

COUNCIL PLAN 2017 - 2022



Mid-Term Review Performance Report

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Leaders' Welcome Statement

When we launched our current Council Plan in 2017 we said:

“Dumfries and Galloway Council is ambitious for our region, focused on supporting our communities to thrive and prosper and ensuring that we provide quality services that deliver our priorities.”

This statement still stands, but we recognise that this is a very different world from that in 2017.

At the start of our 5 year Council Plan we could never have anticipated what lay ahead. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered our lives and work practices beyond measure, but our Priorities are still at the forefront of everything we do. We remain committed to:

- Build the local economy
- Provide the best start in life for all our children
- Protect our most vulnerable people
- Be an inclusive Council

Within these four priorities we have 128 detailed Actions. Over the last three years, despite reducing Budgets and new challenges facing our country, region and Council, we have completed 22 of these Actions and 88 are on track or in progress.

Some services have had to be re-focused, but our local communities, our region's economy, and our promise to be an effective and inclusive Council are still at the heart of our decision making.

There has already been a lot of research carried out about the impact of COVID-19 on people's lives. We know that it is having the biggest impact on people who were already facing the greatest inequalities. We need to ensure that our Council's Renew and Recovery Plan directs our focus to the key issues, to give support to our most vulnerable businesses and people to help them get through this difficult time.

We also promised to:

“Work closely with other organisations across the public, private and Third Sectors to ensure that individual and partnership activities best meet people's needs.”



Cllr Elaine Murray
Council Leader



Cllr Rob Davidson
Council Depute Leader

Never has this been truer, and the pandemic has only strengthened our bonds and working relationships. We are immensely proud of our staff and communities for getting us to this stage. We had always planned to review the Council Plan Actions at this mid-way point in our term of office, to ensure that we reflect the needs of our citizens and communities and any changes to our responsibilities – for example, we have recently agreed to add an additional Priority to address the climate emergency.

In some areas we will need to look at new approaches to how the Council works, and this is already taking shape. Through local wards and Elected Members we are responding to our ever changing environment, providing flexible services and staff who are able to adapt and take on new roles as necessary.

Our Council has had to make significant cuts to its resources - over the last 10 years we have had to cut £106M from our budgets.

Our future financial position is very uncertain at this time. We know that there have already been significant additional costs and loss of income to the Council during this financial year – estimated to be around £11.2M so far. We continue to ensure that resources are available and prioritised to support our most vulnerable. A range of measures are being undertaken to seek to protect key services including continuing to seek further additional Scottish Government funding support.

We also know that the announcement of our Scottish Government Grant for 2021/22 is likely to be delayed until into the new year, which makes planning very difficult.

However, it is clear that in the years ahead we will have to prioritise services and projects and be realistic about what we can achieve. Working together is more important than ever, to ensure our region not only gets through the current difficulties, but thrives in the future.

Introduction

This Mid-Term Review Performance Report presents progress from April 2017 to March 2020 against the Council Plan 2017-2022. It provides an update on the progress we have made on delivering our Priorities and Commitments and provides you with information on our achievements and the positive impact that these have had, and how they have benefited our region.

Our Council Plan sets out four Priorities which are delivered through 15 Commitments. Progress is reported against our four Priorities and the following sections of this Performance Report outline and demonstrate our progress in delivering on these Commitments.

<p>1 Build the Local Economy</p> 	<p>Improve the level of skills within our communities and workforce</p> <p>Support our small and medium sized businesses to be established and grow</p> <p>Invest in our key infrastructure</p> <p>Provide an attractive location to do business</p>
<p>2 Provide the best start in life for all our children</p> 	<p>Ensure early intervention, in particular to keep our region's most vulnerable children safe</p> <p>Invest in creating schools fit for the 21st century, which are at the heart of our communities</p> <p>Raise ambition and attainment, in particular to address inequalities</p> <p>Support children to be healthy and active</p>
<p>3 Protect our most vulnerable people</p> 	<p>Tackle the causes and effects of inequality and poverty</p> <p>Help older or vulnerable people live health and independent lives</p> <p>Ensure our older or vulnerable people receive the care and support they need.</p> <p>Keep our communities safe</p>
<p>4 Be an inclusive council</p> 	<p>Ensure that local people and communities are at the heart of our decision making</p> <p>Empower our communities to make the most of their assets</p> <p>Increase equality of opportunity</p>




Assessment

The Mid-Term Review of performance covers the period of April 2017 through to March 2020.

The assessment of performance in this report was presented to Full Council in September 2020, for agreement.

Delivery of the Council Plan is monitored through projects and performance measures which are aligned to each commitment. The performance measures and projects are used to assess the progress. The assessment is then applied across the three levels of the Council Plan, from Activities to Commitments and finally an assessment for the Priority.

The table below outlines the assessment at each level of the Council Plan.

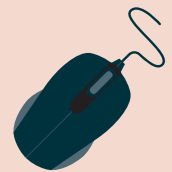
	Activities	Commitment	Priority
Complete	Projects and KPIs are complete	No further action required	
 On Track	Projects and KPIs are assessed mostly Green Additional information confirms On-Track	The majority of activities are assessed as On Track and/or the narrative information evidences On Track	The majority of commitments are assessed as On Track and/or the narrative information evidences On Track
 In Progress	Projects and KPIs are assessed mostly between Amber and Green Additional information confirms In Progress	The majority of activities are In Progress , and/or the narrative information evidences In Progress	The majority of commitments are In Progress , and/or the narrative information evidences In Progress
 Not Started	Projects and KPIs are assessed as mainly between Amber and Red No additional information to evidence progress	The majority of activities are assessed as Not Started No additional information to evidence progress	The majority of commitments are assessed as Not Started No additional information to evidence progress

1 Build the Local Economy

We are committed to ensuring that Dumfries and Galloway emerges from the economic downturn in a stronger position by focusing on tackling the underlying weaknesses in our economy - low pay, a lack of enough paid work that make full use of skills/abilities (underemployment), above average levels of youth unemployment and the low level of qualifications.

We have a leadership role in acting as a catalyst and model for other employers and organisations across the region in terms of innovative approaches.

We have set out an ambitions economic vision for the region working with local businesses, partners and other agencies to realise this.



Build the Local Economy

Commitment	Current Status
Improve the level of skills within our communities and workforce	
Support our small and medium sized businesses to be established and grow	
Invest in our key infrastructure	
Provide an attractive location to do business	



Improve the level of skills within our communities and workforce

Graduate Employment Scheme

The Council continues to recruit local talent to our Graduate Employment Scheme, now in its eighth year of operation.

This Scheme is valuable for us to develop our workforce for the future, while building our local economy by improving the level of skills within our communities. It gives graduates a positive experience to take forward in their careers and provides a quality experience on CVs and applications when applying for jobs in the future.

A high percentage of our graduates gain a positive destination in our region: some of those with our Council. Each year the projects are varied and contribute to improving how our Council operates and delivers services to our communities. Each graduate receives valuable work experience, mentoring and training during their time on the Scheme.

Employment, training, education, employability (CASE STUDY)

Links to Work Scheme

Employability Support workers provide tailored one-to-one support for unemployed adults and young people to assist them into training, education or work.

Frances was referred to the Scheme in May 2018. She was unemployed and recently bereaved after spending the last ten years caring for her husband during a long illness. With our support, she grew in confidence and realised her talent for caring for children. She is now in the final stages of becoming a foster carer and is looking forward to receiving her first children in the next few weeks.

Nick didn't know what he wanted to do when he left school. He was enrolled in our Winter leavers' programme before beginning an Activity Agreement. Several avenues were explored that helped Nick build his confidence, communication skills and gain work experience. This led to the offer of paid employment as a Trainee Mechanic using the Young Person Wage Incentive.

D&G Employability Award (CASE STUDY)

In his senior phase at Kirkcudbright Academy, Scott completed the Dumfries and Galloway Land Based Employability Award, before undertaking a National Certificate in Agriculture through SRUC Barony. He had the same placement farm for both.

The farm was so impressed by Scott's skills and commitment that they offered him full time employment as a Modern Apprentice Dairy Assistant.

Annan Regeneration Team

The Annan local Solutions Team has been based at Annan Business Park delivering support to local businesses.

A key part of the project was to get a new owner for the former Pinneys site. This was achieved with Bhagat Holdings acquiring the site with plans to re-open in late 2019. After a delay, plans were in place for the end of the first quarter in 2020 until the impact of COVID-19. Currently the owner is unable to progress until the pandemic situation improves.

The local Solutions Team has also introduced an action plan which was approved by the Annan Steering Group and this is now being worked through.

Project Search

Project Search had its most successful year yet in 2018/19. It is a one-year intensive work based programme to get young people with learning disabilities and autistic spectrum conditions into paid work. Over half of the interns from the 2017/18 cohort have now secured paid employment. Each intern undertakes the Dumfries and Galloway Employability Award which provides both theoretical knowledge about the world of work and practice in a professional setting. This Award is recognised nationally as good practice.

Improve the level of skills within our communities and workforce



Create a vibrant culture of opportunity in the region to retain and attract people of working age and improve the competitiveness of individual businesses.



Tackle youth and long-term unemployment with investment in initiatives such as our 'Youth Guarantee'- a place in education, training or employment for every young person in the region within four months of them leaving school.



Deliver a ground-breaking 'Links to Work' scheme to provide intensive support to people living in poverty to help them back to work.



Implement a new Modern Apprenticeship Scheme within the Council, providing a minimum of 250 young people with training placements over the next five years and investing in supporting apprenticeships in local businesses and organisations.



Deliver the "Dumfries and Galloway Employability Award", ensuring that those looking for work have the skills needed.



Support our small and medium sized businesses to be established and grow

Business Gateway

Business Gateway has supported 380 new business starts throughout the period, on an annual basis. A range of support was provided to clients on a one to one basis and by workshop throughout the region. Business Gateway also supported businesses to expand and grow through a range of support including funding; marketing; strategy; HR; and International trade, as examples.

Recently the service has moved its service more online, but with the delivery of support to clients still available on a one to one basis, using skype or Microsoft teams. Workshops have all been moved to webinars, which have been very popular.

Support for businesses and community projects

The Council has been successful in supporting a range of businesses and community projects with funding support through the South of Scotland Economic Partnership. This funding is being drawn down by the individual projects on an implementation stage basis. These projects are wide and varied and include community projects such as the Midsteeples Quarter development in Dumfries town centre and the new distillery in Moffat.

The Council also supported local businesses through its capital projects. Examples being the new factory in Annan occupied by Ecogenics; Bladnoch Distillery visitor centre and the sale of the land at Stapleton Road in Annan to facilitate the creation of new jobs.

Kirkcudbright Art Gallery

As well as enabling the Council to open up its nationally recognised Kirkcudbright Artists collection to a much wider public view, visitor numbers at the new Kirkcudbright Art Galleries have been nearly as impressive as the exhibitions themselves. The £3.1m refurbishment of the Victorian Town Hall building has received universal acclaim from those visiting over the first year.

Since opening to the public on 9 June 2018, Kirkcudbright Galleries have welcomed visitors to what is now one of Dumfries and Galloway's premier attractions.

The Galleries team has forged partnerships with national museums and international collections, which means that the Galleries have attracted visitors from across the UK and beyond. By 31 March 2020 there had been 100,223 visits, 25.28% more on average than the annual target of 40,000 visits.

Fairtrade

The biggest annual Fair Trade event in Scotland - the *Scottish Fair Trade Supporters Conference* - took place in September 2018 with delegates reporting high satisfaction levels with the plenary and workshop sessions at the Gracefield Arts Centre in Dumfries.

Our Fairtrade Zone renewal for 2018-2020 was agreed by the Fairtrade Foundation in October 2018. The feedback stated, "it is apparent that there is a strong commitment from Dumfries and Galloway Council, providing a solid administrative framework and guidance".

In March 2019, the Council agreed that any Civic Events it hosts will promote Fairtrade goods, along with local produce.

In September 2019, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to Fairtrade as part of the celebrations of 25 years of the Fairtrade Mark. The Regional Fairtrade Steering Group holds bi-annual meetings to discuss local and national activities.

Fairtrade Fortnight is promoted by the Council and local Fairtrade Groups in new ways each year, including through story packs and @DGCEmpowerment.

The Council is an active member of the Scottish Fair-Trade Forum and represent 'large organisations' on the Board.

Dumfries and Galloway Food and Drink Strategy

Food and drink is identified as a key sector within the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Economic Strategy.

The Dumfries and Galloway Food and Drink Strategy 2019-2022 aligns with Scotland's national food and drink vision, the Ambition 2030 strategy, to contribute to the national growth projection, whilst delivering actions within a regional context. It also addresses Dumfries and Galloway specific challenges and opportunities to unlock the potential of the industry in our region.

The food and drink sector in our region is worth £1.2 billion to our economy each year, making food and drink our largest economic sector and representing 25% of our region's total economic activity. The food and drink sector provides employment to over 9,000 people.

The Strategy was developed during 2018 through extensive consultation with the food and drink sector and launched in April 2019.

Steady progress has been made in delivering against the strategy objectives and some of the early

completed actions in year 1 include business support activity, food tourism, a new food and drink start-up guide, connect local, future chef initiative and industry collaboration.

Work is underway to deliver against the year 2 objectives and areas of activity that have been delayed due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Annual Tourism Visits

Dumfries and Galloway Council Major Festivals and Events Strategy (MFES) 2018-2021 promotes cultural and sporting highlights and demonstrates their economic impact.

The MFES recorded that between May 2018 and February 2019 there were more than 19,000 day visitors to the region directly linked to funded events and more than 33,000 overnight stays.

Associated with the economic, cultural, and sporting benefits of this programme, there was a focus on marketing and PR for the region. Collaborative working between events organisations encouraged a spirit of openness and optimism in the sector, supported by Council funding.



Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic saw the valuable economic impacts of the Strategy curtailed at its mid-point, to date all of the recommended events projects for funding have taken place between April 2018 and March 2020.

The Council is currently consulting on an Interim Action Plan for the MFES for 2021/22 to refocus efforts away from mass gathering events to smaller scale projects.

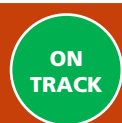
Trusted Trader Scheme

Dumfries and Galloway saw 197 Traders on the Trusted Trader Scheme at end March 2020. Quality controls resulted in a number of Traders being removed from the Scheme in 2018/19 but proactive promotion has ensured an increase in membership.

Our Trusted Trader Scheme helps people to choose a reputable trader from customer feedback.

The Scheme is aimed mainly at home improvement trades. The trades are reviewed by customers as well as checked and monitored by the Council to make sure they are trading safely and legally.

Support our small and medium sized businesses to be established and grow



Build the local economy by developing and delivering a range of high quality, value for money entrepreneurial services, in partnership with local small and medium sized enterprises.



Capitalise on the Region's Entrepreneurial spirit to increase productivity and provide for business led growth.



Work with local communities to deliver Fairtrade Zone Status for our region.



Support local supply chains so that local firms benefit from capital investment projects.



Continue the discretionary rates relief for social or community enterprises serving food and drink.



Introduce a Cultural Strategy to make sure it puts public resources to best use in supporting our important creative industries.



Implement a new Major Events and Festivals Strategy.



Complete the development of the new Kirkcudbright Art Gallery and develop a sustainable future for the provision of arts within Dumfries and Galloway, including exploring the possibility of a new Arts and Archive Centre.



Continue to support investment in marketing support for the tourism sector, more innovatively promoting Dumfries and Galloway to visitors.



Explore innovative ways we can support our land based industries, in particular agriculture and forestry.



Increase the number of businesses taking part in the Trusted Traders Project.



Deliver an ambitious regional Food and Drink Strategy, supporting Scotland's 'Ambition 2030' vision to double the size of the industry.



Provide support to businesses to increase the number of new start-ups and grow existing businesses.



Invest in our key infrastructure

Active Travel

The objectives of the Active Travel Strategy are met by implementation which is recognised nationally for its innovative, multi-agency partnership approach, enhancing outcomes and links within all areas of the physical activity system in Dumfries and Galloway.

The strategy positively inputs to all Council Priorities, attracting significant Transport Scotland funding for infrastructure, behaviour change, monitoring and community empowerment. This success encouraged national partners to deliver additional interventions in Dumfries and Galloway which nationally promote the region.

A regional Physical Activity Alliance of NHS, Council, SWestrans, Colleges, Forestry and Third sector has provided a forum to discuss, promote and ensure a strategic approach across all interventions seeking to increase levels of active travel and physical activity in our region.

Active travel audits of all 16 major centres of population across Dumfries and Galloway continue to feed into many Council projects, as well as work with Business, Third Sector, NHS and communities.

Officers continue to review the strategy and progress the Active Travel elements identified in the Transformation Event on Public Transport and Travel. This will form part of the next business plan to reflect Transport Scotland Active Travel Taskforce Recommendations and allow us to access considerable external funding which will be further supported by the new National Transport Strategy published in February 2020.

Progress on the Active Travel elements identified in the Transformation Event on Public Transport and Travel, agreed by the Finance, Procurement and Transformation Committee on 3 March 2020, continues although these have been delayed by the response to COVID-19.



The National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan has also been delayed, and our Active Travel Strategy will be required to await the completion of this work to ensure local delivery aligns with the outcomes of this national Delivery Plan.

In 2019/20 Active Travel received £137,000 of funding from the Paths for All Smarter Choices Smarter Places fund for projects.

These include Sustrans iBike and the Paths for All – WoW schools Travel Tracker programme, working in schools to encourage pupils to choose active travel, continuing to support Healthy Working Lives through workplace pedometer challenges and developed behaviour change evaluation tools.

In partnership with the local community, NHS and Sustrans we continue to deliver an e bike social prescribing programme that provided bikes to key workers during lock down.

Significant work on delivery Spaces for People funding is ongoing with the Active Travel Strategy refresh being developed as much as possible in parallel with national requirements and will play a key part in addressing the climate change emergency and the economic recovery of our region.

Lobbying for investment in local transport infrastructure

Dumfries and Galloway link between Dumfries and the M74

The Council response to the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland Initial Call for Evidence consultation highlighted the need to consider the benefits in providing appropriate infrastructure in rural Scotland to address rurality effects like geographic scale, deficiencies in transport infrastructure, low populations, migration of young people, weak economic growth and low wage economies.

The Council highlighted the need to balance the nation's investment in new infrastructure whilst ensuring adequate funding of existing infrastructure and the need to ensure that an equitable share of infrastructure investment is realised in rural areas.

The Council has also been active in providing input to the development of Transport Scotland's South West Scotland Transport Study Case for Change Report to ensure that the Council's priorities in transportation

infrastructure improvements are reflected in the options to be developed. We are working with the South of Scotland Economic Partnership and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry to help identify how they can contribute to the Council's lobbying position on transport infrastructure and also consider the need for better knowledge of the benefits to the local economy of the road network in terms of existing business transport needs and future business growth.

Community Transport

Community Transport is first and foremost about people and their needs: it is designed, specified, and developed by the communities it serves and is provided on a not-for-profit basis in direct response to these identified needs.

Community Transport impacts on employability and the rural economy, access to services, and preventative measures in relation to both health and social care and social isolation and loneliness.

Working with its community planning partners, the Council has invested £100,000 to enable the establishment and delivery of a Dumfries and Galloway Public Social Partnership (PSP) model to deliver innovative social and community transport solutions to be tested and piloted across the region.

The PSP pilot projects have focused on community-led transport service developments at Borgue, Waterbeck and Glentworth; health and social care transport solutions to both external and local hospital appointments; D1 driver training and building the sustainability, capability and capacity of local community transport operators through the creation of a Community Transport Quality Framework; health and social care transport solutions; and the capability and capacity building of community transport operators.

Broadband

The Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) Rest of Scotland contract agreed to the reinvestment of £26.921 million into the existing DSSB Contract for further network deployment being extended into 2020.

This was a positive outcome for our Council with deployment focussed on maximising the number of premises with access to speeds equal to or greater than 24Mbps with funding targeted on areas with the lowest speed coverage.

ThinkBroadband, an independent broadband comparison site, shows that within Dumfries and Galloway 97.7% of premises in our region are connected to fibre broadband infrastructure with 87.02% of premises with access to speeds of greater than 24Mbps.

The Reaching 100% Programme (R100) seeks to deliver the Scottish Government's commitment to superfast broadband access for 100% of premises in Scotland. The contract has been awarded to BT and aims to bring all premises currently unable to access Superfast Broadband, in reach of accessible fibre and is likely to comprise a range of solutions to deliver on the commitment.

Street Lighting Spend2Save

The Council is investing £7.4m over a period of eight years from 2012 to change the existing street lighting stock to a mixture of LEDs and other dimmable white light sources. The aim was to reduce the Council's Carbon footprint by 42% and reduce maintenance by £143k per annum.

The performance of the project has surpassed all expectations. Advances in technology and a reduction in the cost of LED lights has allowed the Council to complete the project one and a half years ahead of schedule and £1M under budget. Energy has been reduced by 67%, Carbon footprint and maintenance by £258k per annum. The change to LED street lighting has added to the Dark Skies project.

CleanDG

Working with our local communities, the CleanDG initiative aims to improve our neighbourhoods, including a renewed focus on getting basic maintenance correct, from weed free paths to better maintenance of bus shelters.

The Council's Community Assets team is committed to delivering a high level of service for customers and communities.

Educating and informing 'Community Conversations' were conducted in March 2019; these were aimed at promoting Neighbourhood Champions and CleanDG.

Community workshops to recognise Neighbourhood Champions were held in October 2019 which sought to embrace civic pride and volunteering. Further volunteering was unfortunately put on hold due to COVID 19.

Our aspiration is that this will help change behaviours and create a higher quality environment for everyone to live in. We can influence behaviours when working together and we are committed to working with Community Councils, schools, volunteer groups and staff to achieve this.

The hosting of the Beautiful Scotland Awards in September 2019 gave our region an opportunity to showcase the positive results of CleanDG to the whole country and the success of four local groups across the region was welcome recognition of their hard work. We held events in October 2019 to recognise the contribution that volunteers have made to the CleanDG initiative.

NUTS2 South of Scotland

Dumfries and Galloway Council along with five other authorities were successful in the establishment of a new South of Scotland NUTS2 region, which would reflect how European Union funding would be allocated. The new region was agreed in 2018. The future of funding from the European Union will be subject to the outcome of Brexit deals.

Opposition to fracking

Dumfries and Galloway Council does not support unconventional oil and gas (UOG) extraction and, in particular, is opposed to fracking.

The Council requested that the Scottish Government should not allow UOG in Scotland and included the following statement from Scottish Government within its Local Development Plan (LDP2):






'The Scottish Government's preferred policy position on unconventional oil and gas in Scotland is that it does not support the development of unconventional oil and gas in Scotland. The preferred policy position is now subject to a statutory assessment, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment.'



Invest in our Infrastructure



Work with Registered Social Landlords on community bargaining of energy to cut gas and electricity bills for residents.	
Support the implementation of economic masterplans.	
Campaign to improve services from our region's railway stations, including.	
Fully implement and promote the new Active Travel Strategy, increasing support for cycling and walking.	
Campaign for the retention of rural bus routes and for appropriate funding.	
Develop new parking strategies for Dumfries and Stranraer.	
Increase the number of roads with 20mph speed limits and zones to enable greater on-road cycling and create a safer environment for all road users, and within residential areas in our towns and villages.	
Continue the leading programme for the roll- out of LED street lighting across the region.	
Work towards delivering a carbon neutral Dumfries and Galloway - Europe's first carbon neutral region.	
Encourage innovative renewable energy generation.	
Lobby the Scottish Government to extend 80% funding to include smaller flood prevention schemes/studies.	
Roll out a household recycling scheme across the region.	
Lobby for investment in key local transport infrastructure.	
Oppose fracking and underground gasification.	
Invest an additional £100,000 to support Community Transport operators.	
Implement the projects within the Flood Risk Management plan.	
Develop a Rhins of Galloway Coastal Trail.	
Develop SW 400 tourism route to mirror the success of the NC 500 route in the Highlands.	
Support 100% coverage of next generation broadband by 2021 and lobby for further improvements to mobile connectivity.	

Explore the possibility of developing a case for a Solway Coastal and Marine National Park, making more of our marine and coastal assets, and attracting larger leisure vessels.	
Lobby the UK and Scottish Governments to ensure that the South of Scotland is recognised as a NUTS2 area in the development of any future replacement for European Structural funds.	
Nurture relationships between our region and both the central belt of Scotland and our Borderlands partners to facilitate new economic opportunity for our local businesses and bring in investment; delivering a 'Borderlands Deal'.	
Increase investment in our roads infrastructure, including 'pothole' squads.	
Capitalise on our unique tourism assets and develop these more.	

Provide an attractive location to do business

Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal

The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal brings together the five cross-border local authorities: Carlisle City; Cumbria County; Dumfries and Galloway; Northumberland and Scottish Borders. The first truly rural deal in the of the UK, and the only one to straddle a Border, it covers an area the size of Wales.

More than 370 business representatives, public sector organisations and individuals attended the first Borderlands Conference in Dumfries in June 2018 to hear about the themes being developed and to give their views on proposals and projects to transform the Borderlands economy.

'Heads of Terms' for the £350 million Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal was signed on 1 July 2019. This includes an allocation of £150 million, equating to £85 million from the Scottish Government and £65 million from the UK Government, to be split between the two Scottish Councils.

We have developed six Borderlands wide programmes: Digital; Borderlands Energy Investment Company; Destination; Quality of Place; Knowledge Exchange Network; and Business Infrastructure Programme. There are four specific place-based projects: the redevelopment of Chapelcross former power station in Dumfries and Galloway; the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre in the Scottish Borders; Berwick Theatre and Conference Centre in Northumberland; and Carlisle Station Gateway in Cumbria. Also included in Dumfries and Galloway projects are allocations of £8 million to develop

a state-of-the art Dairy Innovation Centre at the Scottish Rural University College (The Barony) and an anticipated £16 million for the redevelopment of Stranraer Marina.

Combined with the work of the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency, which will look at the economy of our area, this is fantastic news for our region. The transformation of the area will attract further private investment and lead to wider regeneration, providing employment, raising skills and salaries, meaning everyone will benefit.

The last Borderlands Conference was held in Northumberland, in November 2019.

South of Scotland Economic Partnership (SoSEP)

The work of SoSEP as part of the emerging South of Scotland Enterprise has seen investment in excess of £4 million for projects to develop the skills of the region's future workforce, generate new income through tourism and support our community enterprises.

The Partnership laid the foundations in preparation for the Agency and ensured that the area benefits from a new approach to economic development as soon as possible with a clearly prioritised work plan.

The Partnership brought together the private, Third and further and higher education sectors, as well as the seven key public sector organisations supporting economic development in the South of Scotland.

South of Scotland Enterprise Agency

Legislation was passed in June 2019 to allow the creation of the new enterprise agency for the south of Scotland. The creation of the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency from 1 April 2020 will also help drive inclusive growth.

Recognising the distinctiveness of the region, the new body will deliver a tailored approach to support these aims and Scottish Government's ambition. Set in the context of Scotland's Economic Strategy, this ambition is for a south of Scotland which has:

- businesses with increased productivity, ambitious for the future, investing in innovation and offering good conditions of employment paying higher wages
- a skilled workforce with both the skills needed now, and the ability to develop the skills needed for the future
- more opportunities for young people so that they can see a future in the area, and to attract people who want to locate in the area

- communities better equipped to play a greater role in the economic, social and environmental success of their area
- a clear commitment to inclusive growth, taking a holistic look at the barriers that are getting in the way and taking action to address them

Planning

The Planning Service plays a key role in delivering our Council's main priority of building the local economy. In terms of Development Management performance, there was an improvement in 2019/20 in the average time taken to process all headline application categories in comparison to 2018/19. There was a further slight improvement in the already good average Householder application determination period to 5.6 weeks (5.7 in 2018/19).

The local applications (non-householder) determination period was 9.4 weeks, improving from 10.7 weeks in 2018/19 and 13.6 weeks in 2017/18.

The Major application determination timescales improved to 30.2 weeks on average, this timescale having been 45.1 weeks in 2018/19.



The number of applications determined in 2019/20 was slightly up on the previous year (1068 in 2019/20 compared to 1050 in 2018/19 or a 1.7% increase) and in this context, the improved performance can be seen to be in real terms.

These improvements are of great importance to our local builders, developers and agents in helping to speed up the delivery of new developments and supporting this important sector of our local economy.

The Planning Service continues to operate effectively, with 95.1% of decisions being made under delegated powers in 2019/20. 95.6% of applications were approved over the reporting period. This represents an increase in comparison with the 2018/19 approval rate (94.0%).

Our new Local Development Plan (LDP2) was adopted by the Council in October 2019 and a new suite of related Supplementary Guidance for the Plan was produced and adopted in early 2020. These documents provide a strong and comprehensive framework for decision-making and help provide certainty for potential inward investment.

The Council's 2nd Design Awards were successfully run in 2019 with specific categories for non-residential building projects; new residential build; and residential – works to existing buildings. The Design Awards allowed the many high quality schemes completed within the region from March 2016 to March 2019 to be celebrated and showcased to a wider audience.

Youth Beatz Festival 2017, 2018 and 2019

Seven days of community led events offering a wide range of events from roller discos to young parent's days.

The main event, attended by around 40,000 people each year, offers a wide range of interactive and experiential arts and community activities for young people to take part in, culminating in live music throughout the day from emerging local and national talent, alongside established headline acts in the evening.

The event is supported by youth and adult volunteers - rising to over 200 in 2019 and a number of partner organisations. The most recent Youthbeatz Festival in 2019 had an economic impact of over £500k and received over 4,800 items for Foodbanks across the region.

LEADER 2014-2020

LEADER (EU and Scottish Government funded) awarded Dumfries and Galloway Local Action Group (LAG) £5.6m for the current programme period.

The LAG has supported over 70 projects with grants ranging from £5,000 to £150,000 across a diverse range of activities including community led initiatives to promote our coastal heritage (Stranraer Oyster Festival), encourage young people to get involved in local decision making (Amaze Me LEADER); and outreach work to reduce social isolation for older people in our rural communities (Connecting in Communities).

LEADER has also been able to support our rural business sector with projects including support for community led enterprise which will retain the local newspaper (Hold the Front Page!); support for a new venture in innovative accommodation design (Loch Ken Passive Pod); and creation of a new 'pick your own' flower garden business (Arkleton Walled Garden).

LEADER has also been able to support our farming community with a number of diversification projects to ensure the future sustainability of farming businesses across Dumfries and Galloway – a new farm centre near Castle Douglas (Ernespie Farm Centre); introduction of shepherd hut accommodation in the west of the region (Drumbain Shepherd Huts); and the diversification of an existing farm business to bring Alpaca trekking to Dumfries and Galloway (Senwick Alpaca Trekking).

LEADER also administers the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) with an allocation of £580,000. This fund has supported a number of projects ranging from the development of a harbour side to enhance the amenity for the community and visitors (Portpatrick Harbour building renovation project); support for a community engagement project (Fishing Faces) and support for a project which encourages local chefs to use local fish and seafood (Cooking Masterclasses).

Both of these EU funded programmes will close on the 31st December 2020 due to the UK's exit from the European Union with, as yet no clarity on any replacement funding stream from either UK or Scottish Government.



Developing a Cultural Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway

During 2018/19 as the Scottish Government consulted on its Culture Strategy for Scotland, work started on developing a Cultural Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway. During the year, the Council established a project team with representation from a range of services and the arts sector network organisation DGUnlimited. A graduate was recruited to support this work and her administrative and research skills took forward the Strategy development substantially.

The Council's Communities Committee agreed the policy intent and Consultation Mandate in September 2018. Extensive engagement on the draft aims and objectives of the Cultural Strategy, developed in liaison with two reference groups, took place over summer 2019 and generated over 430 responses. Following Committee approval of the headline findings in January 2020, the Project Team completed a full Engagement Report and this is available [online](#). Although the timetable has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic the Project Team resumed work on the finalisation of the Strategy and Action Plan in autumn 2020.

Provide an attractive location to do business

ON TRACK

Introduce a new 'Clean DG' initiative with communities to improve street cleaning.



Implement a derelict property strategy, and support businesses that bring empty properties back into use.



Ensure businesses have a 'one stop shop', when it comes to support such as planning.



Campaign for the decentralisation of publicly funded services and jobs to our region.



Establish a dedicated 'Locate in Dumfries and Galloway' Campaign.



Support the establishment of a powerful, locally run South of Scotland Enterprise Agency.



Promote economic development in local areas, making business support more inclusive and accessible for all our region's rural businesses.



Work with stakeholders to implement the Regional Economic Strategy.



Empower the region's communities to address their distinct economic challenges and opportunities



2 Provide the best start in life for all our children

Invest in creating schools fit for the 21st century, which are at the heart of our communities.

Raise ambition and attainment, in particular to address inequalities



Provide the best start in life for all our children

Commitment	Current Status
Ensure early intervention, in particular to keep our region's most vulnerable children safe	
Invest in creating schools fit for the 21st century, which are at the heart of our communities	
Raise ambition and attainment, in particular to address inequalities	
Support children to be healthy and active	



Ensure early intervention, in particular to keep our region's most vulnerable children safe

Integrated approach to Education

We have developed an integrated approach to education in S5 and S6 across all 16 secondary schools in Dumfries and Galloway. This approach means that schools can offer young people more flexibility with their options and choices and this will help us ensure that young people continue to enter positive destinations.

Incredible Years parenting programme

The delivery of the Incredible Years parenting programme has been successful. This programme is for the parents and carers of children aged three to six and parents who took part have given us positive feedback about how they have gained confidence and improved their parenting skills.

Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)

Children's experiences and development during their early years have an effect on their learning throughout their lives. Affordable, accessible and flexible ELC is fundamental in supporting parents to work, train or study. Investment in Early Learning and Childcare also has key economic benefits for Dumfries and Galloway; where subsidised childcare removes barriers to employment.

The Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014 increased the provision and flexibility of free early learning and childcare from 475 hours a year to a minimum of 600 hours for every 3 and 4 year old and eligible 2 year olds. The Government has since committed to extending this further to an entitlement of 1140 hours per annum for all eligible children. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 2) Revocation Order 2020, revoked the duty to deliver 1140 hours by

2020/2021, however, Scottish Government has stated its commitment to the rollout of the 1140 hours expansion, and wishes to see this delivered as soon as is practicable with the continuing recognition that high quality and nurturing early learning and childcare is the foundation from which every child can develop socially, emotionally and educationally, enabling them to reach their full potential.

Dumfries and Galloway has taken a phased approach to the expansion of ELC and where possible prioritised areas of deprivation to ensure that those families who stood to gain the most from the early access to these hours were able to do so.

We have made very good progress in meeting parental choices for ELC; providing high quality stimulating physical environments, inside and out, which meet the needs of children, parents and communities.

With the local implementation of the final phase of the expansion programme in August 2020 all eligible children in Dumfries and Galloway can now access the additional hours.

45 local authority nurseries, 39 private and voluntary providers (one of which is undergoing registration) and 43 childminding services deliver funded ELC to children and families in a flexible approach. Children can access funded hours over term time or all year round and may access provision in blended placements across more than one provider where required.

92% of children accessing funded ELC are taking up more than 600 hours of provision with 57% of children currently accessing the full 1140 hours.

The uptake of places for eligible two-year olds continues to increase with approximately 50% of the eligible cohort either already accessing their funded hours or in the process of application and registration.

ELC is provided in a nurturing ethos which supports children's wellbeing, learning and development wherever the child accesses their funded hours.

We have made good progress in developing a skilled and suitably qualified workforce. There is a clear progression pathway in place for staff with opportunities for trainee Early Years Support Assistant posts, Support Assistants, Nursery Nurses,

Depute Managers and Managers. The final phase of expansion saw an additional 139 members of staff appointed to Early Learning and Childcare posts.

GIRFEC

GIRFEC implementation in Dumfries and Galloway continues to provide support for children and families at an early stage. Improvement activity has focused on the continued review and refinement of GIRFEC practice materials and increased support arrangements for staff.

We have introduced a GIRFEC Practice Log to allow a fast, multi-agency response to issues from staff. This helps us identify emerging issues and patterns so that we can escalate an issue to senior managers across the partnership.

Family Centres

Family Centres are now both fully operational at the YMCA Building Lochside and Rainbow Family Centre, Park School Stranraer with positive impacts feeding into the Children's Services Plan.

Lochside Centre, Dumfries

Trust and relationships have developed, and parents are increasingly accessing the Centre for support and advice in times of crisis.

The Centre now has its own Facebook page, and this is regularly used by families to message the Centre staff.

Families are actively involved in sharing clothes, equipment, books and toys via the swap shop in reception. The Centre now also distributes surplus bread from Fareshare.

Regular activities include: Toy Library stay and play sessions; Babes in the Woods outdoor play; speech and language drop-ins; breastfeeding support; teeny boppers toddler group; cuppa and toast drop in; and the new parent-led 'bubble' group with supporting crèche. Incredible Years Parenting Programme has also been delivered at the Centre. The Centre also hosts meetings and supervised contact sessions through Social Work throughout the week and has been used as a base for Relationships Scotland's Child Contact Centre on Saturdays.



Rainbow Family Centre, Stranraer

Progress was affected by delays in building works and capacity issues to support the development of two sites at the same time, however the last year has seen a very a positive start to the transformation into a Family Centre.

Regular activities include: Creche parents group; tweenies group; baby group; dads' group; Looked After Children health clinic; Women's Aid, Rape Crisis, and Speech and Language Therapy drop ins; Supporting Holistic, Arts and Wellbeing Locally (SHAWL) group (for people with long term conditions); child psychology and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) appointments; Young Carers group; Relationships Scotland counselling sessions; and Park nursery activities. The Incredible Years Parenting Programme has also been delivered at the Centre.

Breakfast Clubs

In determining breakfast provision in schools, the Council targeted the following areas:

- To consider alternative methods of delivery to a tradition breakfast club approach
- To provide information for schools and parents wishing to set up a breakfast club
- To develop a resource to support schools in their delivery of breakfast clubs in order to improve sustainability

Due to the rural nature of our region, many children come to school on a bus, and therefore miss the opportunity to attend breakfast club with buses arriving after the club has ended. Children arriving late to school are most likely not to have had breakfast but have also missed the breakfast club times. The Council therefore trialled an initiative that might better reach the target children. A pilot to provide milk, fruit and vegetables to pupils during the school day and morning interval was considered the best option.

Many schools were already running breakfast clubs, and some had run breakfast clubs in the past but stopped these for various reasons, including low uptake, staff availability to run the club and increasing costs. From this data there were 39 schools who had never had any provision and some of these were targeted for this pilot. However, schools

who identified specific issues were also included to determine if the morning snack initiative was a better option.

The pilot was evaluated in April 2018 and proved very popular with families; Headteachers reported that as an initiative it better reached the children most in need.

A resource pack was created for schools who want to run a breakfast club or a morning snack initiative. This pack has now been circulated to all schools and Parent Councils, as one of the keys to the success of a breakfast club is effective parental involvement. The pack sets out how to plan for and implement, a breakfast club. It provides links to nutritional information together with guidance to ensure that there is good planning for the setting up of a club and provides the tools required to do so.

This resource is supporting schools and Parent Councils to offer food early in the school day, either through a breakfast club or a morning snack approach that will target the appropriate pupils and at levels of cost and effort that remain sustainable.

Supporting Vulnerable Children

Children and Families Social Work has implemented the "Signs of Safety Framework" which is a strength and safety organised approach to case work. It provides a practice framework that revolves around risk assessment, risk management and care/safety planning.

Signs of Safety integrates professional knowledge with knowledge from families and their wider networks to rigorously explore harm and danger alongside existing strengths and safety.

It aims to work in partnership with families to reduce risks and increase safety by building upon the family's strengths, resources and networks to change the everyday lived experience of the child.

All social work staff and significant numbers of partners have been trained in the approach which was formally launched in November 2019. We continually monitor and assess our practice.

We continue to use the Neglect Toolkit and train staff across the multi-agency partnership.

Ensure early intervention, in particular to keep our region's most vulnerable children safe



Develop free breakfast clubs in every primary school across Dumfries and Galloway.	
Improve the effectiveness of appropriately assessed Additional Support for Learning in schools across Dumfries and Galloway to meet growing demand and support for our most vulnerable children.	
Deliver 1140 hours childcare for every eligible preschool child.	
Look at improving the flexibility of early education by aligning the nursery day with the school day and working better with childcare partners.	
Complete the implementation of the 'Children's Services Plan'.	
Ensure the early years' workforce in Dumfries and Galloway has access to speech and language therapy skills to support parents with the basics of early language and identify and refer children who need extra help.	
Complete the establishment of Family Centres at the Children's Services Centres at Park Primary in Stranraer and Lochside Primary in Dumfries.	
Protect and safeguard children through fast effective information sharing and decision making through implementation of MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub).	
Improve our identification and response to risk through continued implementation of evidence based approaches such as Neglect Took kit and Risk Assessment Framework.	
Continue to offer advocacy services to ensure the voice of children and young people who are subject to child protection proceedings and LAC processes are heard.	
Continue to prioritise funding of a Young Carers project for children who are carers for their parents who have substance misuse issues.	
Continue to deliver the PACE programme to ensure faster more effectively planning to secure long term futures for children and young people.	
Develop and implement a strategy for disabled children across Dumfries and Galloway	



New Learning Campuses

The Council is committed to giving all local children and young people an equal chance to fulfil their potential. For our children, raising attainment in schools is key to who they become and how they contribute to society.

There is a strong focus on keeping children safe and helping vulnerable young people, as well as improving health and wellbeing for all children and young people.

The quality of practice in the classroom and of school leadership makes the greatest impact on pupil attainment. The Council continues to build capacity in our staff, develop excellent practice in learning and teaching, and support and promote leadership at all levels.

By investing in our ambition to have five new learning campuses which will benefit 6,000 learners in Dumfries and across the region, we are seeing good progress on delivering our priority.

Dumfries Learning Town

Delivering Dumfries Learning Town significantly contributes to our Council's Priorities.

North West Community Campus (NWCC) in Dumfries plays a key role in improving standards in education.

The Bridge is a key component in delivering the aspirations of Dumfries Learning Town. Filling a gap between learning and work, it is increasingly relevant in developing the local workforce and ensuring that education and economy develop together.

The South of Scotland Economic Partnership (SoSEP) is investing in Digital Hubs at College Campuses (Dumfries and Stranraer) and Digital Spokes at Annan Academy, Castle Douglas High School, Douglas Ewart High School and Sanquhar Academy.

These will involve video conferencing facilities equipped with hi-definition touch screen displays, hi-spec cameras and microphones, and modern learning spaces.

School estate

The Council has invested in the school estate to ensure our children have improved opportunities to learn and develop - examples include Dalbeattie Community Campus and St Joseph's College in Dumfries.

Early Learning Childcare (ELC) Capital works

All capital works were on track for completion ahead of August 2020 for the start of the statutory requirement to provide 1140hrs of free early learning and childcare.

Due to COVID-19 the Scottish Government has removed this duty until August 2021; however, at local authority level the commitment remained to ensure, where possible, this is available to families.

There are four nurseries that still require capital works to conclude before they can meet the service delivery plan aspirations: namely Calside, Canonbie, Springholm and Laurieknowe nurseries.

In these locations contingency plans have been put in place to ensure children can receive 1140hrs. Once works complete ahead of August 2021 the settings will transition into their new facilities.

Inclusive Playparks

We recognised that for our community parks to be safe spaces for young people to learn to play and to be able introduce inclusive play equipment in several of our facilities across the region, we needed our local communities to be at the heart of our refurbishments. It is clear how much local people value their local assets and are keen to get involved and be part of the decision-making process to make our play areas better equipped for their local community.

We promote national 'Love Parks Week' across the region which generates lots of ideas and comments from our communities. There is wide public support for the Council to invest in inclusive play equipment and other play equipment to allow everyone to use our play areas.

There is provision for play equipment within Dumfries and Galloway's 264 parks and play areas which can be used and accessed by disabled children. We recognised that, overall, provision is mixed and does not necessarily enable integration of able and less able children on the same equipment.

Seven inclusive play parks across the region have all progressed with strong community and parental involvement.

The Council secured £500k investment for the establishment of three inclusive play parks in Dumfries, Stranraer and Annan in 2017/2018 to improve the provision of inclusive play equipment for young people with disabilities. This allows all young people to integrate within one facility and to play together.

The first inclusive play park opened at Stair Park, Stranraer in July 2018, with the changing places toilet opening in October 2018. The installation of this park was driven by the Wigtownshire Family Support Group at the heart of the community.

The Council's 2018/19 budget included a further £500k for the development of four more inclusive play areas in Newton Stewart, Castle Douglas, Kirkconnel and Lockerbie which are being developed with local communities for installation in 2019/2020. Five are now open - Annan, Dumfries, Kirkconnel, Lockerbie and Stranraer.

We have continued to work with partner organisations and community groups in each local area, recognising that they are best placed to determine local needs and priorities; consult with their own communities; and have the ability to draw in additional external funding to add added value to each play area. This could include, for example, developing a changing places toilet, adding adult equipment and looking at traffic management and disability parking spaces.

In taking this commitment forward progress has been made through the establishment of collaborative networks of secondary schools in three areas across Dumfries and Galloway. These have been established to provide the young people attending these schools with increased access to wider curricular choice through partial alignment of timetables. Pupils currently travel between the networked schools to access this opportunity.

Supporting Rural Schools

Access to a broader curriculum in smaller or rural schools is being developed through wider deployment of digital technology and through the cluster working arrangements within schools and areas.



This is also part of building capacity within the senior phase strategy project which seeks to develop access and opportunities for pupils in senior phase across the region.

There are currently a number of initiatives to develop the ICT infrastructure in schools which support improved access to digital, these include:

- **WIFI Upgrade** - All 114 schools across the region were completed in 2019/20 on a like for like basis.
- **Bandwidth Upgrade** - 35 of our primary schools will receive a bandwidth upgrade as part of a national Rural Gigabit Project, completion date for all 2020/21 session. Funding to facilitate upgrades to the remaining primary and secondary sites forms part of the Digital Investment in Virtual Desktop Infrastructure project.
- **SD-WAN Technology** - All 16 secondary schools now have this technology which enables Bring Your Own Device (BYOD).
- **BYOD** - All secondary schools completed March 2020.
- **Windows 10 Rollout** - All 16 secondary schools are now on W10 operating system. Primary operating software will be upgraded as part of the Digital Investment in Virtual Desktop Infrastructure project.
- **Hub and Spoke Digital Delivery** - Funding from South of Scotland Economic Partnership (SoSEP) - Education and Learning collaborating with Dumfries and Galloway College to deliver distance learning by using a Hub and Spoke model. The aim of the Digital Hub and Spoke project is to allow students across the region access to courses and learning offered by the Dumfries and Galloway College regardless of their geographical location. In 2019/20, four schools in Dumfries and Galloway have been identified as recipients to become Digital Spokes. Planning is underway to complete roll out to the remaining schools by the end of 2020/21.
- **Software** - Core software, including the recommended software from Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) is made available to all learners and teachers. Wherever possible software purchased will be industry standard to maximise the development of appropriate skills for work and will be on a central license to provide equity of access for learners across all schools.
- **Digital Investment in Virtual Desktop Infrastructure** - the Council agreed in principle in September 2020 to support the implementation of this infrastructure which will facilitate learners and staff to access everything they do in school from anywhere, at any time, on any device therefore improving equity of access for all to support learning outcomes.

Invest in creating schools fit for the 21st Century, which are at the heart of our communities



Increase community use of the school estate.



Complete the delivery of Phase 1 of the Dumfries Learning Town project and develop a clear plan to fully implement Phase 2.



Increase access to a broader curriculum in smaller or rural schools through the use of digital technology and cluster working.



Raise ambition and attainment, in particular to address inequalities

Attainment

Schools across Dumfries and Galloway show an improving record of raised attainment in Literacy and Numeracy in both the Broad General Education (secondary stages 1 to 3) and Senior Phase (secondary stages 4 to 6).

Looking at attainment and comparing areas of relative disadvantage compared to least disadvantaged according to the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), there is a marked difference in levels of attainment, which is similar to the national average. In the most disadvantaged areas, the average attainment score reported for Dumfries and Galloway young people, is almost half the value of the least disadvantaged areas. However, since 2012 attainment of young people from disadvantaged areas has been steadily increasing and is continuing to do so.

The national benchmarking measure of leaver initial destinations shows a rise in the percentage of school leavers in a positive destination approximately 3 months after leaving school (i.e. initial destination) to 94.7%, this compares well with national target of 95%. Current focussed work in schools in relation to senior phase pathways will ensure all young people have the opportunity and the necessary support required to help them participate and progress to their next stage of learning whether that be further or higher education or to training and employment.

Educational Attainment

Pupils continue to do well in our schools; evidence shows good and improving attainment across the early level, broad general education and senior phase. We use a range of assessments to make sure everyone understands how well a child is doing, from the beginning of their education through to leaving school and we analyse a range of different information, such as:

- their development in the early years
- reading, writing, talking and listening skills (literacy)
- the ability to work with numbers (numeracy)
- their health and wellbeing

- national qualifications and awards
- what they do when they leave school

We have improving attainment for all pupils aged 5 to 18. Dumfries and Galloway schools do well when compared with similar schools both regional and nationally.

We know that the outcomes for children who live in our more affluent communities do better in school than those from poorer families. We have made progress in narrowing this attainment gap - although this is smaller than the national average, progress continues to be a priority for all schools.

Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy

Dumfries and Galloway achievement of a level data shows year on year improvement but, as schools closed in March 2020 due to COVID-19, Scottish Government paused the collection and publication of this data for June 2020. Schools will still be tracking and monitoring pupil progress, but this will not be published data.

Improved attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

A range of focused interventions were put in place and have been shown to improve children's attainment: 'Talking, Listening and Questioning' (TLQ) delivered in collaboration with Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), 'Closing the Literacy Gap', 'Collaborative Strategic Reading' and 'Accelerated Reader'.

A focus on developing Mental Math's ability, and targeted interventions such as 'Maths Recovery' and 'Developing Number Knowledge' were successful in improving outcomes in numeracy and maths for identified children and young people.

Pupil Equity Fund

Early indications are that schools' use of the Pupil Equity Fund is supporting progress in reducing inequality of educational outcome. Almost all schools have reported that this additional funding has enabled focused delivery with identified children and young people to reduce inequality as a result of socio-economic disadvantage.

In general, schools allocated Pupil Equity Fund to widen and increase the range of strategies and interventions to improve outcomes for the identified





children and young people. Using existing knowledge of learners, other children also benefited from inclusion in these interventions. This focus, along with the key strategies and actions to deliver the National Improvement Framework priorities, has been central to schools' improvement work and has made a positive difference to outcomes for children and young people.

Proportion of School Leavers entering positive destinations

Schools continue to focus on preparing young people for the world of work; all young people in our region should have access to a dynamic and progressive senior phase (S4-S6), with the aim of that they move into a job, training or post school.

Our schools plan their curriculum together, informed by young people's views, and knowledge of where the future jobs are; it is important we plan our curriculum taking account of the demand for skills and qualifications needed by economically important sectors in our local area and nationally.

We work with a number of different partners including The South West Education Improvement Collaborative (SWEIC), national and regional DYW (Developing the Young Workforce), Skills Development Scotland (SDS), the colleges and university sectors and local businesses, to make as many opportunities available to young people as possible.

Foundation Apprenticeships and a range of vocational qualifications are offered in all schools. In 2018/19 all secondary schools achieved SCQF ambassador status; this means that across Dumfries and Galloway we will use this national framework to give equality between vocational and academic qualifications.

Our aim is that all young people have the opportunity and support they need to have a pathway to a positive destination after school. Underpinning this work is a recognition that, for some young people, more targeted support is required to allow them to benefit from the opportunities available to them.

Delivering Improvement

Successes and Achievements

All our young people and pupils in schools across Dumfries and Galloway are involved in projects, events, and learning experiences in various settings that are too numerous to mention. All these successes and achievements have been celebrated in different ways in schools, at authority level and sometimes at national and international level. Schools share their news and celebrations in many ways, including through school newsletters and local media. We are very proud of all successes and achievements in Dumfries and Galloway.

Schools Leadership Training

Our, Education Scotland Accredited, Introducing School Leadership Programme continues to provide over 30 teachers with the opportunity to gain an insight into school leadership and management. The course continues to be very well received with strong numbers of applications.

The course is delivered over eight sessions from September to May (which is now online) and includes up to date educational theory and practice in relation to leadership and management. It also develops the understanding and application of self-evaluation for school improvement through presentations, workshops and group activities: all of which maximise the opportunities for professional dialogue and peer support.

As part of the course, participants are required to complete a school based project related to their School Improvement Plan.

Many staff who complete the course then move into middle and senior leadership positions within our schools.

School Transport

In August 2015, Full Council agreed a fund to assist families, who do not qualify for free school transport under existing Council Policy, who may face specific vulnerability through poverty.

In all cases, the criteria used is; the pupil lives more than 2 miles but less than 3 miles from school, attends their catchment school, is entitled to be in receipt of Free School Meals and is not eligible to receive commissioned school transport provision.

In taking forward this school transport fund, Education and Learning linked this to raising poverty awareness in schools as part of wider activity to address the impact of poverty related barriers on full participation in school life.

This focus helps give consideration to 'poverty proofing the school day'. This includes exploration of family costs associated with school, the curriculum and the wider curricular experience; and the pressures of poverty that can lead to barriers in learning and participation for children and young people.

During financial year 2019/20 a total of £5,324 was disbursed by Education and Learning to families to help with these transport costs.

Raise ambition and attainment, in particular to address inequalities

ON TRACK

Raise attainment and be ambitious for all children and young people.



Work with schools and parents to maximise the use of the attainment fund to close the attainment gap.



Reduce or remove barriers so that all children and young people have equality of opportunity.



Maintain teacher numbers in line with pupil numbers.



Raise attainment, achievement and participation for children with protected characteristics and Looked After Children.



Design, implement and evaluate numeracy interventions - mental arithmetic and general Mathematics - with a particular focus on levels across the BGE and senior phase where the evidence indicates intervention is required.



Focus target interventions through Excellence and Equity groups to raise attainment linked to specific groups of children and young people: LAC / ASN / FME / SIMD Quintiles 1 and 2 / Males.



Build capacity of staff to use data effectively; identify gaps and ensure impact of Pupil Equity Funding to close the poverty related attainment gap.



Develop a framework and network of support to enable looked after young people and care leavers to access suitable training and learning opportunities to help get them into work.



Partner all schools across Dumfries and Galloway with local libraries to give every child a library membership.



Maintain a school transport contingency fund across Dumfries and Galloway.



Curricular school music tuition is free.



Ensure that teachers can progress their career while staying in the classroom through further developing and accrediting the Dumfries and Galloway 'Into School Learning Programme (ISL) and make this available to all non-promoted staff.





Support children to be healthy and active

Health and Wellbeing

Through consultation with children and young people, Education and Learning has focussed its delivery to improve health needs with improving mental wellbeing as a priority.

The approach involved a partnership with Youth Work Services and Education and Learning which sees Youth Workers delivering low-level mental health interventions in schools. The engagement informed the service to the fact that Health and Wellbeing is a crucial starting point in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Improving relationships and personal, social and emotional education have been prioritised to develop children and young people's wellbeing. Several schools integrated Rights Respecting Schools and the KiVA anti-bullying approach into Health and Wellbeing focussed work. A range of programmes were put in place to support wellbeing; for example, Roots of Empathy; Growth Mindset; Mindfulness; Lego Therapy and Therapeutic Drawing and Talking.

In some establishments, pupils were trained and upskilled to be playground leaders and School Counsellors. Also, Learning Assistants were deployed as Family Engagement /GIRFEC Officers to focus on positive transitions and improving home school relationships for identified children and young people.

Our schools are embedding approaches to health and wellbeing, with high levels of kindness, empathy and strong, positive respectful relationships amongst all in the school community, leading to positive environments in which children and young people are valued and included.

'Food for Thought' funding enabled thirteen schools across Dumfries and Galloway, including two secondaries, to provide enhanced food education experiences for children and young people. The learners planned and implemented high quality learning experiences, developing their own knowledge and skills in food education, whilst focussing on sustainability and capacity for future development. Working in partnership with local businesses, the 'Food



for Thought' approach facilitated learner leadership, an enhanced awareness of healthy eating and nutrition, and developed children and young people's skills for learning, life and work.

The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) supported interventions to increase physical activity; for example, local swimming, 'Fit 4 Fun', 'Better Movers, Better Thinkers', and 'Let's Move On'. To ensure sustainability, schools have focused on empowering children and young people, and engaging parents; for example, young people's trained in Health and Food Technology; engagement in breakfast clubs and the 'Eating a Rainbow' partnership with the NHS. Some schools provided PE kit bags and funded music tuition for individual children/young people.

Local community organisations and groups are providing extended opportunities and experiences for children and young people to develop and practise social and life skills.

The Dumfries and Galloway 'Being Well, Doing Well: Excellence and Equity Health and Wellbeing (Curriculum) Strategy' will be launched in early December 2020. This will ensure minimum standards and expectations in schools' work to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people.

Year of Young People

2018 was Scotland's Year of Young People (YOYP) which aimed to inspire Scotland through its young people; celebrating their achievements, valuing their contribution to communities and creating new opportunities for them to shine locally, nationally and globally.

To ensure Dumfries and Galloway maximised the opportunities around Scotland's Year of Young People, a group was established in April 2017 which included representatives from young people within the Youth Steering Group, all Council Directorates and Third Sector organisations. There were over 30 organisations represented on the group which created an ambitious plan of grassroots activities, experienced and events which were based around the six key themes of Participation, Equality and Discrimination, Education, Health and Wellbeing, Culture and Enterprise and Regeneration.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to a legacy from YOYP to ensure that there are clear benefits for the region in the years ahead.

The commitments were:

- 1. 10,000 Voices engagement programme**
- 2. Youth Council**
- 3. Youth Beatz including The Toon**
- 4. Dumfries & Galloway Youth Awards**

Focus on increasing physical activity rates

We can demonstrate that we have fewer inactive children and young people:

Active Schools - Family Walk, Jog Run Clubs (Case Study)

"Having recently been inspired to join a local volunteer led Jog Scotland community group I felt it was something that could be transferred into the local primary schools. I loved the whole ethos about everyone coming along, having fun, and trying their best in whatever capacity they could manage. "

In order to 'lead by example' the Active Schools officer in the Douglas Ewart cluster started a club as a parent volunteer at her daughter's primary school within the cluster. The officer worked with other schools to identify volunteer leaders who would deliver a similar after school walk/jog/run club, with further input from Active Schools to provide session plans and ideas on how to include all ages and stages.

There was a great response and each school within the cluster had a club going for 4 to 6 weeks and some beyond. Volunteer parents, staff, a student and a P7 playmaker pupil were at the helm and everyone who took part enjoyed the sessions.

The Active Schools team has been trying to encourage more parents to support schools to lead after school clubs and this proved popular. The 'coach' did not have to be an expert in a sport but just someone who was a role model to encourage and inspire those taking part to be active and hopefully to exercise in their own time and as a family.

The club (pic below) had between 18 and 25 people taking part over 11 weeks from March - June and we are looking to 'run' it again after the summer holidays due to the commitment, social and community spirit it generated".



Young People as Leaders in Sport: Young Leadership Academy (Case Study 1)

During summer holidays we deliver a Young Leadership Academy supported with funding from the Holywood Trust and Magnox Limited. The aim is to develop the skills of young people which can enhance their opportunities in further education and employment, and in turn can help increase levels of physical activity in schools and communities across our area.

Young Sports Leaders from Langholm Academy delivered Sportshall Athletics to children in Langholm Primary School. Such was the success of their coaching and support, the Langholm Primary School team came runners up at the Annandale and Eskdale Sportshall Athletics Final, a first for the school. They went one better to win the primary school's regional final in Dumfries before being narrowly pushed into second place from eleven of Scotland's best primary school teams at the West of Scotland Finals in Glasgow.

In doing so, the young people were nominated and recognised in the YOYP Award at the Annandale and Eskdale Sports Awards. Their nomination was for their dedication to delivering Sportshall Athletics practice sessions for Langholm Primary Sportshall team. In addition, all the young people achieved Saltire Awards which are recognised awards that acknowledge voluntary work by young people in the community.

One of the positive impacts of this work was the class teachers in the primary school indicating the changes in confidence, self-esteem, social skills and focus that came with being part of the team.

#Choose to Lead



Choose to Lead - Nithsdale Active Schools Pilot (Case Study 2)

The Choose to Lead Programme is open to those aged from 12 years up to and including the age of 25 years. Although underpinned by leadership in sport, the awards can be utilised by young people volunteering in clubs or facility settings with 16 young people registered for the pilot.

The programme offers participants with the opportunity to undertake and achieve a variety of qualifications and awards including courses from Sports Leaders UK, Saltire Award hour recognition and National Governing Bodies for sport. The pilot programme in Nithsdale has been supported with funding support from the Holywood Trust and was launched in Nithsdale in 2019 and is planned for a regional wide launch in December 2020.

The Nithsdale Active School team supported each young person who registered to be part of the programme, providing direct mentor support to enable and empower them to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them. Whilst working towards the award levels, candidates gained valuable experiences of practical leadership and benefit from links with local clubs and opportunities in the wider community.



Support children to be healthy and active

ON
TRACK

Celebrate local sporting successes with appropriate civic recognition.



Implement 'Cool2talk' interactive digital intervention to provide young people with access to digital health information and support.



Roll out best practice in youth work right across the region.



Expand the courses and opportunities available to young people in the more remote parts of our region by working more closely with Dumfries and Galloway College and other partners.



Support our Active Schools including: - increasing the number of children and young people achieving 60 minutes of physical activity daily - support the introduction of the 'Daily Mile' as a normal part of the school day.



Deliver healthy school meals and ensure they remain free for children in P1-P3.



Support secondary schools in Scotland in having access to a qualified school counsellor, providing accessible counselling to young people who need it.



Roll out school-based social work provision.



Invest £500,000 in the development of flagship inclusive play parks in Dumfries, Stranraer and Annan.



Establish a playpark fund to support improvements to parks across the region.



3 Protect our most vulnerable people

We want our most vulnerable residents, many of whom live in poverty or suffer poor health, to have the support and resources they need to live healthy and independent lives.

Our focus is on tackling poverty, improving services for the homeless and working with our NHS partners to deliver better health and social care services for people in our region, demonstrating our commitment to help and protect those most in need.

We fully support positive developments such as credit unions and home energy programmes to help people help themselves. Our Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan was agreed in June 2015 and continues to run until the end of December 2020.



Protect our most vulnerable people

Commitment	Current Status
Tackle the causes and effects of inequality and poverty	
Help older or vulnerable people live healthy and independent lives	
Ensure our older or vulnerable people receive the care and support they need	
Keep our communities safe	



Tackle the causes and effects of inequality and poverty

Award Winning Services

During this Council term, Dumfries and Galloway Council picked up a number of awards for our work in this area:

- the COSLA Excellence Gold Award for 'Tackling Poverty in Dumfries and Galloway' in the category 'Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health' in recognition for our involvement of people with lived experience of poverty in our work.
- the Financial Inclusion and Welfare Support Team won the Excellence in Social Inclusion category at the 2019 UK Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation awards for its Welfare and Housing Options Support Project and its coordination with other linked services.
- the Council's Homeless and Housing Options Team were awarded a bronze COSLA award for Service Innovation and Improvement in acknowledgement of the work done by the service to improve the customer experience for service users.

- our Commission on Representation and Engagement was a finalist in the GoScotland Procurement Awards in the category 'social inclusion' for our co-production approach with representative organisations for people with minority Protected Characteristics of disability, sexuality, transgender, race and religion or belief.

Tackling Poverty in Dumfries and Galloway

The implementation of the Tackling Poverty Strategy Action Plan progressed on target with significant investment in funding each year of this Council. This included over £200k funding each year for Area Committees to allocate to local priorities; over £200k each year to be determined by Participatory Budgeting; and support for a range of projects to address the highest priority needs each year, identified in discussion with the Tackling Poverty Reference Group and partner organisations in the Co-ordination Group – this has included . Intensive Family Support Service fuel poverty, community transport, benefits maximisation and Holiday Hunger/ Holiday Food Programmes.

In March 2020, funding was allocated to review the Anti Poverty Strategy, update research on poverty and deprivation and develop our future approach. The impact of COVID-19 will also be a significant factor in how we move forward, particularly in relation to financial poverty.

Tackling Poverty Budget determined by Participatory Budgeting (PB)

We have delivered three PB exercises using Tackling Poverty Budget during this Council, delivering a total of £640k to 97 local projects – the purpose being: to address the Findings of a Mapping Project in 2017/18; Making Ends Meet and child poverty in 2018/19; and food insecurity, fuel poverty, transport and benefits advice in 2019/20. The participation of, and engagement with, the Tackling Poverty Reference Group volunteers in the Steering Group each year, which determines the criteria for each Exercise, the voting arrangements and communications, has resulted in increased confidence, a greater sense of self-worth and an ability to discuss and provide extremely useful insight to the PB processes.

Our Council's approach in introducing participatory budgeting for its Tackling Poverty budget was highlighted as an area of good practice in Audit Scotland's Local Government in Scotland Challenges and Performance Report published in March 2019.

Tackling Child Poverty - Increasing the support for families

The Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Team and Education joined forces to identify families in receipt of Council Tax Benefit, Free School Meals and Free School Clothing Grants. They looked for variations, and where families may have been missing out on key benefits. Over 600 families were identified and contacted.

Work is ongoing to finalise automatic registration which means that when a family is identified as eligible for Council Tax reduction, they will automatically be registered for the Free School Meals and Free School Clothing Grants Benefits.

This innovative project enhances the lives of some of our most vulnerable families, whilst at the same time reducing workloads for Council Services. During our Budget Setting process in February 2019 the Council increased its Free School Clothing Grant to £134.00 per child, one of the highest levels available in Scotland.

Cost of the school day

Schools have continued to focus on reducing the cost of the school day.

Detailed studies have been completed within our region including the "Cost of the School Day Report 2016" which highlighted the ways in which both primary and secondary education impacts children, young people and families in low income households in relation to the often hidden financial costs of formal schooling.

We provide assistance to all parents/carers through a range of methods, including signposting to support through our Council's dedicated 'Financial Support for Education' pages.

Further consideration of links with the local authority in terms of Cost of the School Day will be considered in 2019/2020 as part of the developing Child Poverty Action Plan.

Our existing range of projects which specifically aim to tackle child poverty include:

- **Cost of the School Day:** Home Economics and Technical Subjects: any barriers to learning these two subject areas are removed which will result in increased engagement for all pupils wishing to study these two areas.
- **Cost of the School Day:** Pupil Charges for Extra Curricular Subjects linked to national qualifications in the Senior Phase - schools will cover the costs of these subjects (including Art and Design, Drama, Photography and Geography) for pupils.
- **Cost of the School Day:** Extra Curricular Travel: This fund can be accessed by families on low incomes to cover the costs of travel for school trips and sporting fixtures.
- **Removal of Period Poverty:** free sanitary products to young people within every school in our region and also through all sites throughout our region which offer youth work activities.
- Extension of the Food in Schools' Breakfast Clubs to include holiday meals and during study support. Pilot projects have now been delivered to offer the provision of meals linked to other activities during all holiday periods.





- Increased registration of free school meals and clothing grants: This project has increased the number of eligible families taking up free school meals/clothing grants and streamlined the process to make the current and future process easier and more accessible for our most vulnerable families.
- **Free School Uniform Bank Project:** Donation and Collection Points have been set up across the region for both new and used school uniforms and shoes to be donated. Every child in need can now access free school clothes without the stigma of having to collect these within a school setting.

Poverty Awareness Training

Working with the Poverty Alliance, the Council has developed training for our staff which will see:

- Better understanding of the nature, roots and causes of poverty and what it means to those experiencing it. Examples will be drawn from our experiences on tackling poverty issues
- Increased compassion for people experiencing poverty and an understanding of why no one plans to find themselves in poverty

- Improved knowledge on how to tackle misconceptions about poverty and why these arise
- Identifying changes and improvements to work practices to improve service delivery. For example, more effective signposting to support for people experiencing poverty

Staff who attended in the 2018/19 performance reporting period have stated:

“A good, interesting course which widened my understanding of the subject of tackling poverty. Thought provoking and interesting”

“Reduced the Stigma - left thinking of what we can do as individuals to help”

“This course has changed my overall perspective on why poverty happens and made me realise that it can happen to us all - a real eye opener and well delivered course. Would recommend to all”

1,200 staff and Elected Members will complete this training.

Financial Wellbeing Workforce

Our Financial Wellbeing in the Workplace Project was introduced in 2018/19 in response to an increasing number of staff seeking advice about their financial circumstances. This can often be associated with high levels of stress and anxiety which can impact on performance at work.

Through the Project we aim to:

- Promote financial planning across the Council through regular broad and targeted communication, emphasising confidentiality
- Signpost to local and national resources, such as Citizens Advice or the Money Advice Service
- Provide advice, guidance, and support, including a list of supporting agencies on our Intranet Site
- Include informative and topical messages on Council payslips
- Provide information to Managers for their team briefings, alerting and informing staff about the Project and available advice
- Introduce a referral system for employees to fast track advice from local agencies
- Promote existing employee benefits which could save employees money

Homelessness

Our Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Service provide assistance and support to a wide range of vulnerable people across the region. The Service has established a new Team that works with people who are at threat of homelessness to ensure they can access benefits, including the Scottish Welfare Fund, to help them maintain their tenancy and to source more suitable accommodation wherever possible.

In the two years to March 2019, the Team has prevented 111 evictions. The Housing Options and Homeless Service continues to work with key Third Sector partners, private and Registered Social Landlords to ensure early intervention in Homeless cases.

Welfare And Housing Options (Who) and Wider Team (Case Study)

The Scottish Welfare Fund Team alerted WHO Team to a single parent with 3 children who had applied for a Crisis Grant due to using monies towards rent arrears. Liaison with the Housing Options and Homeless Team identified rent arrears of £1,659 and customer at risk of losing Registered Social Landlord (RSL) tenancy due to forthcoming court date.

Records detailed that Housing Benefit had been cancelled some months previously as customer had failed to provide all required evidence. A request for reconsideration was submitted by the team detailing: the customer's personal circumstances, health issues across the family and outside factors, all of which had impacted on the customer's efforts to resolve the matter. The case was immediately escalated for reconsideration and with evidence to hand the Housing Benefit was reinstated.

A payment of £1,941 was made, this cleared the rent arrears and removed the eviction threat. Prompt action by all teams ensured that the Housing Benefit was awarded, and the eviction threat removed.

One off Award:

Housing Benefit Underpayment	£1,941
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Weekly Award:

Housing Benefit	£97.16
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Housing











Dumfries and Galloway's Local Housing Strategy 2018 - 2023

Delivering high quality new affordable housing to address unmet need is a key policy aspiration for the Council and its partner organisations. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) sets out the key priorities for affordable housing development within the local authority area over a five year period. The Scottish Government has allocated £23.264m to the Council for 2020/21 to support the delivery of new affordable housing. Our development partners, including Registered Social Landlords, increase the overall investment by raising their own private finance, and applying their own resources, to meet the total cost of new housing development.

The Council's £1m Town Centre Living Fund is widely recognised as delivering positive regeneration outcomes across our region while making best use of the additional income generated by Council Tax on second homes. This approach to bringing empty properties and derelict sites back into use contributes to our Council's approach to addressing climate change and town centre regeneration.

Obligation (ECO) funding. Dumfries and Galloway has been allocated £2,118,958 for 2020/21 which will be utilised in both rural areas of the region and in larger settlements. In the first six years of delivery, there have been more than 1,700 energy efficiency measures installed across Dumfries and Galloway. These will save over 51,000 tonnes of carbon and £11.7m from fuel bills during their lifetime.'

The Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme aims to assist homeowners, as well as people living in the private rented sector. The main objectives are to reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions plus leverage additional resources from Energy Companies

Tackle the causes and effects of inequality and poverty		ON TRACK
Develop support and improve planning and housing policy to ensure that young people leaving care will be able to access suitable accommodation and appropriate support to sustain tenancies.		
To support people experiencing poverty to move from dependence to independence.		
Provide services that meet the needs of people experiencing poverty.		
Listen to people and families experiencing poverty and make sure their voice is heard.		
Continue Dumfries and Galloway Council's commitment to the Living Wage.		
Improve access to services and information about benefits and employment for local people.		
Deliver the objectives of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy, helping our most vulnerable people through targeted support.		
Work with partners, including Scottish Government, developers, and social landlords, to secure new money to increase the number of new, affordable homes through social housing in the region and invest £1m a year in a town centre living fund.		
Carry out a full, more comprehensive review of the council's charging policy across all services.		
Deliver the objectives of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy, helping our most vulnerable people through targeted support.		

Help older or vulnerable people live healthy and independent lives

Invest in innovative ways to support independent living, such as technology enhanced care

Digital technology has a fundamental and central role in delivering care and support that:

- supports the delivery of better outcomes for people
- offers people greater choice in how they access care and support
- helps us to make the best possible use of available resources
- makes services sustainable into the future

In August 2020, the Dumfries and Galloway Integration Joint Board Digital Health and Care Strategy was approved.

This local Strategy:

- provides clear strategic direction for the Health and Social Care Partnership

- identifies the key elements of the infrastructure needed to optimise the use of digital technology locally
- identifies and builds on existing work and outlines future developments

Over the last year, a pilot of Just Checking's Roaming Night prototype and CM2000's Advanced Risk Modelling for Early Detection (Armed) technology took place.

This pilot used a mix of movement sensors, wearable devices and Polar Loops to explore how overnight support could be delivered to adults with learning disabilities.

This work has resulted in overnight support being delivered more effectively and efficiently while also ensuring that the support in place is appropriate for each person.

The learning from this overnight support pilot is now being used across Dumfries and Galloway.



Armed technology, that uses data collected from wearable devices, is also being piloted within three different care settings for older people:

- a sheltered housing complex
- a residential care home
- care at home support

This pilot is exploring how the data collected can be analysed and used to generate alerts when a person's health begins to deteriorate and will support an early intervention and prevention approach, enabling people to stay in good health for longer and living in their own home or homely setting.

The Scottish Government is working to update telecare from analogue phone lines to digital lines. This fits with its overarching aim to switch all phone lines in the UK from analogue to digital by 2025. Upgraded digital systems will support and enable:

- faster connections from telecare equipment to the team who coordinate a response
- a wider range of equipment to be used, increasing capacity and flexibility
- the introduction of telehealth monitoring equipment

Moving to a digital platform will enable a technology enabled care approach. This has the potential to bring together telecare, telehealth, telemedicine, and assistive technologies generating alerts to one platform. It also creates opportunities to widen an individual's circle of care to engage families, friends, and communities, supporting early, proactive, and preventative interventions.

During COVID-19 the use of digital technologies has increased significantly, enabling people to access health and care while reducing or altogether avoiding the risk of infection. It is important that we learn from people's experiences of this to effectively maintain and build on these changes.

Let's Motivate

In recognition of the age demographics within Dumfries and Galloway, and the positive impact of physical activity on older adults and those with long term conditions, we have sought to expand the reach of our bespoke 'Let's Motivate' physical activity training programme for those working or volunteering with adults in this sector.

Let's Motivate is a training programme which aims to increase levels of physical activity within adults and older adults; by giving staff and volunteers the necessary skills and resources to be confident physical activity deliverers within their own setting.

Let's Motivate training has now been extended to 24 care home settings across our region and 17 community settings e.g. day centres, community groups. Our local evaluation conducted in partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University found an increase in:

- Older adults meeting arm strengthening guidelines
- Older adults meeting balance and coordination guidelines
- Wellbeing scores (life satisfaction/ life being worthwhile*/happiness)

Over 4000 low intensity sessions have been delivered for older adults or those with Long Term Conditions (LTCs) as a result of Let's Motivate training.

Bridging Programme

Due to the lack of community based, supervised, active and appropriate exercise opportunities for individuals with long-term conditions (stroke, pulmonary, falls and cardiac) who have completed healthcare based exercise programmes, the Council and NHS partners have launched a 'Bridging' programme aimed at encouraging regular physical activity after rehabilitation.

NHS Physiotherapy staff have developed partnership education for local authority exercise instructors and have been implementing this in line with the current health and social care integration agenda.

Improve accessible transport for women, older people and disabled people

The Taxicard Scheme continued to provide financial assistance for taxi travel to some 2,100 residents of the region who have severe mobility restrictions and are unable to use conventional public transport. The Scheme is available to residents who are Registered Blind; in receipt of the higher rate of mobility element of Disability Living Allowance, or PIP Mobility Component Standard or Enhanced Rate; in receipt of War Pensioner Mobility Supplement; or over the age of 60 and have a severe restriction of mobility. This Scheme provides essential support to enable all recipients to have unrestricted access to essential services.

Day Centres

A review of Day Services was commissioned by Dumfries and Galloway Council to look at the sustainability of Day Centres and Day Care. This review reported in the summer of 2018 and made 22 recommendations which are now implemented, including an action to develop a fair and transparent approach to funding Day Centres.

Help older and vulnerable people live healthy and independent lives

ON TRACK

Accelerate the rollout of self-directed care for people who want more freedom to determine their own needs.



People using social care services are safe from harm.



People are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer.



Support the long-term funding of Day Centres to ensure they can continue to provide and improve services to our region's older people.



Invest in innovative ways to support independent living, such as technology enhanced care.



Review the Council's social care charges, with a focus on fairness, starting with adults with disabilities.



Improve accessible transport for women, older people and disabled people.



Ensure our older or vulnerable people receive the care and support they need

Carers Week

In June 2018, Dumfries and Galloway celebrated the first Carers Week after new legislation; Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 came into effect. This Act extended the rights of Carers and placed a duty on Local Authorities to support Carers who have an eligible need.

To help Carers understand these new rights, a range of short, animated videos were produced and launched during Carers week. This was supported by a communications campaign with coverage in the local newspapers, social media posts and also on Connect.

Various events such as afternoon tea, craft groups and other entertainments across Dumfries and Galloway were held with Carers to celebrate. For new Carers Information Stations at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary, Galloway Community Hospital and Gardenhill Health Centre were available. These included a display with information for Carers to take from a wide range of Carer organisations available. 49 new Carers were identified this week. There are on average 600 new Carers identified and supported by Carers Organisations each year.

Integration Joint Board (IJB)

The IJB Annual Performance Report for 2018-19 has been reviewed by the Council. The report considered progress made by the Health and Social Care Partnership against nine national health and wellbeing outcomes and the commitments in the IJB's Strategic Plan for Health and Social Care 2016-19.

Some highlights of the Report include:

- The Partnership delivered a breakeven financial position for 2018-19
- We are using more technology is being used to support people to manage their long term conditions and to live at home as independently as possible. This includes Telecare, Home and Mobile Health Monitoring and video consultations
- The social prescribing approach to health and wellbeing has been embraced across Dumfries and Galloway
- A programme of transformation has started within primary care as a result of a new national contract for GPs



- All people who need care and support are helped through a Self Directed Support (SDS) process. There are now support options available through SDS Option 2, where people choose to be more involved in the planning of their care and support. This has been the most challenging option to implement locally and nationally
- We are improving how we work with the communities we serve and how we involve people in designing services, through better use of public engagement and a co-productive approach
- More people are sharing their experiences with us and we are improving how we share the learning from these stories

Accommodation for Young People Leaving Care

The Council has worked closely with local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to ensure that priority points are awarded to all care experienced people who are seeking permanent accommodation.

The Council's Social Work Services and the Housing Options and Homeless Service work closely together to ensure young people who are at threat of homelessness are prioritised and proactively engaged with to ensure suitable accommodation and supports are in place. This ensures that unsuitable temporary accommodation is not used.

Social Work Services has also entered into a partnership with a local RSL (DGHP) to provide transitional accommodation for care leavers in Dumfries (Holmpark View); this accommodation provides a supported environment to young people who have not previously had a mainstream tenancy.

Dumfries and Galloway Integration Joint Board's Carers Strategy 2017-2021

Unpaid Carers are the largest group of care providers in Scotland, providing more care than the NHS and Councils combined, avoiding costs of £10bn nationally, every year (University of Sheffield 2015). Carers are a vital part of the health and social care system in Dumfries and Galloway with over half of all required care (approximately 410,000 hours every week) being provided by unpaid Carers.

An increasing number of people in Dumfries and Galloway are finding themselves in a caring role. At the 2011 census, 10% (14,995) of the population

of Dumfries and Galloway identified themselves as Carers. This percentage includes Young Carers and Young Adult Carers. Nationally (59.2% Census 2011) and in Dumfries and Galloway there are more female Carers (58.6% Census 2011) than male Carers.

A Carer is 'a person of any age who provides unpaid help and support to a relative, friend or neighbour who cannot manage to live independently without the Carers help due to frailty, illness, disability or addiction.'

Supporting Carers is one of the ten areas of priority identified in the Dumfries and Galloway Integration Joint Board's Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021. There are three commitments specific to Carers in this Plan:

- We will provide support to Carers (including the provision of short breaks) so that they can continue to care, if they so wish, in better health and have a life alongside caring
- We will develop a consistent approach across the workforce to make sure that the needs of the Carer are identified and that Carers are supported in their own right
- We will work towards developing 'Carer Positive' as an approach across the [Health and Social Care] Partnership; identifying staff that are Carers and supporting them in their own personal caring roles.

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 came into force on 1 April 2018 and is designed to support Carers' health and wellbeing and to help make caring more sustainable for individuals. The Act requires that a single Carers Strategy for Carers of all ages is developed between local authorities and the NHS.

The Dumfries and Galloway Integration Joint Board's (IJB) Carers Strategy 2017-2021, and action plan to implement it, is for all unpaid Carers of any age living or caring for someone in this region. It was co-developed with Carers in the region and sets out the services and support available to them locally.

Based on what Carers have said matters to them, the five key themes of the Strategy are:

- Access to Services
- Breaks from Caring
- Health and Wellbeing
- Information and Advice
- Support

Involving Carers in Care

The ‘Triangle of Care’ approach in acute mental health services has meant Carers being better involved in the care and treatment of the person they care for. Building on this success, during 2019/20 work started to test this as an approach in Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary (DGRI).

Carer Positive

Carer Positive is a national award with three levels, recognising employers who offer best support to employees who may have a caring role. Dumfries and Galloway Council has achieved the Exemplary status (level 3). NHS Dumfries and Galloway was awarded Established Status (level 2) during 2019/20 and is working towards Exemplary status in 2020/21.

Adult Carer Support Plans

From 1 April 2018 the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 gives rights to Carers to have a support plan that addresses their needs. The Dumfries and Galloway Carers Centre provides support to help people through this process. Around one Carer in ten accessing the wide range of support from the Carers Centre goes on to develop an Adult Carers Support Plan (ACSP). The number of Carers being supported using an ACSP in Dumfries and Galloway in 2019/20 was 173.

Ethical Care

In 2017 the Council endorsed the Ethical Care Charter: the commitments in it for the commissioning of homecare services that care staff valued are supported.

These good practice commitments are supported through our homecare activities and work. The Council has implemented and delivered for both our commissioned adult social care service providers (providing 80% of services) and our in-house workforce (providing 20% of services). The Council promotes this good practice and encourages other suppliers and employers across the sectors.

Many of the commitments within the Charter were considered as part of the Council’s review of homecare and reflected in the Care at Home tender. The Council has worked with the IJB to ensure that the commitments in the Ethical Care Charter are incorporated in developing, and future, social care arrangements.

Ensure our older and vulnerable people receive the care and support they need



Implement UNISON’s Ethical Care Charter, ensuring fair working conditions for all social care staff.



Efficiently deliver fully integrated health and social care services by collaborating with NHS Dumfries and Galloway and other partners.



Work with key partners to develop a new strategy to better recognise and enhance support for our region’s carers.



Keep our communities safe

Public Protection Partnership

The Dumfries and Galloway Public Protection Partnership has now been in place since August 2018. With oversight from Chief Officers Group: Public Protection, Dumfries and Galloway Council and partners continue to take an innovative approach to ensure that those who are at risk and vulnerable are protected, and to minimise the risk from those who pose a threat to our communities.

As best practice, the Public Protection Committee (PPC) continues to have ongoing evaluation to assure chief officers, and within the reporting period undertook several developments and learning sessions for members.

This was to ensure both continuous improvement of this innovative approach and for the strategic development and delivery of services to our most vulnerable population, who are at risk of significant harm.

After consultation Members and partners highlighted benefits of the PPC approach, including greater information sharing and networking, reduced duplication and streamlining of approaches. Also, that PPC is a strong foundation for future public protection activity and progression of the integrated joint agenda. Notwithstanding these, we are fully aware of the challenges presented by significant change and continue to provide scrutiny and review on a continuous basis.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH continues to deliver fast effective multi-agency decision making where there is a risk of harm for either children or adults. The MASH includes the Council, Police and NHS, based together to share information and make informed decisions about the protection of adults and children in our community. It maintains a regionwide remit which gives a single point of entry for screening referrals.

Within the Children MASH, since 1st August 2018 to 31st July 2020, 88% of all Initial Referral Discussions (IRD) have had decisions taken within 24 hours. The Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) Review Group continues to meet monthly and its findings, along with the performance report are fed back to the operational managers.

Changes within the Adult MASH have aimed to further develop both the referral screening process, and the completion of adult protection initial inquiries.

Through an additional second senior social worker and council officer this has allowed us to increase capacity, to aid with the quality of risk analysis. In May 2019, a Nurse Consultant Clinical Risk role was introduced to assist the safeguarding hub where specialist mental health information and/or advice is required. This has provided a level of expert mental health knowledge, advice, and support and is pivotal to support multi-disciplinary teams in managing high risk service users.

Self-Neglect and Hoarding

In response to recommendations from case reviews, both nationally and locally, Dumfries and Galloway Council and partners developed a Self-Neglect and Hoarding strategy which was launched in February 2020.

To support this launch there were three days of public and staff engagement culminating in National Adult Support and Protection Day.

The strategy provides a clear pathway to report adults at risk of self-neglect and hoarding through the newly developed adult protection referral which encourages a more collaborative approach between agencies and partners.

In addition, there is a broader perspective on self-neglect work which impacts on autonomy of the person and the duty of care and improved timelines in intervention at an early stage.

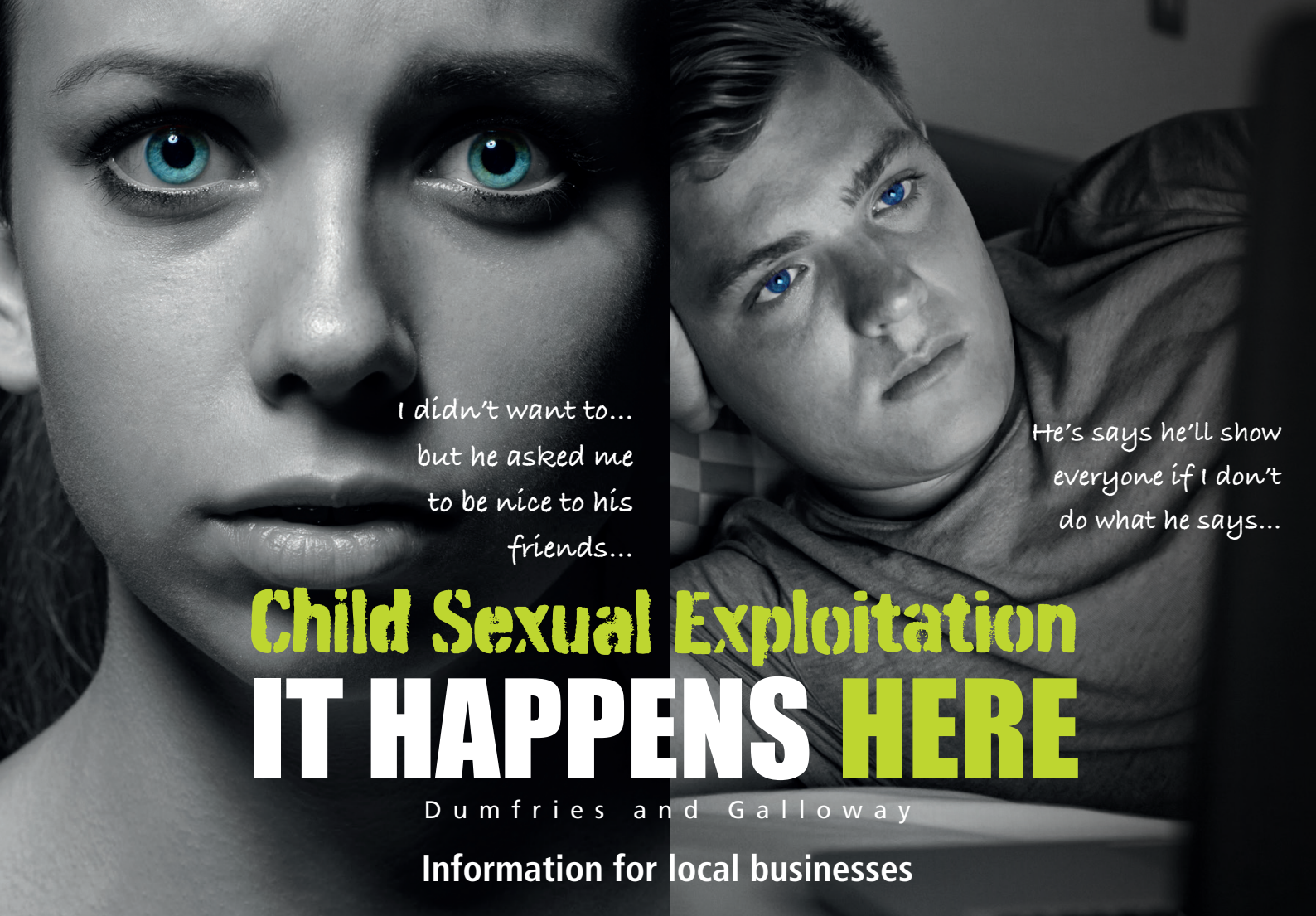
Community Justice/Domestic Abuse and Violence

In March 2019 the Community Justice Partnership and Public Protection Partnership held a "sold out" Conference entitled "From Hurt to Hope: Moving from Shame and Blame to Understanding".

This was the first shared-agenda Conference of its kind in Scotland and involved participants across the sectors in our region and beyond, who explored the impact of violence against women and girls and the links across Community Justice.

The Conference covered the personal impact of living with trauma; why commercial exploitation is a violence against women issue; trauma-informed Policing;





*I didn't want to...
but he asked me
to be nice to his
friends...*

*He's says he'll show
everyone if I don't
do what he says...*

Child Sexual Exploitation IT HAPPENS **HERE**

Dumfries and Galloway

Information for local businesses

the Police response to domestic abuse; women in the justice system and the new regional child sexual exploitation campaign. The Conference evaluated very positively.

Dumfries and Galloway Council and partners continued to promote the 16 days of action for the elimination of violence against women in November/ December 2019.

This included a social media campaign; a range of training days; promotion of the White Ribbon Campaign and awareness of Gender Based Violence; an "Inside Outside" pop-up event on women's experiences in prostitution in Scotland; and the screening of "Custody", a film that explored the dynamics of post-separation domestic abuse and the abuser's behaviour.

Work continued to raise awareness of all forms of violence against women and girls, including exploration of the issue of consent and the development of a local animation on some of the issues arising from pornography. Over 600 secondary school pupils received input on domestic abuse and coercive control.

Child Sexual Exploitation

In November 2018, our local Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) practice guidance was disseminated through various communication methods. This was accompanied with details for staff on how to assess risk. Furthermore, we invested in training additional staff to become competent trainers in this area to assist with capacity going forward.

With support from the Public Protection Committee and in collaboration with National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), a yearlong awareness raising campaign was successfully concluded in March 2020. Entitled 'It Happens Here' the campaign used numerous platforms including distribution of leaflets and posters, the use of social media across the Council, NHS and Police websites, bus-liners and radio adverts, and CSE workshops.

The campaign's reach included secondary schools, publicans, hoteliers, food retailers, parents/carers, youth groups and professionals across statutory and Third Sector agencies.

Safer Young Drivers' Programmes

Youth Work Services has delivered several 'Safer Young Drivers' Programmes across the region that are focussed on engaging young people through informal education about the risks and consequences of unsafe driving.

There are also a number of detached programmes running (including Dumfries Town Centre and Kirkcudbright) that engage with young people out and about in their local community. The provision of detached programmes is ad-hoc and responsive to areas experiencing an increase of anti-social behaviour perceived to be committed by young people.

DG

Following on from DGVOST (Dumfries and Galloway Virtual Operations Team) winning a COSLA Bronze Award in 2017 and success at The Scottish Public Services Awards, the initiative won a Police Scotland Award in April 2018 for its work in ensuring our most vulnerable residents are identified and safe during emergencies.

Young People's Services

Young People's Services provides a range of targeted services for vulnerable young people, this includes; young parents, LGBT youth, care experienced young people, young people with Additional Support Needs and disabilities, young people experiencing poor mental health, young people at risk of exclusion or who are not in education, training and employment and young people experiencing poverty.

Services and support are centred around the needs of young people, signposting on to support agencies where appropriate i.e. Employability, Leaving Care, Housing Support, etc.

Consumer Protection Project

This project required a refocus of consumer protection to support vulnerable groups and was successfully completed with the help of a Graduate placement from the Council's Graduate Trainee scheme.

The project involved extensive research into consumers in poverty and a survey of consumer experiences in Dumfries and Galloway. The outcomes of the project have ensured that people in poverty are included in consumer protection measures.

Police and Fire Service Accountability

Dumfries and Galloway Council continue to work with Police Scotland (V Division) and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Dumfries and Galloway to maintain the safety of the region.

The Police and Fire services report every 6 months to the Police and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Sub Committee. To ensure the reporting was appropriate and reflected the community and regions concerns, new templates were developed to support Elected Members in their scrutiny of performance and highlight areas of concern which require improvement action by the two national services.

Accountability for both Police and Fire extends to their senior representatives attending the four area committees twice a year to provide area level statistics. All these meetings receive regular updates on national developments and their potential impacts upon the local area.





Keep our communities safe



Work with the NHS and Scottish Ambulance Service to create and support Community First Responder groups where there is both need and community demand.



Maintain funding for Community Safety and our work tackling anti-social behaviour including addressing domestic noise complaints, fly tipping, littering and dog fouling and ensuring equality of service across the region.



Stand up to domestic abuse and work with partners to ensure effective support is available to families and people across the region living with abuse and the effects of abuse.



Support the rollout of Public Access Defibrillators to all our communities.



Campaign for more local accountability for Scottish Police Authority and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Board.



4 Be an inclusive council

We are passionate about the importance of working with local people, our communities, our businesses, our staff and other organisations in our region. We all have a shared interest in making the most of the talents, vision and commitment of the people who live and work in Dumfries and Galloway.

Ensure that local people and communities are at the heart of our decision making.

Empower our communities to make the most of their assets.



Be an inclusive council

Commitment	Current Status
Ensure that local people and communities are at the heart of our decision making	●
Empower our communities to make the most of their assets	●
Increase equality of opportunity	●

Ensure that local people and communities are the heart of our decision making

Participatory Budgeting (PB)

Our first ever PB exercise was in 2018/19; £240k of Tackling Poverty funding to address the Findings of a Mapping Project. A Steering Group of people who have lived experience of poverty developed the arrangements and then local communities made the decisions at 'in-person' events. 20 projects were funded. The Evaluation Report identified high levels of satisfaction from participants and some suggested improvements.

Our second PB exercise was a series of 'Community Conversations' in May/June 2018 around the £500k Budget for 'Streetscene' services (grounds maintenance, street cleansing, litter picking etc). 16 events were held, at least one in each of our 12 Wards. The Evaluation Report again identified high satisfaction levels.

Our Council's progress in introducing participatory budgeting for its Tackling Poverty budget was highlighted as an area of good practice in Audit Scotland's Local Government in Scotland Challenges and Performance Report published in March 2019.

Youth Democracy and Youth Participation

In Dumfries and Galloway, we are proud to have opportunities for young people to get involved in both local and national decision making.

Our Council's Youth Participation and Engagement strategy, 2018-2021, lays out the ways in which young people can get involved in decision making across the region.

Regional Youth Council

The Regional Youth Council was elected on 1 April 2019 and includes space for a total of 35 representatives.

- 4 Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament** (2 for each parliamentary constituency)
- 24 Ward Youth Councillors** (2 for each ward area)
- 7 Nominated Youth Councillors** (for young parents; additional support needs and disabilities; ethnic minority communities; LGBT; gypsy/traveller; young Carers; Care experienced young people. The first joint meeting with Dumfries and Galloway Council took place in February 2020.)

Elections for the Youth Council and Scottish Youth Parliament run every 2 years with the next election due to take place in March 2021.

Youth Councillors and Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament are responsible for advocating on behalf of young people to local (Elected Members) and national (MPs and MSPs) decision makers to ensure that young people's voices are heard and acted upon.

In February 2020, the Youth Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council had their first joint meeting which saw the agreement of an Action Plan, now being considered by Council managers and Committees.

Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils

Preparatory work on the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils undertaken during 2017/18 continued into 2018/19 and culminated with agreement of the Amended Scheme in November 2018.

The Scheme is significantly streamlined from the previous documentation - as requested by Community Councils during the consultations - and supports a stronger focus on their statutory role in gathering local views and presenting them to local public bodies.

Alongside the new Scheme, new management arrangements for supporting Community Councils were put in place in summer 2018; a monthly Newsletter is produced that shares good practice; and renewed connections with national bodies.

The Scheme has been updated further, providing for online meetings and electronic communications, supporting Community Council Elections and undertaking training sessions. The response times and satisfaction rating for the quality of responses to the Community Council Enquiry Scheme have increased over the last year; and Committees monitor and scrutinise Services' performance.

Community Participation and Engagement

Our Council was recognised as the Consultation Institute's 'Council of the Year' in 2019 for our commitment to training and development.

Business Plans include the consultations that Services are planning for the years ahead, and this allowed us to produce a co-ordinated programme of engagement activity so that we aren't putting too many demands on local people and are making the best use of our trained staff. We developed this further to have a partnership approach with NHS and the Health and Social Care Partnership and the first partnership programme was agreed in December 2018 and is available on our websites.

A new initiative of Ward Events has seen 24 events take place across the region and they covered a wide range of topics –school rolls, waste collection and recycling, road repairs and traffic management – and we had a joint Ward Event at Dumfries High School where pupils posed questions to the Elected Members for their area. Community Conversations have also been popular, with at least one in each Ward each year. Topics have been Streetscene Services, Waste Strategy, Public Conveniences and Customer Service Centres.

There has been an annual Budget Consultation using different methodologies as appropriate including an online Budget Simulator in 2018 to scrutinise specific options; and a live webinar in 2019. Detailed feedback in the form of 'We Asked; You Said; We Did/ Did Not Because was published' each year.



Ensure that local people and communities are at the heart of our decision making

ON TRACK

Work towards Dumfries and Galloway Council becoming a co-operative Council, enhancing transparency in decision making.



Introduce community choices budgeting for 1% of the Council's budget to let local communities directly influence spending decisions in their areas on their local priorities.



We will engage with and work with our communities to understand and address the effects of antisocial behaviour in line with the National Standards for Community Engagement.



Ensure the council follows the National guidelines when consulting and develop a Centre of Excellence, to continue to improve the level and quality of public consultation to ensure these are meaningful.



Fully implement the Council's new lobbying strategy.



Empower our communities to make the most of their assets

Community Asset Transfers

We have produced the statutory Annual Report on Community Asset Transfer (CAT) each of the three years of this Council Plan. They have reported that that we have transferred 30 properties to community bodies -; and exceptionally high satisfaction from community groups with the support they received from Community Planning and Engagement officers.

We reviewed the CAT Procedure in December 2019 and made some improvements including the establishment of an Appeals Sub Committee; the introduction of an officer Panel for complex applications; and the Social Value tool being used for all new requests to provide Elected Members with additional information to inform their decisions.

Volunteering Strategy

The implementation of our Volunteering Strategy has progressed well. Detailed guidance and training are ensuring consistency across Council services; and in March 2019 the first group of volunteers - from the new Kirkcudbright Art Gallery and Stewartry Museum - signed the new 'Volunteer Agreement'. The Agreement sets out clearly the relationship between our Council and the volunteers; their entitlement to training, support and expenses; and how to handle any problems that may arise.

Our promotion of volunteering continued throughout the year, especially at Community Conversations, with a high point being Council sponsorship of the Community Resilience Award at the Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway 'VOSCARS' in June 2018 - taking place during Volunteers Week, this initiative attracted over 200 nominations and had a national profile.

GoScotland Procurement Award

The Council's Commission on Representation and Engagement was a finalist in the 2019 GoScotland Procurement Awards (social value category) in recognition of our co-production approach with Third Sector partners.

Locality Planning

Our Council continues to support local communities in identifying their priorities and addressing the challenges that face their residents.

Officers and community groups are supported by a range of Frameworks and national bodies - including Scotland's Towns Partnership, Scottish Community Development Centre - with the right approach and people depending on local needs and relationships.

A Dumfries and Galloway Framework to aid these activities has been developed to support involvement and training.

Sharing of good practice is being promoted, for example, at Area Committee; at the Community Planning Executive Group (Moffat Collaboration Project in August 2018); and through the Director of Communities' Annual Ward Visits (throughout 2018/19).

Locality planning is progressing with a review of the Local Rural Partnerships underway; the development of four Area Local Partnerships with Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway and anchor organisations; developments around the Local Development Plan, South of Scotland Economic Partnership and Borderlands Growth Initiative; and more recently arising through COVID-19 response, Locality Hubs.

Empower our communities to make the most of their assets

ON TRACK

Source external funding to support sport facilities and events.



Lobby the Government to support the buy-out of historical PFI contracts.



Support an increase in community growing schemes and allotments.



Work with the Third Sector to develop: - an audit of skills, strengths and expertise in our third sector, to make sure our Council enhances the excellent work that already exists in our region.



Improve support for community groups such as Community Development Trusts to help them to prioritise, manage and own services and community assets.



Support a local based community model for the running and ownership of assets such as village halls, community centres, sport and leisure facilities including the Community Sports Hubs.





Increase equality of opportunity

New Library system

The Council has upgraded the Library Management System providing efficiencies in service delivery while also improving digital services to customers.

The new system was successfully launched online and in Customer Service Centres in July 2018.

The new online customer access portal is user friendly and intuitive. Customers are now able to carry out an increased number of online transactions from registering as a new user to using digital materials (eBooks, eMagazines and eAudio books).

The system has also facilitated the re-design and streamlining of back office processes.

The second phase of improvements currently in development are the ability for customers to make payments online and the digitisation of the school's library service.

Equalities Outcomes 2017-2021

As part of the Council's statutory duties in relation to the Equalities Act 2010, our Equalities Action Plan Progress Report and Mainstreaming Equalities Report for 2017-19 were approved by Full Council in March 2019. These reports showed that significant improvements have been achieved, particularly in relation to diversity awareness.

This has only been possible through partnership working, our relationship with diversity groups, and the use of campaigns and events.

Achievements include:

- Receiving the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) Gold Award for Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health
- The development of our Gypsy/ Traveller sites Improvement Plan
- 10,000 Voices
- Youth Beatz

- Participatory Budgeting
- Continued dedicated English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support
- The joint Dumfries and Galloway British Sign Language (BSL) Plan

There has continued to be a better understanding between the Council and diversity representative groups about the pressures and challenges facing the organisations and communities. This is achieved through regular engagement and stakeholder impact assessments and regular opportunities for people to feed in their views on services and issues. For example, through the 2018 Community Survey and the Community Planning Equality and Diversity Working Group.

Impact Assessment

The Council has a well-established approach to Impact Assessment which has been updated annually during the time of this Council Plan and now covers a range of issues including climate change, equalities, environment, health and health inequalities, economic and social sustainability. These Assessments are undertaken by a stakeholder group.

British Sign Language 2018-2024

The British Sign Language (BSL) Plan was brought forward in partnership by Dumfries and Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, Dumfries and Galloway College and Police Scotland V Division. Consultation focus groups included BSL users, Dumfries and Galloway partner organisations and Visibility Scotland. All sessions had BSL translators in attendance.

The Plan was approved on 4 September 2018 and sets ambitious targets to achieve by 2024:

- Analyse existing evidence we have about BSL users in our organisation, identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress
- Review questionnaires/ monitoring forms in relation to the use and understanding of BSL which the Scottish Government is developing for the next census
- Improve access to our information and services for BSL users including making our websites more accessible to BSL users by:

- Prioritising and producing signed videos to provide information about available services
- Reviewing guidance and policies on accessing interpretation and translation
- Using the intranet and internet to promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay service 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL' to staff and local BSL users
- Increasing staff awareness, knowledge and understanding of Deaf culture language and service provision issues
- Working with local Deaf and Deafblind organisations to develop resources to raise awareness for front line staff
- Promoting awareness of the use of BSL to the general public (social media message/video/ translation)

Women's Try It, Play It, Love It (Case Study)

The programme was designed based on a local need, which was identified through consultation on social media to determine whether there was a demand for a ladies' only recreational sport and activity programme.

The programme invites women and girls (16+) to come along and try different sports/activities each week in a 'no pressure', fun, safe, community environment.

Sessions are delivered in partnership with local community sport clubs to provide a pathway onto their club sessions if the ladies chose to take the sport/activity to the next level.

Some sessions are delivered by Active Schools' staff and coaches to provide 'taster' sessions or other sport/activity specific sessions.

The programme has been running for around 18 months with each block based on feedback from participants from the previous session. For example, if the women would like to try golf in the next block, the Active Schools work with a community partner to include golf. Some women have taken part in every block since the start. The programme is all about fun, in a pressure-free setting.



Stroll In The Park (Case study)

Stroll in the Park walks are aimed at anyone who is living with or recovering from a long-term condition. These low-level walks are ideal for anyone wishing to continue their recovery or maintain a level of fitness by developing strength and balance, confidence and enjoying being with like-minded people.

The Stroll in the Parks, organised by the Council's Health and Wellbeing team, are important in terms of physical wellbeing and provide a valuable social opportunity for people to get together. Many of the walkers commented that this has been a real boost to their daily routine and is a valued change from the 'four walls' of home.

We currently have three Stroll in the Parks running throughout Dumfries and Galloway: one in Dumfries, one in Stranraer and one in Springfield, Gretna Green.

Family friendly working practices

The introduction of our Smarter Working Policy has supported a modern, flexible workplace and enabled employees to carry out their roles and duties in more efficient and effective way. The Policy supports our Council to respond to an individual need for flexibility in working arrangements.

Staff have the ability to ask for the following working patterns that are adopting family friendly working practices: annualised hours, compressed hours, day and time of day changes, flexible working hours scheme (Flexi-time), part-time working and term time working.

Our Council also operates an annual leave purchase scheme (ALPS) that allows staff to purchase up to two weeks extra leave in a year.

The introduction of new modern technology gives staff the opportunity to work remotely and with greater flexibility around working hours.

Gender Pay Gap

Overall, since 2013 the Council's gender pay gap has reduced by 5.7%. The gap decreased from 6.23% in 2016 to 5.95% in 2017, increasing marginally to 6.29% in 2018. This is significantly better than the reported gender pay gap for Scotland at 16.1% (Scottish Government 2017) and 17.9% for the UK (Office of National Statistics 2018). The marginal increase in 2018 is primarily as a result of an increase in the gender pay gap within Education Teaching Management roles.

Job applications from females have increased marginally between 2016 to 2018 by 0.42%; however, the number of applicants that did not answer or preferred not to say increased by 3.9.

Move More (case study)

Dumfries and Galloway Council is working in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support and NHS Dumfries and Galloway to deliver the Move More Dumfries and Galloway programme.

Move More Dumfries and Galloway is a programme of activity, specifically designed for people affected by cancer, but is also suitable for those with a long-term condition.

The initial three year programme, originally delivered by NHS Dumfries and Galloway, ended in September 2018. Since then, work has been ongoing to develop a new programme which is better embedded, integrated and more closely aligned to local health and wellbeing delivery approaches in the region.

Being active during and after cancer treatment improves both physical and emotional cancer outcomes and can reduce feelings of isolation. However, many people affected by cancer and long-term conditions often feel nervous about building up activity levels.

Move More Dumfries and Galloway has recruited four Move More Champions, one per locality, in order to support, encourage and deliver Macmillan friendly physical activity opportunities.

Everyone affected by cancer and living with a long-term condition should have access to appropriate physical activity. From gentle movement classes and low impact exercise to low impact gym instruction and walking programmes, Move More Dumfries and Galloway will ensure there is something for everyone.

Active Communities Review

Since the launch of our community based 'Active Communities' and wider Health and Wellbeing programme, we have seen a very positive outcome throughout the region with increased participation at all levels of physical activity.

14 staff were upskilled and gained Exercise to Music qualification which enabled them to deliver 'Exercise for Health' classes in some of our most rural settings. Four of those staff also took up positions as Move More Champions, a programme externally funded by Macmillan Cancer Support. This development has seen 54 individual referrals to the programme, which includes 12 free sessions of either walking, gentle movement, gym sessions or exercise for health classes.

Staff have also been trained to deliver Let's Motivate activity to some of our most vulnerable people. As well as the continued Care Home development, community sessions, which include low level activity and a social opportunity have now started in Dumfries, Newton Stewart and Stranraer.

Our programmes cater for a range of people, from those with low mobility and condition-specific needs, through to family based and high intensity options.

We are working in partnership with the NHS, Charities and Third Sector groups to provide activity at ground level to fulfil social prescribing opportunities.

We are also working with the NHS on a preventative programme called Let's Prevent Diabetes. This will enable people to make better choices and to look after their own health and live in good health for longer.

Disability Sport

Disability Sport Development Officers have continued to work in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Disability Sport branch to offer a range of weekly sessions and regional events in all four districts throughout 2019/20.

We also support athletes and teams to participate at events nationally, including a focus on attendance at Special Olympics Games at UK and World level.

Across the region in 2019/20 we delivered 1,280 sessions and achieved 14,290 participant sessions as a result. We also delivered 16 local events and supported athletes and teams to attend multiple events out-with Dumfries and Galloway.





Our officers supported a local team to compete at the 2020 Special Olympics GB National Alpine Skiing Championships, held in Crans Montana, Switzerland. This was the first time a team from our region had participated in a Winter Games. The team of four skiers accompanied by three coaches did exceptionally well, coming home with a medal haul of two Golds, three Silver and one Bronze. The trip made a positive difference to the health and wellbeing of the athletes and educated them in a wide range of areas including sport specific skills and teamwork, whilst also developing their personal growth and development through sport by helping to build their confidence and self-esteem.

Community Sports Hubs

Community Sport Hubs are established where there is potential for progressive sport clubs in a community to work together.

This can take different forms, depending on the needs of that community. Across Dumfries and Galloway we have community partners operating

facilities with 14 partnership agreements in place with community partners. This allows better access to those facilities for the partner's members and the wider community.

For example, in Dumfries, North West Community Campus Community Sport Hub have developed a strong core of clubs that are able to manage the school PE facilities in the evenings and weekends. The relationship with the school is strong and the hub is focused on providing sustainable access to high quality facilities, whilst developing links with the wider community.

The Community Sport Hub programme has also taken on a new approach called Changing Lives through Sport and Physical Activity.

The local officer has been on a national training programme to become a champion to encourage clubs and community organisations to use sport and physical activity as a tool to achieve increased participation and wider social outcomes.

Evidence shows that being active brings about positive changes beyond participation and can impact positively on the health and wellbeing of individuals, on their skills and learning, and on communities, ensuring a more inclusive and healthier population.

Our programme is now supporting clubs and community organisations to have a clear intention of who they want to involve and what they want to achieve through their work, focusing on the needs of the individuals and communities they are working with. Initial workshops have been held with clubs and this will be expanded.

Sporting Success

The Dumfries and Galloway Coaching Awards are organised in partnership with sportscotland. The aim of the awards is to celebrate and raise the profile of the fantastic work being done within our region and recognise the contribution and value of these coaches and volunteers.

The sporting community, including Sport Councils and Clubs, were asked to promote the awards. Subsequently, the awards attracted a good number and standard of nominations and provided the panel of judges with some real debate when selecting winners.

This year there were ten Coaching Award winners in the following categories: Young Person's Coaching of the Year; Community Coach of the Year; Development Coach of the Year; Performance Coach of the Year; Young Coach of the Year; Disability Coach of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Young Volunteer of the Year (under 25 years) and Volunteer of the Year (over 25 years).

Increase equality of opportunity

ON TRACK

Use digital technology to improve customer service and efficiency.



Continue the policy of no compulsory redundancies.



To work with Trade Unions locally and nationally, including continuing the open door policy at all Administration meetings for Trade Unions and encourage partnership with the Trades Unions on the redesign of services.



Ensure, where practical, all our buildings used by the public are suitable for, and accessible to, disabled people.



Ensure at least half of employees in the highest paid 5% of earners among council employees are women (excluding teachers which is currently significantly over half).



Invest in quality work-based training.



Encourage the greater use of family friendly working practices, such as flexible working.



Oppose the UK Government's Trade Union Act.



Promote fairness and respect across our organisation and communities.



Our Financial Performance

Our five-year financial strategy 2018/19-2022/2023 sets out our expectation that there will be a continuing pressure on the funding we have available to pay for services and meet changing demands and provides an indication of the financial challenges we face over that time.

We continue to face huge challenges and with more funding cuts a reality over the next three years, forecasts of our funding show that we can expect around c£49 million less to spend on services and resources. This is nearly 15% of our current budgets over that period. This is on top of nearly £106 million in savings we have had to make since 2010. During this period the Council has continued to provide high-quality service across dispersed rural communities to an ageing population.

Where does the Council spend its money?

The Council's Net revenue budget for 2019/20 is £367.4 million. The gross expenditure in 2019/20 is projected at £476 million, with income of £108.6 million from Fees and Charges, Grants and other contributions reducing this figure to the net budget figure of £367.6 million.

Staff costs account for £208.4 million (43.8%) of the Council's gross expenditure and can be broken down as follows:

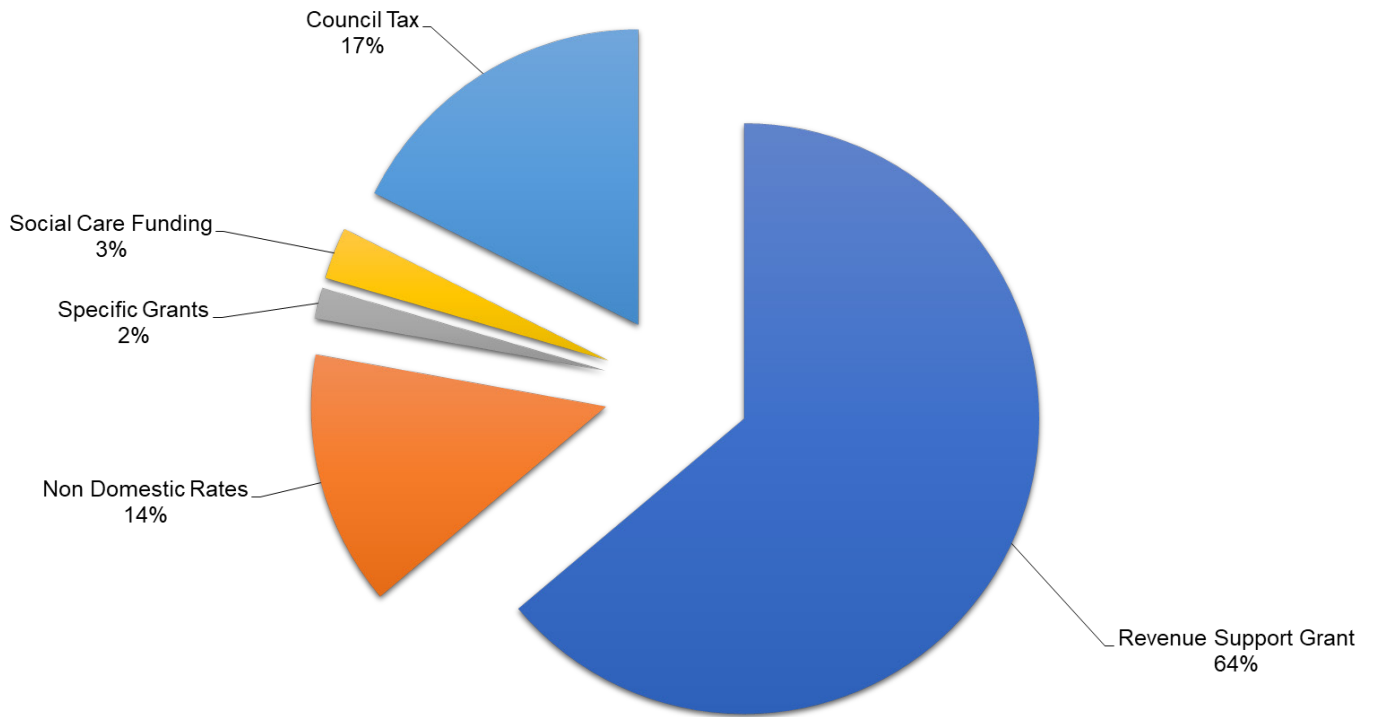
SJC and Chief Officers	£126.2 million
Teachers	£82.2 million

All of the above include Employer's National Insurance and Pension Contributions.

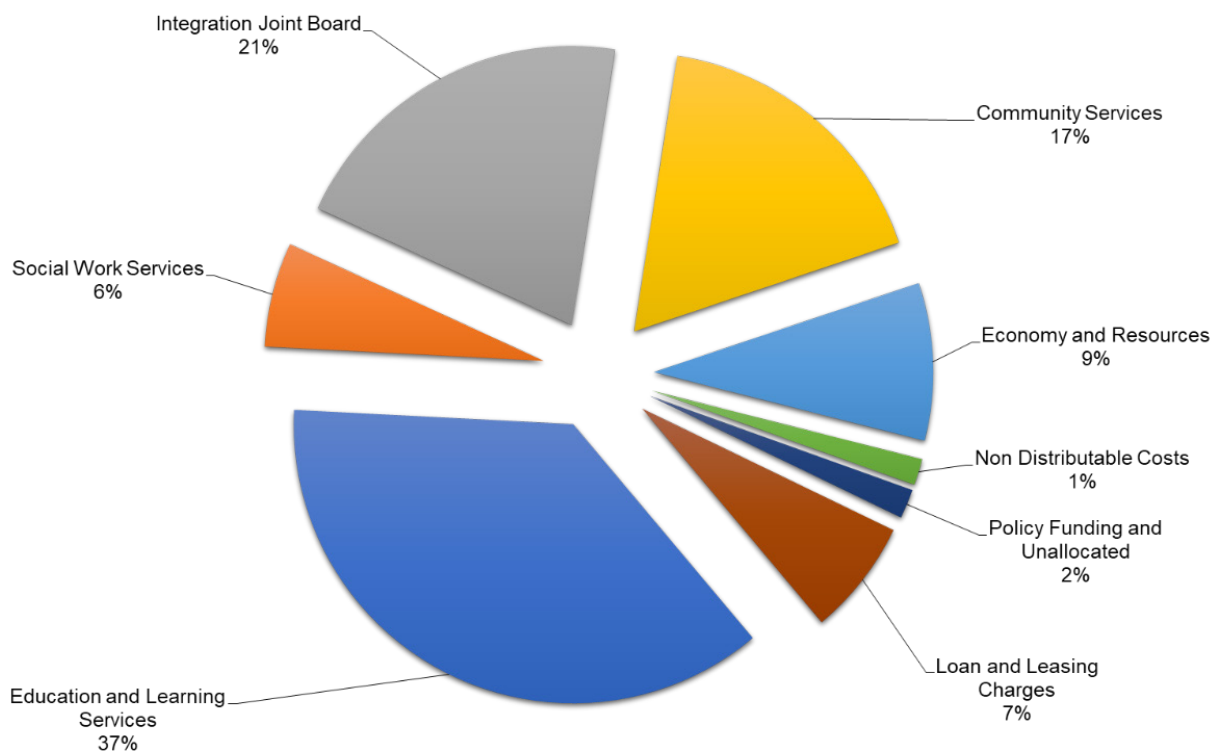
Other significant individual items within the Council's overall budget are as follows:

£75.7 million	is delegated to the Integrated Joint Board.
£15.5 million	is paid into the Schools PPP Sinking Fund.
£24.8 million	is spent on the principal and interest payments on borrowing incurred to fund capital expenditure.
£7.4 million	is the annual cost of the Council's Non-Domestic Rates bill.

Where the money is spent as a percentage of the net expenditure



Where the money is generated (as a percentage of the total financing)



Our People

Our Workforce Strategy 2015 – 2020 ensures that we have the right people in the right place with the right skills to deliver improved services, create greater efficiencies and more flexibility, and improve customer service. It focuses on four main themes: Planning effectively for our future workforce needs; Improving employee engagement; Enabling our employees to succeed; and Ensuring equality for all.

This Strategy helps us to achieve our Priorities and enables us to engage and develop the talent and skills of our employees. Our Council's workforce is highly diverse and complex reflecting the range and type of services which our Council currently delivers.

We employ *6,245 people across a wide range of services. The Council's workforce consists of:

*3,165 full-time, 3,080 part-time, 5,526 permanent and 719 fixed term

*Female employees make up most of the workforce (74%) and occupy a higher percentage (89%) of part time positions. This has also remained relatively static over the last few years.

*Most employees (62%) are employed within the salary band 1-9. This has remained relatively static over the last few years.

**2.1% of employees disclosed they have a disability.

**Minority ethnic groups make up 0.08% of our workforce.

*Statistics from *Workforce Establishment Metrics in April 2019 and **Equalities Mainstreaming Report – 2017-2019*

How we compare to others

All councils in Scotland collect and publish results for a suite of performance measures covering all the main services provided. This is known as the **Local Government Benchmarking Framework**.

We work with other Scottish councils and the Improvement Service to develop and improve the LGBF. Data is provided for performance indicators by all 32 Scottish councils. This allows us to compare how we are doing against other council's performance.

As a Council we are committed to improving services and outcomes for the communities of Dumfries and Galloway. The indicators are embedded in our service business plans and we use them in a variety of ways for example to inform improvement planning within teams/services, used in reviewing the services we deliver and understanding how we are different from others and what we can learn in terms of best practice and used to give comparisons that inform our transformation activity.

The results for all Scottish Councils can be viewed using a simple online tool - follow the link to [mylocalcouncil](#).

As part of the suite of indicators satisfaction of council services is measured, the customer satisfaction indicators are drawn from the Scottish Household Survey, with the exception of social care services which is from the Scottish Health and Care Experience Survey that was last published in 2018. The Scottish Household Survey questions do not fully distinguish the views of the whole adult population on services from views of direct users of some services. The data is collected over a three-year rolling period and the latest data we have is for 2015-18.

How we are changing the way we deliver services

We continue to face huge challenges and with more funding cuts a reality over the next three years, forecasts of our funding show that we can expect around £49 million less to spend on services and resources. This is nearly 15% of our current budgets over that period. This is on top of nearly £106 million in savings we have had to make since 2010. Reducing budgets will result in a Council that is very different from now. It is not a case of small changes across the Council - **we need to Transform** and to create real transformation requires real honesty.

Transforming will mean:

- The Council will be unable to deliver the range of activities that it currently does and needs to achieve outcomes in different ways. The Council that will emerge in the future and deliver services will be very different to the one delivering services today

- Our Priorities and Commitments in our Council Plan are focused on our economy, children, vulnerable people and sustaining our communities. This is where we will sustain and focus our activity. We will be honest with staff and the public on the options to reduce or stop other activities that are less of a priority. We will always protect the most vulnerable people as services change.
- We will continue to have a presence in our communities but to help communities achieve their ambitions some outcomes will be delivered by other organisations, partners and local communities themselves.
- We will not be able to pay for all our existing ageing estate. We have more buildings than we need and can afford.
- We need to change with the demands of the customer and ensure customers and staff have access to the services or resources they need, are sustainable and balance costs and outcomes. The use of technology must be maximised but remain sympathetic to the needs of a rural and ageing population.
- We will maximise the funds available for front line service delivery by having a modern shared support service that minimises the bureaucracy for staff and customers.
- We will have fewer staff who will be supported and retrained to transfer into multi-skilled roles in current and developing priority areas.

Transforming means we have to prioritise activities and functions – resulting in change for each of us and how we contribute to this. Essential services will continue to be delivered; but many will be delivered much differently, perhaps in partnership, with community involvement, by volunteers or other organisations. Other services and activities will have to stop. This will impact on everything we do.

The reality of this will be a reduction in the current workforce. The forecast funding pressures mean that up to 1000 posts will be removed because we will have to stop or reduce activities and services. It is important that all staff understand this and anticipate changes in their roles and future plans.

Transformation activity is happening under six areas:

1. **Focus on Priorities**
2. **Customer and Digital**
3. **Modernisation**
4. **Assets**
5. **Workforce**
6. **Maximising income**

Comments, Compliments and Complaints

The Council has a **Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP)** in place that reflects its commitment to valuing feedback from customers. The CHP enables customers to be engaged directly and helps us focus on early resolution and to value complaints as tools for feedback, learning and improvement.

The key performance indicators that are used to report complaints performance are standardised across the 32 Scottish Local Authorities.

Further information can be found on our website - **[Submit a comment, compliment or complaint](#)**

