hope you will reconsider this idea.

Regards

I recognise the need for the Council to make unpalatable decisions in its budget setting. I write however to urge that the possible closure of the Whithorn recycling site is not progressed.

It is a well-used site for which there is no practical alternative. Its closure would inevitably lead to more inappropriate or illegal fly-tipping, with consequential direct and indirect costs to the Council.

A review of its opening hours or operational arrangements may be appropriate. Its closure should be avoided.

Yours faithfully

Dumfries and Galloway's 2025/26 budget consultation is a missed opportunity because it has been framed mainly as a choice between predefined cuts, rather than as a chance to use the collective brain power of councillors, officers and communities to redesign how services work. The council is open about the scale of the funding gap and the need to rethink delivery, but the way the consultation is structured – centred on a menu of 48 savings options and a simulator that invites people to “reduce” budgets – keeps the conversation at the level of what to cut, not how to work smarter. In doing so, the process underuses the insight of staff and citizens who know where duplication, bureaucracy and outdated practice sit in the system and who could help shape better, simpler services even in a time of constraint. Instead of starting with “how do we improve and simplify services so that cuts are a last resort?”, the consultation effectively starts with “which services should be reduced or stopped?”, and that is where the opportunity is being lost. □

Dear Budget Consultation Team,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am writing as a teacher in the independent sector who works closely with many children from Dumfries and Galloway who are placed in external education provision. I am also the founder of a local charity which leases a community centre full time and delivers social, educational and wellbeing activities across the region.

I recognise the very difficult financial situation the Council is dealing with and I appreciate the need for open and honest consultation. I hope the following reflections are helpful as part of that process.

From my experience supporting children whose needs have not been met within mainstream settings, I want to highlight the financial implications that may arise if core educational supports are reduced. Options such as removing Principal Teacher posts that support play-based learning, reductions in ASN capacity, and the closure of Inclusion Bases with a shift to outreach could reduce the ability of schools to meet the full-time needs of some pupils. When this happens, families have the right to pursue Tribunal action. Tribunal activity has increased significantly across Scotland over the past five years and Dumfries and Galloway is not immune to this trend. Even one or two additional placements per year at an external specialist setting, often costing in the region of £60,000 per child, can outweigh the projected savings of several proposals within the current budget options. My concern is not with service redesign itself, but with reductions in capacity taking place before any alternative model is fully

established. This risks costs rising elsewhere in the system in a way that has not yet been captured within the current financial modelling.

I would also like to comment on the proposals linked to community assets. My own charity leases a community centre and we see every week the benefits that accessible, community led spaces bring to children, young people and adults. The National Strategy for Community Empowerment is clear that Asset Transfer should be proportionate, sustainable and aimed at strengthening local capacity. Recent lease discussions with officers placed significant liabilities on our group and others, including responsibility for wind and water tight repair and historic structural issues, along with annual charges that many voluntary groups would not be able to sustain. If these conditions become the norm, many groups will be priced out of their own facilities, leading to buildings returning to the Council and communities losing vital preventative and wellbeing support. A supportive and realistic CAT approach will produce far more long term value than a short term transfer of risk to voluntary groups.

Finally, I would like to highlight the importance of workforce wellbeing and trauma informed practice in reducing long term costs. Staff absence, turnover and workplace transience are expensive issues for every public service. In other councils, investment in trauma informed organisational development and strengthened wellbeing networks has directly reduced absence and improved staff retention. Even a one percent reduction in absence across a workforce of several thousand staff can translate into significant annual savings. There is strong evidence that embedding consistent TIP principles improves stability, behaviour, engagement and family relationships, which ultimately reduces demand on the most expensive parts of the system. In a challenging financial environment, preventative approaches within the workforce should be viewed as a cost saving tool as well as a values driven one.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my views. I would be happy to discuss any of these points further or contribute to ongoing engagement work if that would be helpful.

Kind regards,

Good day

When I look at the information you provide, I do not see interest income as a line item.

I do see loan charges, which surprised me. Council has income at present of a half a billion pounds. Sharp money management should be able to return 4 percent on unused balances over a year. Which should offset some of the 13 million pound deficit.

Why we are paying loan charges is a bit baffling.

Council tax should also be due and payable on a set date each year. The idea that people are allowed to pay on a monthly basis is putting an added burden on those that pay the council tax on time and in full.

Good morning

Having received the email regarding proposed money saving ideas can I just ask why they are ALL to do with education.

Surely there are other areas within the councils remit that could also have proposed cuts made?

Also re keeping s1 to s3 pupils in school at lunchtimes this already happens at lockerbie academy to protect the town but my child has came home on more than many occasions to say they and their friends have not been able to get anything to eat as nothing left . I absolutely don't mind sending them with provisions but there is money sitting on their ipayimpact card that I can then not use to provide them with food to take with them.

Also on the subject of school meals I thought there was a mention of all primary kids getting free school meals until p7 being brought in by 2025 (this was mentioned a couple of years ago i think) so what has happened to that?

Removing supply teachers and playground supervisors I don't think is a good idea as there may be occasions during staff sickness these supply teachers will be needed. Playground supervisors ((although they cannot understandably watch all kids qt once) are vital in trying to stamp out bullying or merely to be there if a child should need someone during break

hello,

I am wondering why there is no consultation meetings in at least Thornhill, for the more rural schools in upper Nithsdale, sanquhar is not easy access for many? Or have I missed this? Is there a survey we are allowed to fill out or is it purely this is what we the council are going to do, so like it or lump it? I am saddened that the council are proposing to remove music from the curriculum, not all kids have the luxury of families that can afford lessons and not all kids are academically minded.

I am wondering if Dumfries children will be made to use the high schools provided for them as these are brand new building, this would save on transport costs for the council surely.

Sadly cutting funding to the youngest in society is always the easiest target, when rural schools are closed the community dies, leaving an elderly population with no carers to support their ever growing needs.

Will Dalry high school be closed as this seems to be a huge issues for the council.

Please advice when there will be a meeting in Thornhill/Moniaive/Penpont or Dunscore.

Thanks again

I am unable to attend in person to a budget cut consultation today so using email instead. I do not agree with any of the councils proposed cuts and think they are abysmal.

We need less management and more boots on the ground. The people of Dumfries are fed up of councillors who don't even live here not listening and doing what they want. [REDACTED] needs removed over her behaviour and lies. Using her position in power to silence other councillors is disgusting. A look into her finances would also be good considering she didn't consult anyone on a few million getting spent on busses. [REDACTED] should be looked into immediately and removed from power which I'm sure would be a big chunk of savings no one would object to.

Dear Review Team,

I am writing to provide feedback on Option 5.07 regarding the proposed £51.61 charge for grey bin replacements.

While I understand the council's need to benchmark costs, I have serious concerns about holding households financially accountable for bin wear and tear, particularly when damage may not be caused by residents.

My grey bin's wheels are now rusty due to weathering and general deterioration over time. I have always used my bin appropriately and taken reasonable care of it. However, I have observed that collection crews often handle bins roughly during the collection process, which inevitably contributes to damage and accelerated wear.

Before implementing this charging policy, I would request clarification on the following points:

1. How will the council distinguish between normal wear and tear versus damage caused by resident misuse?
2. What assessment process will be used to determine whether damage is due to rough handling during collection or resident fault?
3. Will charges apply to deterioration from weathering and age, such as rusty wheels, or only to clear instances of misuse?
4. What accountability measures will be in place regarding how collection crews handle bins?

It seems unreasonable to hold residents financially responsible for damage that results from the collection process itself or from natural deterioration through normal use over time.

I would appreciate a clear policy framework that protects residents from charges when bins are damaged through no fault of their own.

Thank you for considering this feedback.

Yours faithfully,

Very disappointed that you are closing the site at Whithorn which we use very regularly and is always busy .

Are you going to clear up all the waste people fly tip in farmers fields or you could not careless and leave them to deal with the problem , making the area very unattractive to Visitors on holiday .

Hope you rethink your closure

Thank you for your very detailed and courteous reply to my earlier queries. I can see the amount of care and coordination that went into your explanations around the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the developing Rural Education Strategy, and the Council's equality and consultation processes. I am genuinely grateful for the clarity and information you have provided.

That said, I remain deeply concerned about how these processes are experienced at community level — particularly in small rural villages such as Ae, where I live.

1. Mothballing and the illusion of reversibility

While I understand that mothballing is legally classed as temporary, in practice no school in Dumfries and Galloway that has been mothballed has ever reopened. When residents have asked what pupil-roll threshold would trigger reopening, no figures or criteria have been provided. This lack of transparency makes mothballing indistinguishable from permanent closure and causes significant anxiety for families and staff.

The current budget consultation, although framed as distinct, feels like a continuation of previous school-closure proposals — only now expanded to include more schools. It is creating the same panic and fear for parents, and confusion for families who are about to register their children for school, unsure whether their chosen catchment will even exist.

I also believe that schools and communities which have already been through consultation or mothballing should be afforded a degree of protection from repeated review. Each new round of proposals brings renewed anxiety for families and staff and undermines confidence in the Council's commitment to educational stability. Parents who engaged in good faith during previous consultations are now facing the same uncertainty all over again. It would be fair and proportionate for the Council to establish a moratorium or safeguard period for any school that has already undergone a mothballing consultation, ensuring that lessons are learned rather than communities being placed back under threat year after year.

2. Rural Education and Inclusion Strategy

Thank you for sharing the links to the September and November committee papers. I have reviewed them and would urge that the emerging Rural Schools Strategy explicitly address the pattern of “mothballing drift” and commit to safeguarding small schools as vital community assets. These schools represent more than education; they are the social and economic lifeblood of their villages.

3. Equality, UNCRC and UNCRPD obligations

I appreciate your detailed outline of the Council's Impact Assessment process. However, while screenings and stakeholder panels are valuable, the timing appears reactive. Equality and children's-rights considerations should inform proposals before consultation, not after. Otherwise, the rights of disabled pupils and rural families risk becoming an afterthought rather than a foundation.

4. Consultation fairness, digital inclusion and rural access

Although multiple participation routes have been promoted, they are not truly equitable for rural residents. In Ae Village, we have only two buses in and out each day, and some residents — particularly older or disabled neighbours — were completely unaware the consultation was taking place.

While a notice may have been placed on the local board, many residents face mobility or accessibility challenges and cannot easily view public postings. The main feedback route provided is an online form, which excludes those without reliable internet, up-to-date devices, or digital confidence.

Across Dumfries and Galloway, rural communities face persistent digital and transport disadvantage — slower broadband speeds, patchy mobile signal, fewer bus services, and long travel times. These realities mean that online or centralised consultations are not inclusive in practice, however well-intentioned they may be.

For many people in small villages, taking part would require a car journey they cannot make, or digital skills they do not have. This is not a question of willingness to engage, but of structural barriers that make participation impossible for some.

I would therefore urge the Council to take additional steps to ensure rural voices are genuinely heard — for example:

Delivering printed consultation information and paper surveys to rural homes;

Offering telephone-based submissions and outreach calls;

Providing accessible local drop-ins (even on a smaller scale, or via mobile/community halls).

These simple adjustments would make a tremendous difference to fairness and representation.

5. Data transparency

I understand from your explanation that detailed data will only be compiled if Members agree to proceed with a Statutory Consultation. However, this approach prevents residents from making informed contributions at the most crucial stage — before councillors vote.

Meaningful consultation requires open evidence from the outset: pupil-roll trends, travel times, financial implications, equality assessments, and community impacts. Expecting families to submit Freedom of Information requests to access basic context undermines trust and transparency.

In summary

I am grateful for the respectful, detailed information you have provided, but I urge the Council to recognise that the processes described — however legally compliant — are not felt as fair or inclusive by those living in small rural communities.

Mothballing has become, in effect, closure by stealth, eroding confidence and stability year after year. Rural families and staff deserve clarity, not recurring cycles of uncertainty that harm both education and community cohesion.

I hope this feedback will be taken in the constructive spirit intended — to strengthen fairness, transparency, and genuine inclusion within Dumfries and Galloway's consultation processes.

Kind regards,

[further correspondence]

Apologies for another email but I wanted to get back in touch as I have now read both the Rural School Strategy and a detailed review from parents. After looking at it myself I am honestly very worried about the quality of the document. I am not trying to be awkward, but I feel these issues could have a real negative impact on children in rural areas if they are not fixed.

On page 7 alone there are multiple citations that cant be verified. Wilson et al 2006, Bagley and Hargreaves 2018 and Fargas Malet and Bagley 2023 are not in the reference list and I couldnt find them in any academic database. That means councillors and families are being asked to rely on claims with no clear source. This is not a small mistake, it directly shapes how rural schools are presented.

A quote from Fargas Malet and Bagley 2021 is also taken out of context. The original paper actually shows positive solutions like school partnerships and networks to support staff in small schools. It does not argue for closing them. This makes it feel like evidence has been used in a selective way which causes systemic disadvantage to rural schools.

There is also a claim that opportunities for group work and socialisation are severely curtailed in small schools, but the sources used are missing from the references and dont appear anywhere. This again feels like prejudicial framing rather than balanced evidence.

Beyond this, from my own look at the Strategy and the IA, there are wider concerns. The Impact Assessment says there are zero negative impacts for disabled children or ASN learners, yet the same document admits it has limited disaggregated data for protected groups. That is contradictory and could leave some children unseen in the planning.

There is also no child voice at all. No pupil surveys, no focus groups, no quotes, no input from rural children or ASN children. The Council has made major claims about childrens wellbeing and education without actually speaking to any children. That does not meet good practice and it weakens all of the conclusions.

Definitions in the document are vague. Terms like remote rural, viable two class school and mothballing are used but never explained. Without clear definitions, parents cant understand what criteria are being applied. It also makes decisions at risk of being inconsistent or unfair.

Travel is another area that is very concerning. The Strategy talks about safe travel policies but doesnt show the actual travel time thresholds or any modelling of how many children will be affected. Rural distances, winter roads, anxiety and ASN needs should be properly considered before any decisions are taken.

The financial modelling is unclear too. Older cost saving figures that have already been challenged appear to have been repeated. There is no breakdown of transport costs, staff redeployment or the ongoing costs of mothballing buildings. Without this, councillors are not seeing the full picture.

Is this the version that has been published and approved. If so, I dont understand how these errors were allowed through. Before any consultation proceeds this needs urgent review and correction. Leaving it as it is risks reputational damage for the Council and distress for families, because people will feel decisions are being made using inaccurate and unverifiable information.

Kind regards

Whilst all residents are being asked for their options on what services they would be ok with losing , what is being done internally in terms of the top salaries? How can the CEO of D&G earn more that the First Minister and the Prime Minister ?

DnG Online

THE salaries of the highest paid officials at Dumfries and Galloway Council have been revealed.

For the 2023-24 year, the chief executive led the way on £163,796, with a pension of £35,966, plus expenses, giving her a total remuneration of £200,244.

This compared to £172,153 paid to the UK Prime Minister and £176,780 for Scotland's First Minister in the same period- not accounting for their pensions.

Meanwhile, five other directors at the region's local authority also earned over £100,000 last year.

I am writing to express my serious concerns regarding the current Budget Consultation and, in particular, the options presented for savings within Education. These proposals appear to place a disproportionate focus on rural primary school closures, despite the Council's recently approved Rural Schools Strategy (11 November 2025), which emphasised proactive support for rural schools and made clear that closures should be considered only as a genuine last resort.

1. Budget Options Inconsistent With the Rural Schools Strategy

All three consultation options focus exclusively on closing rural primary schools (under 20, 25, or 50 pupils). This approach places rural respondents in an unfair position and risks steering them toward selecting a "least harmful" option, even if they oppose closures entirely.

This appears inconsistent with the Council's stated commitment to protect rural education and invest proactively in its sustainability.

2. Urban Schools Significantly Under-Utilised

Council data show that several large urban secondary schools are operating far below capacity:

- Dalbeattie High School: 59% utilisation
- NW Community Campus (Secondary): 46%
- Dumfries Academy: 51%
- Dumfries High School: 65% (despite a £53.2m rebuild for 900 pupils)
- Castle Douglas High School: 63%
- Lockerbie Academy: 62%

Despite this considerable spare capacity, only rural schools are being proposed for closure, while urban schools continue to receive major investment.

3. Questionable Financial Logic

The proposed closures of up to 36 rural schools are projected to save £1.6 – £3.5 million over three years, yet the consultation materials do not appear to account for:

- increased transport costs,
- staff redeployment,
- ongoing building maintenance,
- loss of local services, and
- wider social and economic impacts on rural communities.

Without a full cost–benefit analysis, the true financial implication remains unclear.

4. Risk of Deepening Inequalities

Rural school closures would inevitably increase travel distances, reduce access to early intervention services, weaken community infrastructure, and place additional pressure on families already facing geographic disadvantage. This risks deepening inequalities rather than addressing the underlying drivers of low attainment and wellbeing concerns.

Rural schools form the backbone of community life and provide high-quality, inclusive education that supports both attainment and wellbeing. Their future deserves protection, not repeated erosion through budget exercises that overlook wider impacts.

I look forward to receiving clear responses to the questions above and to seeing these concerns taken seriously within the ongoing budget process.

Yours sincerely,

Dear D&G Council,

How can users of the absolutely essential recycling and waste facilities in the Machars attend a community meeting in Newton Stewart about the Council budget on November 10 when we only received an email about it yesterday – three days after the meeting?

Yes, we will comment online, but as Council taxpayers, we expect full and timely notification, and perhaps a visit to this area by Dumfries officials who may never have set foot in our area and have no idea how expensive, inconvenient, and for many, impossible it will be to take our household and garden waste, batteries, white goods, and lightbulbs elsewhere.

Sincerely,

Please could you take my email into account and help us to save our small schools and community. I am writing as a parent of ■ children at Nethermill Primary, with a younger child still to come through the school. The distressing nature of this whole

situation I struggle to comprehend - how we have ended up with the closure of smaller rural schools as even a consideration?

Nethermill Primary school has for many years and generations provided a safe and welcoming space for young children. We have excellent class teachers - however currently have a head teacher leaving post - to be told he will be covered by an acting head teacher until the budget consultation is finalised. The disruption and uncertainty this provides is unsettling, and also off putting to potential children looking to enrol at our school next year.

Maybe this is a purposeful step made - that uncertainty lies until after children register for their desired school - helping the council provide some form of justification by making our small school less desirable? It also raises the question - has a decision already been made and that any of the 'consultation' and opinion is a token gesture which will have no actual impact on an outcome which has already been decided?

Our school brings together members of the local community throughout the year. Children make friends of all ages who live locally and maintain these friendships for life. They also go on to have extremely successful secondary school experiences - with the confidence and sense of belonging they have been provided with in their small school environment providing an excellent foundation. As a small example of how our community is brought together by the local primary school, every year our local community council organises a Christmas party for the school children, and that same week the children sing for the older adults at their own Christmas tea. This linking of generations, and sense of community and looking out for others is instilled in our children - and something that both the children and older adults would miss greatly if the school was to close.

Whilst I could write all day about the benefits of smaller schools, I appreciate you will be busy so have tried to keep this short. I am truly saddened and disappointed that the council consider punishing children for where they live by closing the schools they love and thrive in, as a budget saving exercise - without any consideration of the true implications of this decision on community, children's well being and with what seems a complete lack of general understanding of how a small rural area works and all the wonderful opportunities it provides.

I would greatly appreciate your response, and if you are able to help support us in any way and remove this horrible uncertainty from providing us from further distress.

Kind regards,

[follow up correspondence]

Thank you for your response,

Unfortunately this provides little reassurance. Albeit we are frequently told no decision has been made yet - the logical decision given the strength of feeling and evidence that contradicts the savings quoted in closing small schools would suggest that prior to the consultation in February the closure of small schools should be removed as an option all together. That would provide reassurance.

I am well aware following many errors in council spending on large public buildings that are not used to capacity, or have taken much more money than initially supposed to, that the council needs to save money. I do not feel there is any justification for this to be at the expense of primary school children.

Regards

I am writing to ask the education committee and Dumfries and Galloway council to reconsider the proposals to close many small rural schools. These schools form the heart of rural communities which would be adversely affected by the loss of their schools.

I am the grandmother of pupils who attend Nethermill primary, the fourth generation of our family to do so. The children and staff enjoy taking part in many community events such as entertaining the senior citizens at their Christmas tea, laying wreaths at the war memorial, litter picking around our village, and joining with our hall committee in fundraising activities. These sort of things are the glue which hold our community together and give the children a very strong sense of family and community which you don't find in larger town schools.

At Nethermill there are excellent facilities for both indoor and outdoor learning with a large playing field and access to local woods for outdoor learning which they love.

What a waste to abandon such a school, which has served the local community for so long.

I do not believe the cost of keeping our small schools open outweighs the ongoing costs of transporting children many miles outwith their catchment area and the cost of maintaining empty schools.

We are a rural area, we live in wonderful strong communities, please think councillors and education committee members, look beyond the balance sheets and see that these children are not just numbers but deserve the full support of a great education in the brilliant school they love. Do not let them down.

3.2 - ORGANISATIONS

PUBLIC

PUBLIC

PUBLIC

Protecting what matters

Why collaboration can build our
communities



Dumfries and Galloway Council 2026/2029 Budget

Consultation Response

PUBLIC



THIRD SECTOR
Dumfries and Galloway

Public service, reimagined

What could we do better if we did it together?

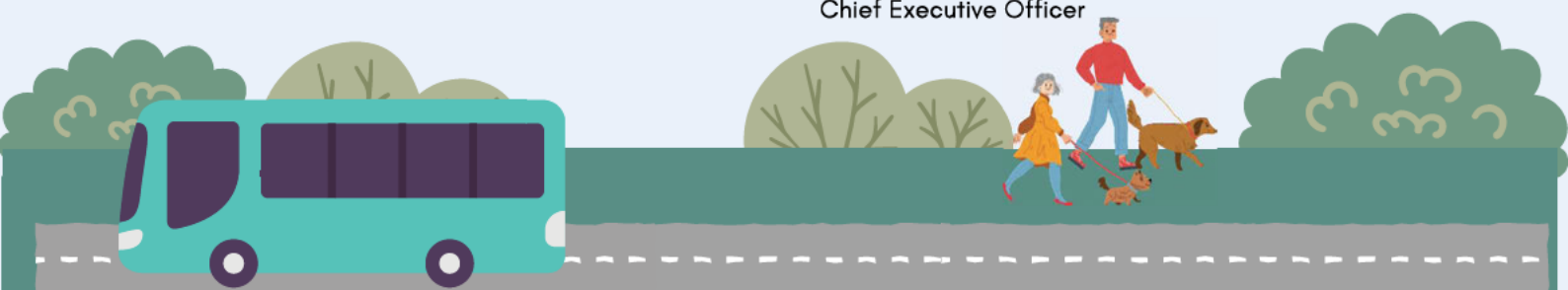
We fully recognise the ongoing and sustained pressures facing our council. We've been part of the conversations nationally and regionally about the real-term financial challenges facing the public sector, and about how things could be done differently. For our community and voluntary (third) sector, this pressure is experienced every year, where many have always been in a financially insecure space.

Since coming into post late in 2023, I have been advocating for a change in approach to our sector, with local partners and with Scottish Government, as well as some national funders. We have strong relationships and recognition of our sector in partnership spaces, but we must see action in how those partnerships translate to change in our communities – through Fair Funding, leadership of our community and voluntary sector, more direct investment, genuine collaboration (not consultation), involving our sector in strategic decision making and believing that our sector now needs to be part of the changes proposed. 95% of our Dumfries and Galloway community and voluntary sector are based directly in our communities – they hold the trusted relationships that are so hard to build in other sectors. We recognise our sector will have to make some changes too.

The latest national strategies, including Public Service Reform and the new Population Health Framework, clearly set out a role for the community and voluntary sector, and importantly for the communities to which they belong. We must be realistic that achieving the ambitions we all have must mean doing things differently. For us, that means investing in our sector to take the lead where we're best placed. Stronger communities, enabled and supported by quality public services. Having shared focus on outcomes and impact rather than activity. Not needing everything to be done the same way across every community, building on strengths. Enabling local change and leadership, not always owning and controlling it. We must take this opportunity to create the conditions for that future.

The Christie Commission recommendations are 14 years old. We haven't changed much since then. Those were the times for reform. Now, we feel, reform isn't enough. Now is the time for investing in what works, not simply protecting what we have. It's time for **reimagining public service**. It will take leadership, along with intention, ambition and courage. Making such huge decisions isn't easy, but it's what we should be accountable for. If we do it together, we're much more likely to achieve our ambitions for a healthy and thriving Dumfries and Galloway.


Chief Executive Officer



Our sector in Dumfries and Galloway

2000

community and voluntary sector
organisations

£171m

min estimated annual income

95%

of our sector are local
organisations

65%

of our sector is based in
rural areas*

2100

people are employed in the
sector

25000

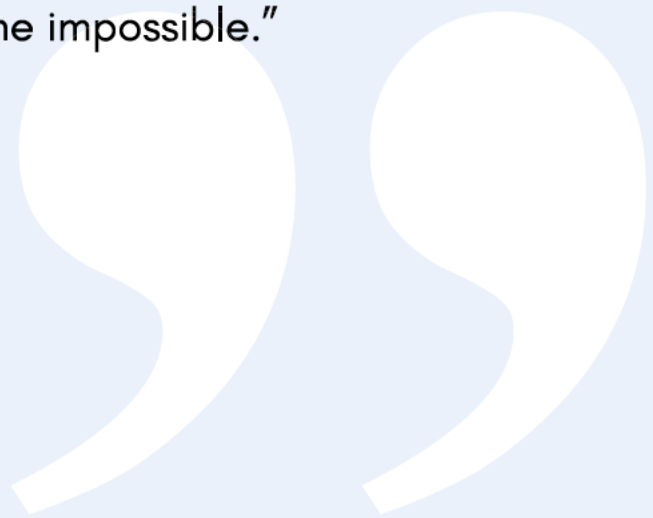
adults formally volunteer





“We need to progress collectively, based on a shared understanding, shared ambition and an honest conversation about the reality of living within our means, now and in the future. We must be willing to change behaviours. To sacrifice, organisationally and individually, for the greater good, to leave institutional thinking behind, to become whole place and whole system (and not just talk about it). To avoid language that divides, that prioritises without an honest understanding of wider system harm, to engage with all people about what the future truly looks like, for communities, families, children.

None of this can be achieved unless we challenge and change our behaviours—not our resources, as if we had much choice about that anyway. There is little point in wishing for the impossible.”



██████████, Chair Solace Scotland

TheMJ, Making reform in Scotland the real thing, Aug2025

Working together, a new way

Community relationships are not just nice to have, but the foundation of resilience and impact. The connections between council, community and voluntary sector, and local communities are central to sustaining wellbeing, tackling inequalities, and keeping essential supports and services within reach for all.

We have many partnerships, and many examples of services and different parts of the system working together. However, in the main, calls for reform are still limiting, and in many ways are too late. We believe the whole approach needs to be **reimagined**.

Reimagine partnership

- Being at the table together is no longer enough. Removing the organisational lines that can stop genuine collaboration and making shared commitments together requires attention.
- We believe we should explore collective leadership and collaboration over partnership working. Our shared skills, insights, resources and planning can avoid duplication and secure maximum impact. It must also be delivered throughout our organisations, not just in leadership meetings.
- We cannot change the different organisation governance arrangements overnight, but they shouldn't block change. Those with the power can make collaborative and collective working happen.

Reimagine Community Planning

- Community planning should have greater focus on shared outcomes and impact, and focus specifically on the things we can do better together.
- Tackling inequity is all of our responsibility, it's a key purpose of the Partnership and should be the driver for our prioritisation of resources.
- We should develop targeted and focussed shared plans that reflect our collective ambition for change.

Reimagine communities as collaborators and leaders, not just recipients or consultees

- Communities in Dumfries & Galloway are proactive, resourceful, and keen to make a difference. When enabled and supported, they take ownership of local assets, deliver essential supports, and provide vital care and connection through trusted relationships.
- The council's budget process should see communities, and community and voluntary organisations as strategic collaborators, able to own and lead, not just as mechanisms to deliver council priorities. We must move power and agency back to people and communities.
- Our developing DGCollective and InvestDG concepts are designed to help our sector and communities take the lead, collaborate on shared outcomes for people, place and policy and also attract long-term external investment into our communities. www.dgcollective.org.uk

Reimagine community investment

- Bringing community funds together to a single Community Investment Fund will help maximise the use of discretionary grants, ensure they are invested in shared priorities and improve the quality of data and impact.
- Applying the CPIB Fair Funding approach is essential for all partners, especially for local government.

The budget proposals

We have provided our views on relevant proposals contained within the budget consultation documents. We have encouraged organisations across the sector to make their own individual submissions as appropriate, specifically in their own community and operating context. A significant disappointment to note is the lack of impact assessments published for the consultation. We are unclear as to how stakeholders and the public are able to make informed contributions to the budget process without understanding the impact of each of the proposals.

We have also taken the opportunity to share our views on additional and alternative considerations to help tackle the council budget challenges that will help build sustainable public services across Dumfries and Galloway in the longer term.

For our community and voluntary sector, a key additional pressure is time to change. We need to protect our sector to give time for any redesign. If funding reductions mean closure of community and voluntary sector models of help and support, they won't be recovered – they will be lost to our communities. We need a managed approach.

We all know too well how essential it is to recognise that rural Dumfries & Galloway cannot be treated the same as an urban local authority – the cost of “doing without” local provision is far higher for our dispersed communities. Cuts to small grants, transport links, or very local/neighbourhood models of working may appear modest on paper but can remove the only accessible service for entire communities. A much bigger, longer-term challenge is one of depopulation. Unless we invest in repopulating Dumfries and Galloway, we will simply manage the decline of community agency and infrastructure.

Investment in preventative, community-led activity saves the council money over time and sustains wellbeing. We could go further by nurturing environments that *create* good health, wellbeing and prosperity, not just preventing poor outcomes. Every pound spent locally through a community organisation has a multiplier effect – supporting jobs, volunteering, and local economies.

It's also important not to presume that council services and supports are better. The council must take an open approach to investments, understand where public money is best invested in other ways of working and not simply protect council at the cost of other sectors, jobs and the impacts on communities.

Overall, there are significant risks to withdrawing or reducing investment in our sector:

- **Loss of community capacity:** Small voluntary organisations may not survive further funding cuts, leaving gaps that cannot be filled by statutory services.
- **Increased rural inequality:** Service withdrawal from rural areas disproportionately affects those without transport or digital access, or the resources to build new connections to replace what's lost.
- **Weakened community resilience:** The social infrastructure – trust, collaboration, and volunteering – takes years to build and can be lost quickly.
- **Short-term savings, long-term costs:** When local preventative support disappears, demand rises in health, social care, and crisis services.

The focus for all of us should be **protecting what's good, what matters**. Decisions shouldn't be made based on who designs and delivers supports and services; if they work and have impact then we should protect them. This means being honest about stopping what is not working, even if it's hard to do. It also means the same evaluation standards being applied across public services in any sector – outcomes and impact, not only measuring levels of activity. And it means not extracting from our communities simply as a means to protect the status quo.

Our council is the custodian of vast amounts of public money. As well as a range of statutory services that must be provided, the council has control of what else it invests in. That power must be used for the greatest community and population benefit, including investing public monies directly into communities where that's best. Using a combination of impact evaluation, shared learning from other models, and brave leadership with intention, our council has the power and influence to make change happen. No one wants to manage decline, albeit a simple slicing of budgets can seem the easiest option. Maintaining a less than impactful system and structure, simply because it's what we have, should not be an option.

There are many experiences and models for us to learn from. We won't be the first to try new ways. However, with the right collective intention and leadership, we can lead the way in whole system change that places communities first every time. We urge members to be bold, to lead change, to **reimagine**.

Some experiences and learning includes:

Changing Futures Northumbria - Liberated method

<https://www.changingfuturesnorthumbria.co.uk/>

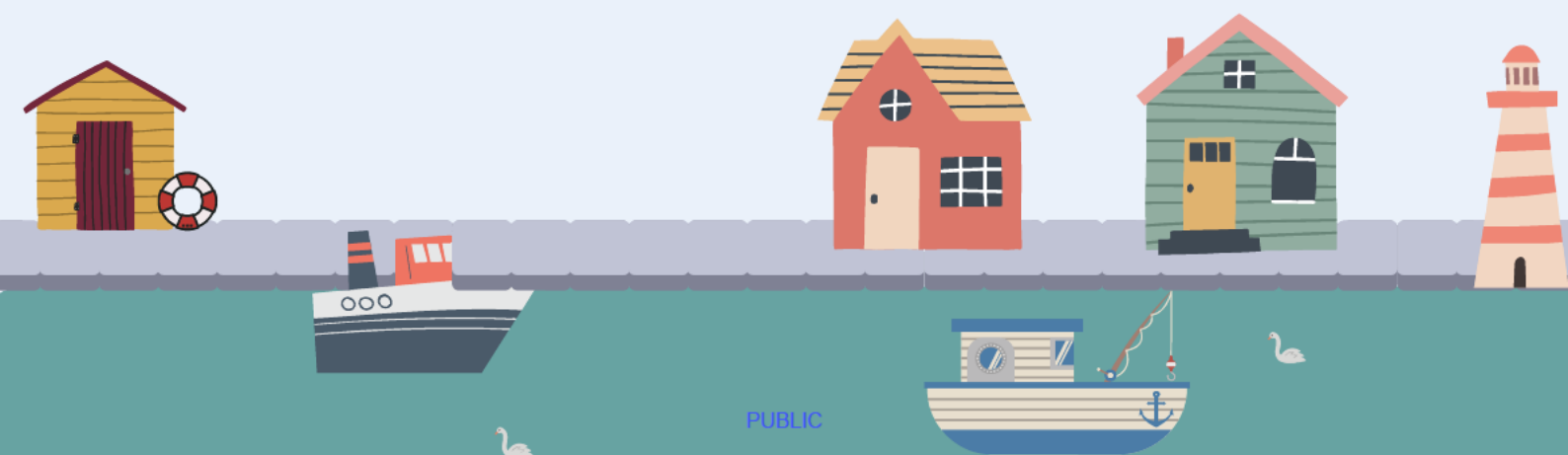
Wigan Deal

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/>

Clackmannanshire Family Wellbeing Partnership

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-family-wellbeing-partnership-clackmannanshire/>

There are many more experiences to learn from. These are to illustrate that a new way, whichever way we choose, is possible.



Sustained focus of resources on our council Plan Priorities outcomes

1.03

Reduce spending on external Children and Families services in Social Work

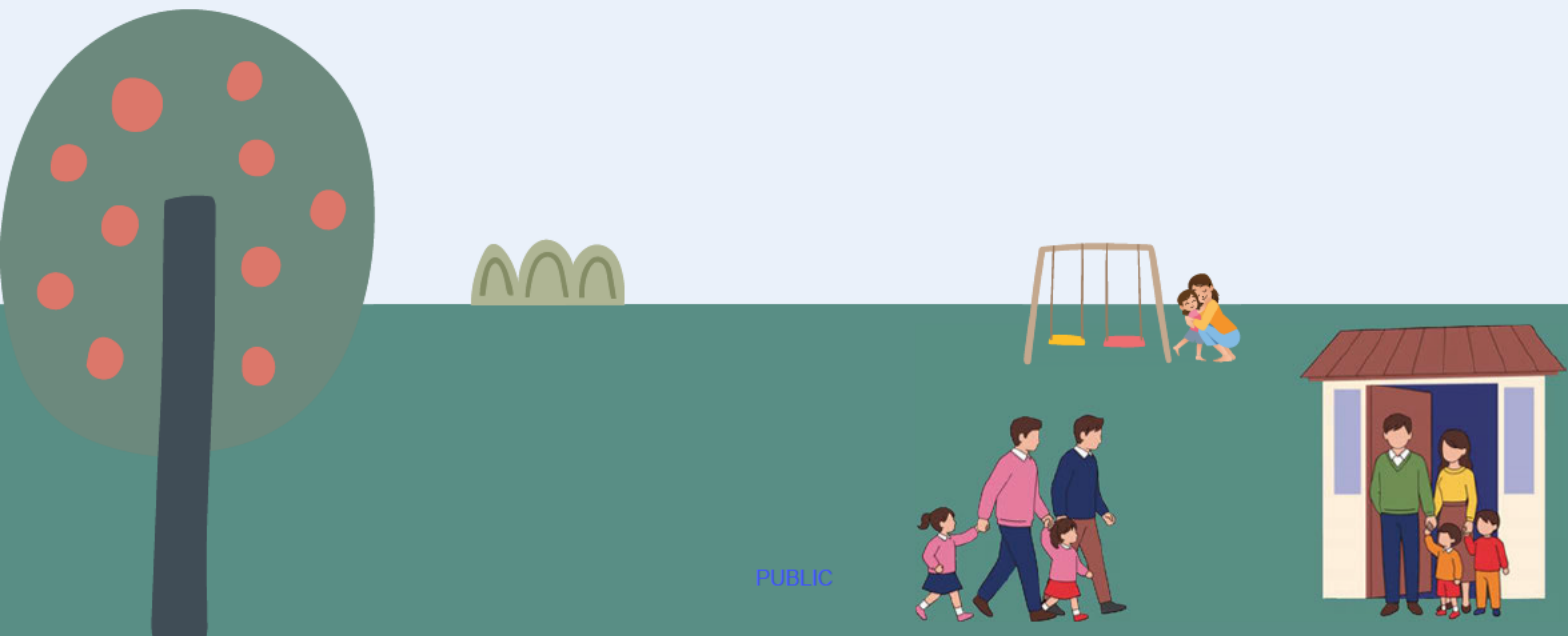


We know:

- A. There are at least **60** community and voluntary sector organisations in Dumfries and Galloway with a primary purpose of providing support for children and families, and many more impacting family support through their work.
- B. Demands on social work children's services can be challenging to respond to, given the pressure on workforce and the situation many families face by the time they ask for help.
- C. Evidence shows building a quality, integrated model of family support across sectors works best. For example, in an evaluation of a Glasgow cross-sector programme, 96% of families would recommend the community and voluntary sector approach, and *"most families gain multiple positive outcomes through their engagement with support"*. Further, evidence showed the community and voluntary sector model stopped escalation of most family needs and prevented social work involvement entirely.
- D. A significant volume of the council's family support work is funded through time-limited Scottish Government grants and not core budget. Reducing community and voluntary sector investment at this point risks overall family support infrastructure at a time when community-led support is most needed.
- E. If we are to deliver on The Promise, live the principles of the UNCRC and truly realise integrated approach to Whole Family Support then we need to do this across sectors and together.

We propose:

- A. The council protects the community and voluntary sector budget at least for the upcoming year whilst a new model, and new investment options, can be explored based on evidence of a different way of working.
- B. The council supports exploration and design of a new, integrated model of family support across sectors that could be overseen by the Children's Services Partnership, including models of long-term investment and a focus on outcomes for families.
- C. The council invests £60,000 in a one-year enabling, invest to save budget to allow community and voluntary sector organisations to actively participate in the design of a new integrated model and diversification of funding.
- D. The council recognises that not all families who require support would like this from a statutory service and we must value our community-led family support, as well as formal social work intervention when it's needed. Removing investment in community and voluntary sector support is likely to increase demand and costs to the council overall.



Sustained focus of resources on our council Plan Priorities outcomes

1.07

End funding for
Information and Advice
services provided by
Citizens Advice



We know:

- A. Last year, more than 8000 people across Dumfries and Galloway received support and advice from this service.
- B. This service helped people with more than £8.6m of debt and supported bringing £9.8m back into households and local economies.
- C. Through new innovations and operating models, the service is committed to reaching everyone who needs support, including new outreach services and making best use of technology for digital support. At the same time, the service was subject to a static budget for many years, a real-terms cut.
- D. In the report on the Scottish Government Child Poverty Plan, the Poverty and Inequalities Commission (2025) made a key recommendation that advice services are essential and called for long-term, secure funding; Better outreach to priority families; Recognition of advice services as a core part of Scotland's anti-poverty infrastructure.
- E. Cost of living, managing debt and navigating systems continue to be challenges for people across the region, often felt more severely in our rural and more disconnected communities, but also for those households facing multiple pressures on household income, poverty and advocating for the rights of their families. Constant national and media conversations around withdrawal of social security and a range of support services being at risk adds to the pressure and makes advice services even more important to our communities.

We propose:

- A. The council recognise the benefits to people across communities, to tackling isolation, poverty and upholding people's rights by investing in adequate advice services. The council further acknowledges the importance of these services being provided independently of the public sector.
- B. The advice service budget is at least protected to maintain its reach and ensure people across Dumfries and Galloway have access to advice and support.
- C. The council makes a further multi-year commitment to independent advice services, with consideration of the economic return for families and local economies in applying an annual uplift to the overall budget. This will help maintain the services, retain staff and allow the services to invest in transformation with confidence.



Sustained focus of resources on our council Plan Priorities outcomes

1.08

End funding for Representation and Engagement services provided by community and voluntary sector groups



We know:

A. The purpose of engaging the service is to ensure that those with protected characteristics, plus our wider community and voluntary sector, is represented across decision making approaches and is engaged in the work of the council and partners.

B. During periods of important decision making, the services ensure the voices and experiences of those least likely to be heard are included in impact assessments, service design and delivery and that the council continues to have mechanisms to engage the widest range of community stakeholders as possible.

C. In their report on the Scottish Government Child Poverty Delivery Plan, the Poverty and Inequalities Commission (2025) recommended that public sector must invest in our community and voluntary sector, specifically: Multi-year funding for proven community and voluntary sector partners; Parity of employment with public sector terms and conditions; Improved access to public assets for community and community and voluntary sector organisations. Whilst the sector continues the direct ask of the Scottish Government, local partners must play their part too.

D. The council's own strategy on tackling inequalities says the approach to representation and engagement helps the council fulfil its legal, as well as ethical, duties. *"The Commission has strengthened links between all member organisations to maximise positive outcomes for the people they support, allows sharing of good practice across all partners and ensures effective forward planning in relation to representation and engagement activity across all communities in Dumfries and Galloway."*

E. Each of the services are relatively small charities doing important equalities and rights work across Dumfries and Galloway. This service fund contributes to the core operating budget to ensure these services remain available and withdrawal would have a disproportionate impact. It's accepted that the value of this investment does not meet the full costs of each organisations commitment and scope of work.

We propose:

- A. The council protects this important investment to engage and hear from those across our communities who are least likely to be heard, to uphold rights and ensure the council has an unbiased views of lived and living experience from independent community and voluntary sector organisations.
- B. The council commits to this programme for another 3-year period in line with Fair Funding, and in doing so, asks services to work with council officers to ensure the Representation and Engagement approaches continues to add value, maximise reach and influence policy and decision-making.
- C. The council increases investment in Representation and Engagement with direct links to each department impacted by including those least likely to be heard or involved in individual budgets, therefore maximising the use of expertise across the funded organisations and securing their future capacity to undertake this work well.



Modernise how we deliver some services to meet our outcomes

2.03

Reduce spending on children's direct payment support



We know:

A. The public sector can't always meet needs. The Scottish Government Framework of Standards for such payments places significant emphasis on the importance of early help, family and community support. In particular, it notes *"Children, young people, families, supported people and carers are at the centre of conversations, and are treated as experts in identifying their own needs and what matters to them."*

B. Agency within families to meet their needs on their own terms is hugely important to quality living. Changes like those proposed increases pressures and demands on families, especially those without wider support networks, and on unpaid carers who already give so much against a backdrop of limited help and support.

C. The system should be built on need however seems under-resourced to meet those needs. A 2022 review of SDS by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) showed there were many systemic factors that meant people did not have their needs or outcomes met, from lack of finance and flexibility, to a range of additional controls placed by the local authority. Real experiences include *"Sometimes the care package is designed to suit the budget that's available, rather than the budget being designed to suit the care package."* and *"She was trying to tell me what I could spend the money on, and it took away the respect, dignity and choice that should be around that."*

D. Organisations across the sector have shared with us that decisions about Self Directed Support are already being made and payments to families are being reduced, before this proposal has been fully considered.

We propose:

- A. The council must recognise that agency over support decisions is a key aspect of SDS and to healthy living for families. Reducing these payments are likely to drive even more demand to council services that simply aren't available.
- B. The council engage with the range of care, support and community organisations to consider how best we can collectively meet the needs of, and provide support to, families on their terms.
- C. The council postpone any long-term decision on these payments, removing any proposed savings for the upcoming year, until it fully understands the impact on children and families and has had the opportunity to connect with families and the wider sector on any reforms.



Modernise how we deliver some services to meet our outcomes

2.04

Reduce emergency assistance payments through the council's Children and Families service



We know:

- A. By their very nature, Section 12 and Section 22 payments are urgent and, especially in the case of Section 12 payments, are a last resort.
- B. As Section 22 payments are focussed on children's needs, the suggestion that the budget can be reduced and families redirected to other networks for support is not evidenced. It is unclear from any public reporting how many payments have been made and therefore whether the need exists.
- C. There is a duty to protect and promote welfare in the very same regulations that allow such payments to be made. Members must be confident that any reduction to these budgets does not risk delivery of its duties.
- D. Whilst the level of child and family poverty in Dumfries and Galloway appears to be reducing, we must maintain our investment in helping mitigate the worst effects whilst we make sure that we eliminate children growing up in poverty with local and national action. Still more than 1 in 5 children are growing up in poverty in our communities. Reduction in support for families, assessed as needing support, will hinder any activity and most likely be counter to our collective ambitions.

We propose:

- A. Members must be clear on the impact on children and their families. Knowingly making a decision to remove support from those assessed as needing it without understanding the impact is a risk. Any reductions in payments must be based on evidence that there is no longer need. As there is no impact assessment, it is difficult to understand the potential impact and how many families receive this support each year.
- B. Until such times as the impact, and family experiences, are understood, the council must protect such payments to ensure it meets its duties.



Maximise use of fewer assets, working with and within communities

3.01 – 3.05

Schools and nurseries



We know:

- A. The importance of early learning and schools to our communities is clear by the public response to a range of proposals in recent years to change our school estate, adjust partnership structures and tackle the backlog of maintenance reported to council committees.
- B. Whilst there are requirements for statutory consultation across many of the changes proposed, there is a risk of consultation fatigue.
- C. The wider infrastructure around transport and connectivity, family connections and the relationship between schools and whole families must be considered. Whilst school transport may be a reasonable answer in some cases to children's attendance, it does not help with family engagement and the council's strategies on participation.
- D. The council's own strategy on rural schools says "A lack of resources or declining enrolment should not therefore, in isolation, be viewed as justification for school closure. Indeed, research increasingly calls for a shift away from deficit narratives and towards recognition of the "rural advantage"". The context, therefore, of these budget proposals and lack of reference to these wider strategies is likely to create concern and drive particular consultation responses that may otherwise be better informed by public understanding in the round.
- E. Dumfries and Galloway continues to face pressures in meeting the needs of children who require additional support. Whilst this can be seen around Scotland, the rising demand and reducing resources risk even further meeting the needs of our children, even more so if any provision is further from home.

We propose:

A. The council must place the highest priority in meeting children's needs, the impact on communities of losing facilities and considers all available options to building spaces rooted in communities for multiple uses, before simple closing facilities through the lens of education alone. One latest example is a model in Clackmannanshire <https://www.healthcaredm.co.uk/uploads/stable/asset> [REDACTED]

B. The council should fully consider multi-agency, multi-sector local Family Hubs, co-locating a range of family advice, support and community services that would mean at least some learning provision may be maintained in community settings. This may also include re-training or redeployment against some savings proposed in Section 4 of the budget consultation document.

C. The council should be considerate of consultation fatigue and the need for active community involvement. There is an opportunity to embrace community participation, involvement and leadership in a holistic way shaped around communities, rather than the current approach to consultation on individual aspects of services. There are legal duties, but they do not stop working in a more integrated way.

D. Tackling depopulation is a significant, medium to long-term consideration that must be part of proposals today. Decisions to close schools will have significant impacts on communities and our ability to attract more families to Dumfries and Galloway.



Maximise use of fewer assets, working with and within communities

3.10

Review local services and buildings in each area



We know:

- A. Place-based working is more than having services based in a place. It means involvement of the community and understanding their needs, complementing community assets and strengths with good services, co-working with partners and stakeholders, and shaping power dynamics to be balanced toward community leadership.
- B. Working with place at the centre requires investment of time and resources to get things right. This includes investing to remove barriers to engagement and involvement across communities to ensure the widest possible input, not just those with particular interests.
- C. Dumfries and Galloway has plenty of experience in the development of Place Plans at various levels and with various purposes. Whilst they demonstrate the effort and resources required, there is also learning to be taken about how inclusive they are, how cross-sector and multi-agency supported they are and whether we have the resources to invest in the actions to make them a reality (either by investing existing resources or working together to attract investment). Planning is only the beginning.
- D. There have been reports from community organisations that access to booking spaces, rules around how spaces are used and the cost of booking spaces can be prohibitive.
- E. This proposal should also be seen together with proposal 2025/26 3.06.

We propose:

- A. Council fully consider a focus on creating community spaces, incorporating education, learning, community activity/action and community specific spaces, co-developed in a place-based way of working.
- B. Council should consider early investment of some of the proposed savings in this section to invest in others to ensure their participation, inclusive approaches for community involvement and leadership and the re-design of some third and community sector services/support models. These can still be expected to realise savings for the future, perhaps re-phased from the proposal, and create opportunities for external investment.
- C. Council implement a new community-friendly fee model, seeing charges for usage not as income, but rather as an investment in community involvement and wellbeing. Many groups expect to pay a fee for facilities to be maintained and staffed.
- D. Aligned with proposal 2025/26 3.06, explore a mixed model of council ownership and community leadership.



Savings options previously subject to public consultation

25/26

1.06

End funding for all
Tackling Poverty and
cost of living projects



We know:

- A. Dumfries and Galloway continues to face challenges of poverty, inequity and isolation.
- B. Poverty in rural areas can often be hidden by top-level SIMD data alone and there are particular experiences of living in poverty in rural communities, including higher bills for shopping and fuel, costs of (or lack of) transport, access to work and lower wages.
- C. This budget is invested in a range of areas, including community transport, access to food, energy and fuel support and the council's own discretionary funds.
- D. As an example, this fund has allowed over 1000 community transport journey's last year, 79% of people using the service are over 65, 13% of journeys travelling out of region and 87% travelling in region. This at a time when public transport has been reduced or removed for some communities following the recent bus procurement exercise.
- E. Community investment to tackle the impacts of poverty can be spread thinly even within this overall budget. This means that much of the investment is in mitigations of the worst experiences and more investment is needed overall.

We propose:

- A. The council should protect this much-needed investment in tackling poverty and inequalities across Dumfries and Galloway to help maintain the community structures and supports that have been created and are relied on.
- B. The council should commit investment on a multi-year basis, allowing a baseline from which the various community services can build wider investment plans in the knowledge that council investment is secure.
- C. The council recognise that a significant element of this investment is focussed on mitigating the worst experiences, and other projects are building essential supports and services. Whilst council has directed a new approach to evaluation, proposals should be invited from each of the projects on what long-term investment would be required to join-up resources, and how we might bring various funding streams together to tackle poverty in Dumfries and Galloway.



Savings options previously subject to public consultation

25/26

3.06

Close or transfer
remaining council-run
community halls



We know:

A. For all communities, but especially those in many rural settings, maintaining places to go is hugely important for wellbeing, connections and retaining a sense of place and togetherness.

B. In the report *Where People Meet*, the challenges of maintaining community spaces is fully recognised as is the importance of creating sustainable thriving spaces. There are calls for community centres to be recognised as national infrastructure by Governments. *"...community spaces are in decline, and have been for years. This deterioration is unravelling our social fabric, weakening the strength of community"*

<https://www.newlocal.org.uk> [REDACTED]

C. The latest review of Community Asset Transfer by the Scottish Government highlighted the complexity of the process and the resources (by council and communities) required over an extended period.

<https://www.gov.scot/> [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

D. Recently, community organisations have been cautioned about asset transfer without long-term planning and sustainability, ensuring the sector does not allow hope and energy for community spaces to overshadow the practicalities of owning and maintaining them <https://tfn.scot> [REDACTED] community-groups-urged-not-to-be-caught-out-by-costs-in-building-ownership-deals

We propose:

- A. The council formally recognises community halls as essential community infrastructure and the importance of community spaces for wellbeing, connectivity, cohesion and local economies.
- B. The council consider all options for community operation and leadership, without transferring ownership, and work with communities on long-term planning for community spaces. Where CAT is applied, the council should reduce the requirements to the minimum required to allow more community interest and ensure the strategy is enabling, rather than hindering, more community action.
- C. The council reconsider its approach to legal fees and charges and take a more balanced approach to the costs involved in CAT and other community leadership models.
- D. The council works across sectors and with partners to build a region-wide model of community spaces, aligned to priorities on Place Based Working set out in proposal 3.10. There are examples of building sustainable spaces, led by the sector, in the Scottish Borders <https://borderscommunityaction.org.uk/> [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Combined with proposal 3.10, council should create a fund to rebuild the community spaces network/forum, led by the community and voluntary sector, to come together and explore the future sustainability of community halls and other spaces with a long-term outlook on resources and savings.



What else should be considered

NP 1

Removing duplication with more formal collaborations to deliver outcomes



We propose:

- A. The council commit to working with partners across the NHS and community and voluntary sector on annual community working plans, meaning our collective resources working alongside communities are put to best use, we remove duplication and have a more streamlined and collective offer for our communities.
- B. The council considers, along with partners, to take a collective approach to promoting, supporting and recognising volunteering across Dumfries and Galloway. With each public service, along with our communitiy and voluntary sector, maintaining their own strategies, there is potential to miss the collective efforts we can make to energise and recognise volunteering as essential infrastructure, supporting citizenship and a route to improved health and wellbeing.
- C. The council should revisit the scope of proposal 2.06 to be expanded to consider shared activities across sectors that make best use of our collective resources, not only in shared corporate public services.

What else should be considered

NP 2

Invest in Communities Fund



We propose:

- A. A bringing together of all discretionary funds for communities to a single fund, focussed on top priorities for our communities, reducing duplication, with multi level investments for different sized groups and organisations. This could increase accessibility, provide a single funding platform, demonstrate better value for public investment and create a collective picture of community action and impact across Dumfries and Galloway.
- B. Remove restrictions on funding that don't add value. For example, investing in community priorities but then adding requirements for match funding, or being too restrictive on what costs can and can't be covered, isn't in line with Fair Funding nor much of the changes we have seen in investment practice across our sector.
- C. As part of a new collective fund, council create a specific work stream focussing on collaborating for prevention, where community and voluntary sector organisations working in this space can collaborate, improve data, learning and impact to evidence models of 'creation and prevention' in our communities.
- D. Building a collective fund becomes more attractive for external investors to contribute in the long term, aligned to our InvestDG concept that's developing. This approach happens elsewhere, including in Edinburgh with its decade-long community investment programme supported by local public services and a range of external investors. <https://regenerativefuturesfund.org.uk>

What else should be considered

NP 3

Joint investment bids with the community and voluntary sector / communities



We propose:

- A. Restricting our ambitions for Dumfries and Galloway based on the council's resources alone is limiting potential. We propose that the council works with other partners to build collective investment proposals for Dumfries and Galloway to attract more external investment in our communities, wider than large-scale capital projects (they are important too).
- B. Council set a clear direction that any investment applications for our communities is collective across sectors where appropriate, but at the very least has input from across our sectors to maximise benefit and impact.
- C. Council support a model for collective leadership, principles and outcomes, meaning that our key partners can represent our collaborative and collective interests in external and national environments, whilst still navigating local governance complexities.
- D. Support is given to more power and agency for communities to design their own priorities - meaning a move from blanket region-wide solutions to community-led, community-responsive, place-based actions which are more relevant and sustainable.

In summary

The range of proposals overall demonstrate the pressures facing our local public sector services. We fully appreciate that this means some challenging decisions will be made, however it is our overall view that the proposals are unbalanced as a set of collective approaches and include areas that the public may expect already happen without budget decision and direction – efficiency savings in-year, for example, as shown in proposals 2.11 and 5.09. Other than for education, the proposals appear to favour reduction in public services rather than a remodelling of our council to face the pressures, whether that's the intention or not. In short, we don't believe the proposals present the cohesive and holistic plan that's needed.

There are some proposals that are not directly within our scope of work and we have therefore not set out a position or proposal, however they do cause concern. Moving towards a digital/digitally enabled and accessed council means members should be clear on the level of investment in digital skills and connectivity needed so as not to risk creating a barrier between people and council. Proposals to reduce Lifelong Learning resources appear to limit opportunities, especially following a successful CLD inspection, however there is no impact information to make an informed assessment.

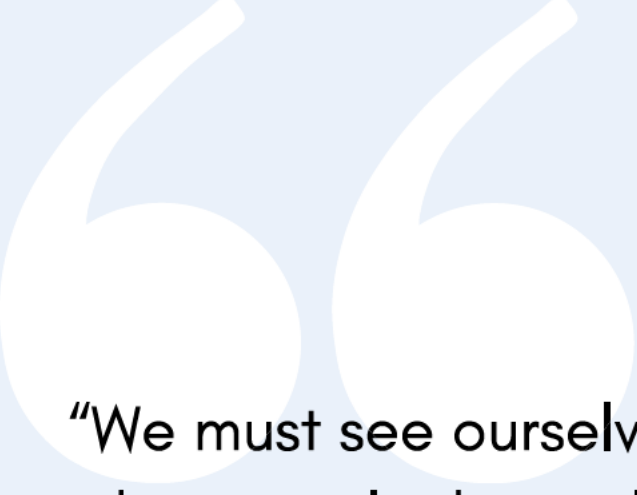
We urge members to call for more detailed impact information on the effect of proposals on communities and to see models of alternative ways of working and of delivering services. All options for savings and income must be on the table, including working with partners to attract more investment to our communities and shaping the size of the council accordingly.

Where there are reductions or defunding of our sector included in proposals, it risks jobs, local infrastructure and support for people across our part of Scotland. Whilst there are real pressures on public finances, council should not be considering dismantling important community infrastructure and deleting community-based jobs, especially when impacts and alternatives have not been considered.

We would have welcomed the opportunity to work together in advance of budget proposals, however we continue to make the offer of working more closely with council to remove duplication, collaborate to achieve outcomes, to work together to attract more community investment to Dumfries and Galloway and to protect, enable and restore power and agency to our communities.

All of this, we suggest, means being bold in decisions, being willing to let communities take the lead and reimagining public service as an enabling action and not an institution to preserve.





“We must see ourselves as citizens – people who actively shape the world around us, who cultivate meaningful connections to their community and institutions, who can imagine a different and better life, who care and take responsibility, and who create opportunities for others to do the same. Crucially, our institutions must also see people as citizens and treat us as such. When they do, everything changes.”



Citizens, [REDACTED], [REDACTED]



Third Sector, Dumfries and Galloway is the operating name of Dumfries and Galloway Third Sector Interface, a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC043832, funded with support from the Scottish Government, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership. We are a Living Wage, Disability Confident Committed and Fair Work employer and commit to Scotland's Fair Work principles.



Response to the Dumfries and Galloway Council Budget Consultation

Submitted by Change Mental Health - November 2025

Introduction

Change Mental Health (CMH) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to Dumfries and Galloway Council's budget consultation. As one of Scotland's leading mental health charities, CMH supports over 10,000 people nationally each year, including more than 670 individuals across Dumfries and Galloway through our integrated network of Outreach and Resource Centre services. We are a long-standing partner of both the Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway, delivering commissioned support since 1995 and currently holding six contracts jointly funded through the Integration Joint Board (IJB).

As a major service provider embedded in communities across Annan, Dumfries, Castle Douglas, Stranraer, and Newton Stewart, we see first-hand the transformative impact that accessible, preventative mental health services have on individuals, families, and wider public systems. Any reduction in early intervention and prevention funding would have a direct and measurable impact on the region's social work, housing, and homelessness services - risking regression in community wellbeing and increased demand on acute statutory provision.

The Case for Prioritising Community Mental Health

Dumfries and Galloway faces significant socioeconomic and health inequalities. Median weekly earnings are among the lowest in Scotland, and the region has a dispersed rural population with limited access to statutory support. Against this backdrop, Change Mental Health delivers practical, person-centred support that reaches people early - before they reach crisis - and helps them stay well in their communities.

Our Outreach Service supports adults living with mental illness at home, while our Resource Centres provide safe, structured spaces where people can connect, build resilience, and regain confidence. Together, these services supported **528 individuals in 2024-2025**, employing 23 trained staff and operating at an annual combined cost of **£637,967.12** - a modest investment that saves significantly more by preventing crisis interventions, hospital admissions, and homelessness.

Independent evaluation and service user feedback demonstrate that:

- **59%** of people said CMH support meant they didn't need to contact their GP for mental health issues
- **62%** avoided hospital-based care such as A&E or inpatient stays
- **51%** avoided needing help from social work teams

- **90%** felt CMH helped them access the right support and stay safe during mental health deterioration

These outcomes highlight a clear return on investment. For every person supported locally, CMH reduces pressure on public health and social services while improving long-term wellbeing. Our model aligns closely with the Scottish Government's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework, and the Population Health Framework (2025–2035).

Prevention and Early Intervention Protect Statutory Services

Cuts to preventative services would have serious ripple effects across Council departments. Outreach and Resource Centres act as buffers that prevent escalation of mental health needs into homelessness, crisis care, and social work intervention. CMH's own data shows that our support significantly reduces dependency on GPs, A&E, and social work teams, while also reducing isolation - a key driver of housing instability and vulnerability.

Without these supports:

- More individuals will present in crisis to overstretched NHS and Council services
- Hospital occupancy rates - already at **94%** in local psychiatric facilities - will worsen
- Homelessness prevention and housing support teams will face higher caseloads; and
- Social work will encounter more complex, higher-risk cases requiring intensive support

Preventative community support is not an optional extra - it is an essential component of the region's mental health and social care ecosystem. Sustained investment protects the Council's statutory obligations under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and contributes directly to achieving IJB outcomes on early intervention, wellbeing, and reduced health inequalities.

Local, Person-Centred Impact

Change Mental Health's approach is evidence-based, recovery-focused, and built on lived experience. Every service user develops a personal plan with clear goals and risk assessments, reviewed regularly to ensure progress toward self-management. Our staff - registered with the Scottish Social Services Council - deliver high-quality, regulated care and support, graded **"Very Good" (5)** by the Care Inspectorate.

The lived experiences of our service users show the real-world impact of this work:

- A young person referred from CAMHS who had not left their home for two years is now engaging in education and social activity.
- A man referred by Primary Care for severe depression and suicidal ideation now participates in community groups and has reconnected with his family.

- Another service user-built confidence and independence through supported learning, progressing to voluntary work and driving lessons.

These examples illustrate that our model not only improves mental health but strengthens community cohesion, self-reliance, and participation in the local economy.

Partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council and the IJB

Change Mental Health values its long-standing partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway through the IJB. We share the Council's priorities around prevention, sustainability, and improving outcomes for the most vulnerable. However, the current pressures facing public budgets must not undermine these priorities.

If funding for Outreach and Resource Centres were reduced, it would directly contradict the national and local policy direction toward community-based care and prevention. Moreover, moving all funding to individualised models such as the National Flexible Framework, without transitional protection, risks diverting scarce staff time from service delivery to administration, reducing capacity and effectiveness.

We urge the Council and IJB to maintain a stable block funding arrangement for CMH's services during any transition period, to safeguard continuity of support and ensure Dumfries and Galloway continues to lead on integrated, person-centred care.

Conclusion

Change Mental Health exists to help people live well and independently, and to reduce the need for crisis or institutional care. The evidence from our Dumfries and Galloway services shows that early intervention works - it keeps people safe, builds resilience, and saves public money. Disinvestment would be a false economy, driving up costs elsewhere in the system and worsening outcomes for some of the most vulnerable residents in the region.

We therefore call on Dumfries and Galloway Council and the Integration Joint Board to:

1. **Protect and prioritise funding** for community-based mental health services
2. **Maintain stability** in existing commissioning arrangements during any financial transition
3. **Recognise the essential preventative role** of services like CMH's Outreach and Resource Centres in safeguarding the wellbeing of individuals and communities across Dumfries and Galloway

Change Mental Health remains committed to working collaboratively to ensure the best outcomes for the people we support and the communities we serve.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Your Budget](#)
Subject: 03OC EXTERNAL: Budget Consultation
Date: 19 November 2025 16:41:52

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello, Wigtownshire Stuff (part of Wigtownshire and Stewartry Partnership) is a local charity working alongside people with additional support needs and their families to provide opportunities/activities in their local communities. These currently include social activities, an accessible bike project and an employment training project in a local restaurant. We are not core funded by the Council, run mainly by volunteers and sessions are either free/low cost/ donation at the point of access.

We have been talking about the budget consultation with members and families to raise awareness and support them to complete the online consultation.

The main concerns are:

- individuals won't get the support they require to attend sessions;
- services that are currently funded by the council may have funding reduced/removed which will reduce/remove support to individuals to access their service and will therefore come in our direction which will stretch our capacity to an unmanageable extent; especially if people who require support start to attend our activities without support;
- if school leavers aren't being offered any personal budgets to get the support they require to build a life after school; they won't be able to access services that cost and will therefore attend our activities but our ability to accommodate a significant amount of additional people would stretch us.
- individuals won't have money to do what they do now, won't be able to go out as much and will become socially isolated, depressed and anxious.

As an organisation we are proud of the fact that we have an open door policy and would like to continue to do so. However, if we feel like our capacity is being stretched beyond our limits we might have to take the regrettable decision to introduce some criteria to help us manage the demand.

We would also like to raise the issue of lack of consultation with people with additional support needs and their families; the lack of alternative formats of information and the timing of the consultation with the local elections which has made it almost impossible to liaise with local elected members.

Regards, Wigtownshire Stuff.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Your Budget](#)
Subject: EXTERNAL: Council Budget Consultation Concern
Date: 20 November 2025 10:52:02

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

I have been instructed by the Kirk Session of Lockerbie Dryfesdale, Hutton, Corrie, and Applegarth Church of Scotland to respond to the Dumfries and Galloway Council Budget Consultation with our concerns regarding the cut listed on Page 3 under 1.07: *End funding for Information and Advice services provided by Citizens Advice*. The Kirk Session notes that the Citizens Advice Bureau is the only organisation to be named directly in these proposals.

We have the utmost sympathy for the difficult budget decisions the Council has to make, but feel strongly that cutting funding for the CAB would be a misstep. The support they offer to the most vulnerable in our community cannot easily be replicated, and certainly not at the same value-for-money that the CAB offers as a third-sector partner to the Council. As we understand it, the help the CAB offers with benefits, housing, debt management, etc, actually brings money into the region far beyond what they cost. After all, money being spent on debt is money not being spent on local goods and services. Moreover, the CAB has a vital role in preventing the kind of financial and mental health emergencies that would throw individuals and families back onto the Council for support, at considerable expense.

You will also be aware of the strong reputation the CAB has for impartial and informed advice. Our Kirk Session was dismayed at the thought that this might be withdrawn, as we regularly have occasion to refer parishioners to the CAB for information and emergency help.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your budget proposals. We are grateful for the work of the Council, and amidst the many and difficult decisions that must be made, we hope that you will continue to support the vital work of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]
Session Clerk,
Lockerbie Dryfesdale, Hutton, Corrie, and Applegarth Church of Scotland

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Your Budget](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: 05OC EXTERNAL: Caerlaverock
Date: 20 November 2025 12:33:04

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

I write as Chair of Caerlaverock Community Association in relation to this year's budget.

The biggest single issue affecting this community is the lack of repair to the roads and we wish to see an increase in expenditure in that respect. With tens of thousands of visitors to WWT, The Castle, and The National Nature Reserve, the poor state of roads as previously reported is unacceptable. These are major tourist attractions for the county that generate substantial income for local businesses.

Secondly we wish to make representations about the public toilets in Glencaple. We understand that closure of such facilities might be part of the review. We make the strongest possible representations to keep these open 24/7. They are a key part of our local tourism infrastructure. Visitors to the village, and particularly the motorhome community, regularly comment how important and welcome they are. Any attempt to close these will be fiercely resisted!

Please consider these points in the budget exercise.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]
Chair
Caerlaverock Community Association

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Your Budget](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: 06OC EXTERNAL: Council Budget - Hillview Leisure Centre
Date: 20 November 2025 16:48:41
Attachments: [Outlook-zwcgm2pq.png](#)
[1.zip](#)
[2.zip](#)
[3.zip](#)
[4.zip](#)
[5.zip](#)
[6.zip](#)
[7.zip](#)
[Council Budget Proposal - CC Letter.docx](#)

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Good afternoon,

In response to the Council's budget proposals, residents of Kirkconnel and Kelloholm have put together a petition against the closure of Hillview Leisure Centre. I am emailing on behalf of the Community Council who have collected these signatures to forward to Dumfries & Galloway Council in hopes of highlighting the concern that our community has regarding this proposal.

Attached are copies of all signatures collected in protest of the closure of Hillview, which amount to over 800 signatures, as well as a letter from Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Community Council. Also, below is a link to the online petition that currently has over 500 signatures:

<https://bit.ly/3Lld3XA>

Hillview is the hub of our village, and its closure would mean the loss of vital services that many of our residents rely on. We hope that the numerous signatures and comments collected exemplifies the need to keep Hillview running and highlights what needs to be prioritised in Kirkconnel and Kelloholm.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Business Support Officer – Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Development Trust
Minute Secretary - Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Community Council

Email: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]





*Kirkconnel & Kelloholm Development Trust is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
Registered Charity Number: SC045680*

20/11/2025

Kirkconnel & Kelloholm Community Council



To whom it may concern,

Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Community Council wishes to express our concern regarding the proposal of the closure of Hillview Leisure Centre.

Hillview is a valuable facility in Kirkconnel and Kelloholm that provides services and activities to residents of all ages. Many community members have been in contact with us to voice what the Leisure Centre means to them and their families and what they would lose in its closure.

We have collected the signatures from a petition started by frustrated community members, and the number of signatures and comments shows just how much Hillview means to our community. We hope that the impact that this facility has on our residents is considered when determining its future.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction mark covering a signature.

Chairperson, Kirkconnel & Kelloholm Community Council



From: [REDACTED]
To: [Your Budget](#)
Subject: 07OC EXTERNAL: (Case Ref: OM2966)
Date: 21 November 2025 12:40:30

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Good afternoon

I am writing as the constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament for Dumfriesshire to express my strong concerns at the Local Authority's Budget Proposals.

While I appreciate the SNP Scottish Government has starved our Council of cash and has failed to understand the costs associated with delivering services in rural areas, it does not excuse these truly shocking proposals which have been very unsettling for communities and many dedicated individuals and teams within the Council.

In particular, I am concerned the idea of closing Hillview Leisure Centre has even seen the light of day. No one who has actually visited this facility and seen how well it is used or taken the time to consider the challenges faced by residents in Upper Nithsdale would have thought this was in any way justified. It has made an already fragile community feel even more forgotten.

The same goes for proposed cuts to Citizen's Advice – words fail me. This is a life line service that is already picking up the slack and filling in for statutory services supporting the most vulnerable in our communities.

I am also deeply concerned at the proposals and commentary presented around rural schools. This is not fair on pupils, parents or teachers and confirms my long standing belief that there is a mindset within the Council that is determined to see these schools closed by stealth. Rather than plan properly for changing demographics and present something positive for our more rural communities, it feels like cost cutting is driving the agenda.

Finally, I was also alarmed to see cuts to music tuition included in these plans and again I would question what this says about Dumfries and Galloway commitment to equality of opportunity and the message this administration is sending out to our young people.

These are just some of the issues that concern me most and on which I have had very high levels of correspondence and engagement with constituents. In essence I believe the methodology and approach behind this consultation has been flawed and that a Council doing the right thing in difficult circumstances would be having a different conversation.

Please look again at the options available and look to protect our communities, not undermine them.

Regards,

[Oliver Mundell MSP](#)

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Dumfriesshire

E [REDACTED]

T: [REDACTED]

A: [REDACTED]

The Office of Oliver Mundell MSP will process (collect, store and use) the information you provide in a manner compatible with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We will endeavor to keep your information accurate and up to date, and not keep it for longer than is necessary. The office of Oliver Mundell MSP is required to retain information in accordance with the law, such as information needed for income tax and audit purposes. How long certain kinds of personal data should be kept may also be governed by specific requirements and agreed practices. Personal data may be held in addition to these periods depending on individual needs. A full copy of the privacy policy of Oliver Mundell MSP is available on request.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Your Budget](#)
Subject: EXTERNAL: CONSULTATION INPUT
Date: 21 November 2025 14:40:13

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Good afternoon,

I am writing on behalf of the Board, Staff, Volunteers, Members and Stakeholders of Dumfries Day Centre for Older People in support of continued funding for this valuable service, used by some of our most vulnerable members of the community as is indeed the case for the 9 Day Centres throughout Dumfries and Galloway.

Taking the decision to reduce or cut the budget for Day Centres is a decision which affects real lives, real families and the wellbeing of entire communities. Day Centres are not optional extras, they are lifelines. Reducing/cutting funds to them will leave older adults, their families and carers throughout Dumfries and Galloway without the support they rely on.

Day Centres contribute greatly to preventing isolation, protecting health and wellbeing, reducing hospital admissions, underpinning stretched care packages and supporting carers and the impact of reduced/cut funding would be long lasting and detrimental to the older people throughout Dumfries and Galloway whilst increasing pressure on other, already overstretched Health & Social Care services.

Kind regards.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Service & Development Manager



[REDACTED]

Tel: [REDACTED]
Scottish Registered Charity No: SCO14747

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Your Budget](#)
Subject: 09OC EXTERNAL: Feedback on Budget
Date: 21 November 2025 15:48:03

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Dear D&G Council,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am the Admin Assistant for DG Voice. I write here to share my feedback on your proposed budget cuts 26/27.

DG Voice is the region's only Disabled People's Organisation and we wish to raise serious concerns over the proposed cuts to essential services.

We are deeply concerned that the measures outlined will disproportionately and detrimentally impact disabled people in Dumfries and Galloway, their families and their Carers, and place the Council at risk of failing to meet statutory legal obligations.

We are particularly opposed to the following proposals:

- 1.07 Ending funding for Information and Advice services provided by Citizens Advice
- 1.08 Ending funding for Representation and Engagement services provided by third sector groups

These services are essential for disabled people and removing them will severely restrict their ability to take part in everyday life, access their rights, engage in decision-making, and obtain support that enables them to navigate complex systems.

DG Voice is the ONLY local organisation that speaks to – and on behalf of – disabled people who's voices might otherwise go unheard. Without the funding we receive to represent and engage with our members we would be unable to continue our valuable work.

We also oppose the following additional cuts, as each will have a disproportionate adverse effect on disabled residents:

- 1.01 Removal of the Instrumental Music Instruction Service
- 1.02 Removal of funding for school-based Police Officers
- 1.03 Reduction in spending on external Children and Families services in Social Work
- 1.04 Reduction in winter road treatment
- 1.05 Reduction in grass cutting on 60mph roads
- 1.06 Reduction in the council's subsidy of business rate reliefs
- 1.09 Reduction in funding support for major festivals and events
- 2.01 Introduction of fixed enrolment dates and capacities for nurseries
- 2.02 Changes to how out-of-hours social work calls are handled
- 2.03 Reduction in spending on children's direct payment support
- 2.04 Reduction in emergency assistance payments through Children and Families
- 2.05 "Digital Re-design" to automate processes
- 2.06 Sharing services with other organisations
- 2.07 Reduction in the live-streaming of council meetings

- 2.08 Going paperless for council committees
- 2.09 Review of staff training purchasing
- 2.10 Review of customer experience across services
- 2.11 Ceasing use of a separate IT system for Housing/Homelessness services
- 2.12 Less frequent household waste collection
- 3.01 Consultation on the closure of small nurseries
- 3.03–3.05 Consultations on school closures (up to 50 pupils)
- 3.06 Closure of four seasonal museums and attractions
- 3.07 Closure of Hillview Leisure Centre, Kelloholm
- 3.08 Closure of the Midsteeple Box Office
- 3.09 Reduction in the number of council office buildings
- 3.10 Review of local services and buildings in each area
- 3.11 Closure of Whithorn Household Waste Recycling Centre

Taken cumulatively, these proposed cuts would have a devastating effect on disabled people. They remove essential support structures, limit access to education, reduce community participation, remove safety nets, and increase everyday barriers to independent living and inclusion.

I urge the Council to reconsider these proposals and instead explore alternative, less harmful options such as savings on non-essential services, a hiring freeze, or an earnings cap.

I also wish to highlight that implementation of the above measures may place the Council in breach of several statutory duties:

Equality Act 2010

- *Public Sector Equality Duty (s.149)* – The Council must have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations. Failure to fully consider the disproportionate impacts of these proposals on disabled people may amount to a breach.
- *Reasonable Adjustments (s.20)* – Disabled people must not be placed at a substantial disadvantage due to a provision, policy, practice or physical change. Many of the proposed cuts risk doing exactly that.

Human Rights Act 1998

- *ECHR Articles 8 and 14* – Reductions interfering with family or community life, or which disproportionately impact disabled people when compared with others, may breach human rights protections.
- *Protocol 1, Article 2* – Education-related cuts may undermine the right to education.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

- Articles 19, 24, 9, 29 and 4(3) emphasise the rights to independent living, education, accessibility, participation in public life, and meaningful consultation. The Council risks failing these obligations if disabled people are not fully enabled to participate, access services, and live independently in the community.

The threats to disabled people are not theoretical – they are real and immediate. Cutting

core support services without providing viable alternatives risks long-term harm to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

DG Voice is asking you to PLEASE reconsider. Our members are the most vulnerable people in the community. They are suffering the aftereffects of the pandemic, austerity measures and the current cost of living crisis. They cannot take any more.

We would welcome the opportunity to share with you the research we have done and the alternative savings we have identified.

[REDACTED]

tant

[REDACTED]

DG Voice

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DG Voice is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.
Registered Company number (Scotland): SC327973 . Charity number: SC030187

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Your Budget](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: 100C EXTERNAL: Annan Academy Parent Council Formal Response to Budget Proposals across D&G
Date: 21 November 2025 16:39:49

[You don't often get email from [REDACTED] Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

I write on behalf of the Annan Academy Parent Council to share our collective views on the current budget proposals in Dumfries & Galloway.

Please note the following:

1.01 Removal of instrumental Music Instruction Service

As well as having an impact on the academic outcomes of young people studying music and limiting the range of instruments they may learn. This massively impacts all the creative benefits from learning an instrument and the emotional growth and self esteem that comes from performing. This suggests a regression back to a two-tier education system one for those who can afford private music tuition and the rest of the school population. For us a school parent council, we believe this would be damaging as we recognise the inherent value of belonging to a music group and performing at community events of which we continuously support.

1.02 Removal of funding for School Based Officer

It is apparent that our schools have come to rely on the presence of the school-based officer for proactive things like working with PSHE groups, talking to Assemblies as well as early educational interventions to small groups and individuals. Given the changes in society that we are seeing, with an increase in anti-social and risk taking behaviour, having a known point of contact that can intervene and react flexibly to issues that arise in our community is incredibly useful and one which we can see no other suitable response or proposal.

1.02 Reduce spending on external children's and families services in social work

Currently we are aware that as a school community there is a growing need for timely interventions of which some may require a social work intervention. We currently have 52% of our pupil community registered as having as a minimum, an additional support need. A reduction of this amount on an already stretched service will directly impact on our children and families. Which in turn may impact on the wellbeing and resilience of our teaching staff.

4.01 Removal of permanent supply teacher pool and 4.02 Reduce the budget for teaching staff cover

By removing these it is our opinion that this shifts cost on to schools directly and impacts directly on to overstretched systems. Schools in effect will have less money to run than they do currently. This will definitely adversely impact our school and its resources.

4.09 Share headteachers between smaller and larger secondary school.

It isn't yet known nor are we state that there has been any discussion how this proposal may operate even though financially, savings can be evidenced on a page. We feel it would negatively impact on the quality of provision in both settings.

These are the main cuts that we as a parent council understand will impact adversely on our school through operational functions to adversely impacting our pupils abs families. This will also likely increase the daily challenges to frontline staff including retention, resulting in staff / subject shortages. The reduction of staff numbers in line with reduced pupil numbers would need to be looked at as does the whole allocation of staff so that the allocation is equitable across all schools.

Please note that we have focused our response regarding curriculum and respite proposals.

We remain concerned regarding the impact of your budget proposals in relation to the wellbeing of our most vulnerable children & families. We are concerned about the educational and societal disparity between our least and most deprived children & families.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

Parent Council Member

[REDACTED]

Chair Of Parent Council

On behalf of Annan Academy Parent Council

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Your Budget](#)
Subject: 11OC EXTERNAL: Budget Consultation
Date: 22 November 2025 18:39:52

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The Kirk Session of Lochmaben Church wish to express their grave concerns regarding the proposed cut to services provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau as named in the D& G Council Budget consultation.

The service the CAB provides to vulnerable people is second to none: professional, knowledgeable, impartial and compassionate and is most certainly cost effective.

We acknowledge that the Council has to make very difficult budget decisions but we feel very strongly that cutting funding for the CAB would be a serious mistake and would lead to increased poverty and mental health problems.

We as church members often recommend the CAB to worried parishioners and know how much their support is needed and valued.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your budget proposals.

We hope that you will continue to support this very important and necessary organisation.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

Session Clerk,
Lochmaben Church of Scotland

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Your Budget](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: 120C EXTERNAL: COUNCIL BUDGET CONSULTATION
Date: 24 November 2025 15:29:22
Importance: High

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Dear Sir/Madam,

We are emailing on behalf of Castle Douglas Community Council regarding the Dumfries & Galloway Council budget cuts consultation.

We have been made aware that the following buildings/services, specific to Castle Douglas, are under threat of closure.

1. Castle Douglas Swimming Pool
2. Castle Douglas Art Gallery
3. Castle Douglas Town Hall
4. Public Toilets

We are extremely concerned regarding all these proposed cuts and would like to strongly object to them on behalf of the Town.

Castle Douglas Swimming Pool provides an essential service to our residents. Combined with the Fitness Suite, it promotes a healthy and active lifestyle to all ages as well as being a skill that can ultimately save people's lives. With the recent cuts to bus services, closing the swimming pool would provide a real barrier for many residents of Castle Douglas to access swimming facilities. We were also under the impression that the swimming pool was to receive an upgrade in the near future (this was mentioned multiple times during consultations regarding the New Multi Modal Travel Hub which is to be located on the Market Hill). This upgrade is strongly supported by the local community, so we are distraught to hear that the Swimming Pool is now under threat of closure. Castle Douglas Art Gallery was gifted to the town in 1938 by Mrs Ethel Susan Graham Bristowe, and is an asset that should be promoted rather than threatened. We are currently discussing plans for two possible community events next year, both of which would require the hire of the Art Gallery and would be difficult to proceed with if this venue were to be closed. We believe that a stronger focus on promoting the hire of the venue, alongside affordable rates, could see a large increase in demand and should turn this asset into a profitable one for D&G Council. Surely this would be more desirable than closing it.

Castle Douglas Town Hall is unique for our town, in terms of its size and ability to accommodate large scale events. It is well used and there is no other venue of its size in our town. We have been in recent discussions with Councillor Pauline Drysdale, with regards to accessing funding to update the building and hope that D&G Council will not close it.

Finally, public toilets provide a real lifeline for so many. Closing them can lead to social isolation for those who require easy access to toilet facilities when out in public. We strongly oppose the closure of our public toilets in Castle Douglas and hope that this is not a cut that will go ahead.

We appreciate your consideration of our email request and, whilst we appreciate that difficult & unpopular cuts do have to be made, we strongly hope that these 4 important buildings & services for our townspeople will not be axed.

Kind Regards,

On Behalf of Castle Douglas Community Council.





BURNS HOWFF CLUB

INSTITUTED 1889

President: [REDACTED]

FEDERATED No. 112

Honorary Secretary: [REDACTED]

Tel: [REDACTED]

E-mail [REDACTED]

Club Website: [REDACTED]



Meeting Place:
GLOBE INN,
DUMFRIES.

[REDACTED]
Chief Executive
Dumfries and Galloway Council
English Street
DUMFRIES

Date: 20th November 2025

Dear Madam

MUSIC TUITION AND MUSEUMS IN DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

At our Executive Committee Meeting last night several members raised the subject of potential cuts in Music Tuition throughout Dumfries and Galloway and also the possibility of Museum Closures or reduction in opening hours of same.

We are writing to express our concern at reducing cultural experiences and learning for the young people of Dumfries and Galloway.

As part of the Dumfries and Galloway Burns Association, we are heavily involved with the Annual Schools Competitions which takes place in February each year, for which your Education Department has been kind enough to allow us to use Educational Premises for many years, most recently St. Joseph's College and St. Andrew Primary School. Children performing at these competitions build a personal confidence and many go on to great things winning at the National Competition run by the Robert Burns World Federation. This in itself reflects the hard work of the Councils Education Department and all the teachers and parents who put the time in to help young persons reach their full potential not to mention all the volunteers who step up to help, with many of the young people going on to study music at the Conservatoire of Scotland and other Colleges linked to music and the performing arts. A tremendous accolade for our region.

We feel this is all linked including the cultural benefits of Local Museums where the pupils of all local schools visit to learn of our heritage.

The great writer and playwright Alan Bennett once described closing libraries as child abuse. All this is the same so let's look to the young, they are the future.

Many of us have already completed the online survey of potential cuts in front of the Council. Please let us protect the youth of our region where there is so much talent and potential.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]
Honorary Secretary

Honorary Treasurer: [REDACTED]

Tel: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Your Budget](#)
Subject: 14OC EXTERNAL:
Date: 24 November 2025 16:53:07

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of Castle Douglas Community Council and the people of Castle Douglas, I would like to submit this petition against the closure of our Swimming Pool in the forthcoming D&G Council budget cuts.

<https://c.org/xMM4SyN8v4>

Unfortunately, we were only informed today that the deadline for lodging community concerns re this potential closure was 5pm this afternoon. This has given us minimum time to publicise this petition.

However, we hope you can see that by getting 150 signatures in just a couple of hours, there is a great amount of local support for our beloved Swimming Pool.

We will leave the petition running, but we are aware the deadline is 5pm today, so we are submitting what we have so far for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Castle Douglas Community Council

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

When your dog deserves more than 'just a walk', send them on a crusade!



[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 November 2025 15:03
To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: EXTERNAL: Annan Town Bands Petition - for Budget Consultation 2026

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi [REDACTED]

Please see the attached petition that Annan Town band carried out in response to the councils consideration of the removal of the Instrumental Music service

Let me know if you have any issues.

File format is CSV which is how it downloads from change.org

Thank

[REDACTED]
Treasurer Annan Town Band



[REDACTED]
Inverurie
[REDACTED]

5th December 2025

D&G Councillors,

Budget setting in Education: School leaders express considerable concern

The Association of Headteachers and Deputies in Scotland (AHDS) is Scotland's sole union devoted to the advocacy and support of school leaders within Primary, Early Years, and ASN sectors. We are proud to represent nearly 100 Headteachers, Deputies, and Principal Teachers across Dumfries and Galloway and over 2800 nationwide. I write on behalf of D&G members.

We are acutely aware of the challenging decisions demanded by the present financial climate and do not underestimate the gravity of your responsibilities. Nevertheless, we believe it is imperative that you are equipped with the perspective of your school leaders as you consider potential budget changes. Having consulted with our members locally, I am writing to you to set out their views on the proposals and where we have concerns, to describe the impacts on pupils, schools and school leaders.

To provide appropriate context, Dumfries and Galloway faces what can only be described as a profound crisis in the recruitment of school leaders. The number of applicants for Headteacher positions is alarmingly low, with many posts attracting no candidates whatsoever. According to the 2025 AHDS workload survey, only 27% of current Headteachers would recommend Headship to others, while only 16% of Deputies and 11% of Principal Teachers express any aspiration to pursue Headteacher roles. Furthermore, members consistently report working in excess of 50 hours per week, a situation which is unsustainable, deeply concerning and only likely to worsen if the proposed changes are put into effect. The undesirability of headship expressed by those already in the system paints an alarming picture of under-investment and insufficient support.

It is clear to our members - your employees on the ground - that several of the proposals under consideration would serve only to exacerbate the problems with the desirability of head teacher roles, the retention of current staff and the provision for children. We are not persuaded that the proposed reduction in leadership roles will yield the anticipated financial savings; rather, we fear it will intensify workload, pressure and absence – with the very real prospect of creating a greater financial burden, not to mention negative impacts for children.

Looking at budget proposals in groups, there are those that we can offer some support for (page 2), some that we are concerned would add to workload and service pressures (page 3) and some that we feel would be a significant mis-step for the service and the pupils in its care, suggesting cuts in areas which require greater investment (page 5).

Best regards,

[REDACTED]
AHDS General Secretary

Proposals which AHDS supports to some degree**Proposal 3.02: Use schools more effectively by bringing pupils into under used modern buildings.**

While concerned about the continued employment of members currently in smaller schools, we cautiously welcome this proposal as it offers the possibility of service efficiencies and savings which would not be possible through other proposals.

However, it is not clear from the public consultation document if the proposal has taken into consideration some costs associated with the redeployment of school leaders in many of these schools. This may result in surplus staff and the need to offer an early retirement/voluntary severance scheme. In addition to paying promoted teacher salaries to any who are redeployed to class teaching roles (under teachers' terms and conditions, those in promoted posts are entitled to cash conservation for a period of three years - <https://www.snct.org.uk/> section 1.63. This proposal is clearly related to Proposals 3.03-3.05 but it is not clear from the consultation document whether the savings envisaged in 3.02 are standalone or would only be achievable with some or all of 3.03-3.05 also being approved. It would appear very unlikely that 3.02 could be approved in isolation and result in substantial savings.

Proposal 3.01 & 3.03-3.05: Consulting on closure of small nurseries and schools

We appreciate that such proposals are difficult for the communities affected and for staff in those schools but, as noted in relation to proposal 3.02, this is the only mechanism open to the council that offers an opportunity to increase efficiency while also, in some ways, enhancing pupil experience. However, the decision to close schools is not one which can be made in a binary way based solely on school roles as local circumstances and geographical challenges always need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Proposal 2.01: Introduce fixed enrolment dates and capacities for nurseries

Again, this proposal appears to offer a sound approach to managing resources effectively and efficiently.

Proposals which would add to workload and service pressures

These proposals represent a reduction in cost, without a reduction in service. Ultimately these tasks are still required to be carried out and as such will fall to school leaders or impact .

Proposal 4.01: Removal of the permanent supply pool

If these colleagues can fill current vacancies then we may support this proposal. However, it is important to note that a permanent supply pool was created for sound reasons – securing supply teachers in sufficient numbers to service the needs of schools is difficult in all rural local authorities and offering permanent roles which to maintain a ‘base-load’ of supply teachers was a mechanism designed to increase the desirability of the role and availability of staff. Proceeding with this proposal would risk creating operational difficulties unless strong availability of supply staff can be ensured.

Proposal 4.02: Reduce absence cover budget for teaching staff

Within the proposals it notes absence is to be managed by a renewed Maximising Attendance policy. The reality of this is as follows. Currently school management provides the first five days of any staff absence. Principal Teachers and Deputies can cover this when they are not in class but the vast majority of these staff have significant class commitment anyway. Therefore, frequently, class cover is provided by Head Teachers leading to greater workload and pressure on school leaders. Deadlines and demands on school leaders do not diminish in these circumstances so, as a consequence the working hours, stress and pressure faced by school leaders all increase further. We cannot support this proposal.

Proposal 4.06: Restructure Management in large Primary Schools

This relates to schools with over 221 pupils – the eight largest primary schools in D&G. In these schools there are currently two Deputies or a Deputy and two Principal teachers. However, these post-holders spend a lot of time in class. For example in the case of a school with 1 DHT and 2 PTS, there are only 2 – 2.5 days a week between them where they are not class committed. Furthermore, schools of such size are typically 10 classes or more and so five times more likely than a 2-class school to require class cover as outlined in point 4 above. Finally, if this proposal is given due consideration, we ask that you consider it within the context of the management structure of a similarly sized secondary school. Primary school management teams are called upon to cover classes when staff are absent, have core planned teaching time as well as the core role of school leadership. There is a desperate need to increase management time for promoted teachers. We could not support this proposal unless it increased the management time genuinely available to each school.

Proposal 4.03 & 4.05: Reduce staffing in ELC support and management teams for small nurseries

We have considerable concern about these proposals. Early intervention – in this case investment in supporting the youngest children in our settings – is a crucial foundation block to improve the life chances of our pupils and to reduce the need for increased spending on those pupils in later years.

These proposals are of considerable concern as they seek to reduce spend on ELC.

The first proposal is that the headcount of SLC support teams is cut by 50%. This seems very likely to have negative consequences for the quality of service.

The second proposal is clearly linked to proposal 3.01 and as such (4.05) could not be progressed in isolation without creating unmanageable workload demands on the staff

remaining. Again, to do this would seem likely to have negative consequences for service quality and potentially give rise to H&S concerns.

Proposal 4.04: Remove dedicated education H&S team

While not strongly opposed to this proposal we are concerned that in a context where schools are supporting a broader range of pupil need in an increasingly litigious society, if this function was moved to a central H&S team, would there be sufficient expertise and capacity to support schools effectively and timeously?

Schools need a H&S team who are well trained and knowledgeable about school environments and who are ready and available to visit schools to undertake assessments. Such an arrangement would have a positive impact on school leader workloads.

Proposal 4.11: Remove Playground Supervisors

Simply put, this makes playtimes unsafe. This is the only dedicated role for playground supervision. Such has been the reduction in Learning Assistants in recent years, that these staff are typically supporting individual children with medical or emotional regulation needs and are not available to supervise. Many school leaders already undertake daily playtime and lunch time supervision out of necessity, but such a proposal would mean that they were compelled. As part of the role, Headteachers are occasionally off site through the week meaning that there could potentially be no supervision. We cannot support this proposal.

Proposals 4.07 and 4.08: Share Headteachers between ‘very small and larger’ Primary Schools and ‘small and larger’ Primary Schools.

We do not believe these proposals are viable or desirable. They would not be possible or present a saving if 3.01-3.05 were progressed.

Partnership Heads of small schools already report on the challenges of leading in two locations. Heads of larger schools are already working far in excess of contracted hours managing one site. If this proposal were to be accepted it would require increases in management time which negates any cost benefit.

Proposals for cuts in areas which require greater investment

The proposed cuts noted in this section would be to the detriment of our most vulnerable pupils. **We cannot support cuts in these areas** when members in D&G and all-around Scotland are calling for much increased investment in supporting pupils with ASN:

Proposal 4.12: Close three inclusion bases and shift to outreach support.

The children who attend inclusion bases are there for a variety of reasons, but in essence it is because mainstream school cannot meet their needs. An outreach service would only be able to advise on strategies to support these children. In the current service, in order for a child to access an inclusion base, staff from an inclusion base have already undertaken that outreach service and it has not been successful, hence the pupil attending the inclusion base. We need more inclusion bases rather than fewer. This would offer the benefit of reducing pupil transport costs.

Proposal 2025/26 2.02: Reduce Additional Support for Learning Teachers in Primary Schools

Cutting the headcount of these highly trained professionals doesn't mean that pupils no longer require support. In order meet the needs of these pupils would mean an increase in the workload of both teachers and school leaders. The impact of the increase in learning need and the reduction in learning support teacher time in recent years has been widely documented nationally. Our concern about these proposed cuts extends to proposals 2025/26 2.01, 4.01 and 4.05. Similarly, proposal 1.03 appears to reduce essential support for vulnerable children and families, including children with ASN, which would likely have a negative impact on those individuals currently supported and on pressures in schools.

END.