

COUNCIL PLAN 2017 - 2022



End of Term Performance Report

Our Vision

Dedicated to creating opportunity for all, we'll support ambition, promote prosperity, and establish Dumfries and Galloway as the best place to live, work, and learn.

In 2017 our 4 priorities were:

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

In 2020 we agreed the inclusion of a fifth priority, reflecting our Council's Climate Emergency Declaration - **Urgently respond to climate change and transition to a carbon neutral region.**



Priority 1

Build the local economy – Key Highlights

Improve the level of skills within our communities and workforce

We reconvened and refreshed our Local Employability and Skills Partnership, bringing together partners across the region. The partnership supports the work of employability, skills and training services to support our local people into sustainable employment and to help businesses recruit from our local labour market.

We worked with industry representatives to develop pathways into key sectors. This included: work experience and qualifications leading to opportunities in the land-based sector as part of the Growing Rural Talent approach; an Intermediate Labour Market programme for trainee Youth Workers; training parents to become classroom assistants; and developing a programme to upskill and train people for the hospitality sector.

We took action to tackle unemployment and provide our young people with support to move into positive destinations. We have used Young Person's Guarantee funding from the Scottish Government to develop and deliver of a wide range of support and services. More than 850 offers of support were provided to young people who were at risk of not sustaining education, training, employment or formal volunteering.

Working with partners, we provided more than 300 placements for young people in private, third sector and public businesses. As the largest employer in the region, our Council led by example, providing employment to young people through our Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships and offering a range of Kickstart placements. Our Kickstart work has been recognised nationally as a model of good practice by the Department of Work and Pensions and has resulted in many participants becoming valued members of our workforce.

We have upskilled our staff through a DiGiSkills programme to build digital skills and confidence in our workforce.



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

We have helped 400 new business starts through our Business Gateway service and supported businesses and community organisations to obtain funding from the South of Scotland Economic Partnership, including the Crichton Trust; Moffat Distillery and Eardley International Ltd.

Our Business Accelerator Schemes supported our region's entrepreneurs in the food and drink and outdoor activity sectors. These schemes operated in partnership with Mid and East Antrim Council as part of the North Channel Partnership, enabling businesses to share experiences and learn from industry leaders.

The Advancing Innovative Manufacturing in the South of Scotland project was set up to support manufacturing small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Borders and Dumfries and Galloway. Incorporating state-of-the-art equipment and technologies, it offers SMEs access to advanced manufacturing, business support and industry-led expertise.

As part of our Economic Recovery Plan, we supported existing and new businesses through the High Street Challenge Fund and the Business Seed Fund.

Increased our online training to local firms through the Supplier Development Programme and updated our sustainable procurement policy to include a community wealth building charter to ensure that benefits from our capital investment projects are realised locally.

Supported local supply chains so that firms benefit from our capital investment projects. 195 local businesses secured work through our Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Administered over £100m of grants to local businesses to mitigate the impact of the economic and training restrictions during the Covid pandemic.



Invest in our key infrastructure

We supported the regeneration of town centres through 5 area-based programmes. Communities were supported through the development of place plans to identify their project priorities. Capital grants were obtained to take these projects forward.

Since 2017 we have invested more than £1.8 m towards our Strategic Employment Sites programme, supporting regional economic growth by enabling business expansion through direct capital grants or capital enabling works.

Through nationally funded schemes such as the Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme, we worked with Registered Social Landlords to tackle fuel poverty and lower carbon emissions. More than 1,200 insulation installations resulted in estimated fuel bill savings of more than £10.3m and carbon savings of 45,000 tonnes.

We established an Active Travel Team - it has developed and consulted on the second Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy, which will be adopted by the Council and the South West Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans) in 2022.

We supported bus companies through Covid to ensure bus services remain in the region. Through our transformation programme, we worked with SWestrans to develop a new sustainable transport model. This fully considered the challenges faced by the bus industry and how we can support high-quality service across dispersed rural communities using new powers available to local authorities.

We invested in the Community Transport Public Social Partnership (PSP) and worked with partners and communities to develop innovative, integrated, and flexible transport solutions. The PSP has been highly successful in supporting community transport across the region. The dedication of volunteers, through schemes operated by Annandale Community Transport Services and Galloway Community Transport, enabled 1,600 patients to attend health appointments with over 8,000 volunteer hours.





Build the local economy

Provide an attractive location to do business

Our Streetscene model was introduced in 2017, with staff adopting a ward working approach to support communities with a wide range of services centred around the priorities for maintenance in their local communities. The community and volunteer support has been recognised, with People's Project Dumfries and Brighten up Kirkcubbin being nominated to represent Scotland in the Royal Horticulture Society (Britain in Bloom) UK Finals in 2021, both receiving honours for their achievements.

We worked in partnership with the Scottish Government and Scottish Borders Council to establish the South of Scotland Enterprise. This is an important step, along with the Borderlands Growth Deal and the new Regional Economic Partnership (REP) in supporting inward investment, increased productivity, and business growth in the region. Through the REP, and following extensive engagement across the South of Scotland, we have developed a Regional Economic Strategy.

Our Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal was signed by the UK and Scottish Governments in March 2021 and brings £452m of new investment. At the forefront of our economic development, this partnership between the 5 local authorities that straddle the Scotland/ England Border will directly benefit a total of 1.1m residents. It will generate 5,500 job opportunities and attract additional tourists to our region, encourage young people to stay, live and work here, and improve the lives of current residents and communities.


We have supported our communities to access the Community Renewal Fund, with 3 applications with a total value of more than £1.4m were approved by UK Government and being delivered.

Priority 1 at a glance


43 participants
within our Graduate
Employment Scheme

400 
new business starts
supported annually
through our **Business
Gateway Service**

We are now below the
Scottish figure of 7.17%
for the proportion of
16-24 year olds that are
claiming out-of-work
benefits in our council
area.


6.8% in 2020/21



More than **£10.5m**
investment was
leveraged through
The Energy Company
Obligation to tackle
fuel poverty and reduce
carbon emissions


**Major Events and
Festivals Strategy**
responsible for more
than
£8m
of spend each year.



£1.8m



towards regional
economic growth
through our Strategic
Employment Sites

58,849  premises
connected to upgraded
infrastructure through £36m
investment.

Council contribution £12m.

We have invested
£243,546 
per 1,000 population in
**economic development
and tourism in 2020/21**

54 jobs 
created/safeguarded
by **Dumfries and
Galloway LEADER**

868 
people supported into
employment, training
and education

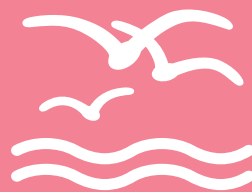


Since 2017,
we have
secured
external
funding in excess of
£15m for regeneration
projects 

**Contract
spend** with
local suppliers
increased from
29% in 2017/18 to
33% in 2021/22 



£1.3m



has been distributed to 42 projects by
Regionwide Coastal Benefit Fund

The cleanliness of
our local streets has
increased from
97% in 2017/18 to
98% in 2020/21.

Our **Borderlands Inclusive
Growth Deal** brings

£452m

of combined new
investment to the
Borderlands area.



Build the local economy

Case Study

Workplace Skills Award

We developed and delivered a customised Workplace Skills Award, providing flexible support for young people who need help to develop the skills needed to move into sustained employment.

The Dumfries and Galloway Workplace Skills Award develops employability skills. The Award, accredited by Scottish Qualifications Authority and endorsed by the Scottish Chamber of Commerce, was developed by our Employability and Skills Team following research with local employers, training providers, and young people. It provides a credible quality assurance framework for No One Left Behind, including the Young Person's Guarantee.

More than 100 people have completed the award and have been supported into work, further training, or education. This included care experienced young people and people with additional support needs or disabilities on our Project Search programme. In 2019 our Workplace Skills Award was recognised nationally with a SURF Award for Youth Employability, which acknowledges best practice and community regeneration by providing skills and employability support to help young people aged 16-29 years fulfil their potential. It was also the winner of the DG Business Award for the Best Work Ready project in 2020.

In addition, the award has been offered as part of the accreditation and added value for young people accessing Kickstart placements, building their confidence and providing credible evidence of the ability and readiness to work. Our Young Person's Guarantee Co-ordinator won an individual award, Developing the Young Workforce Champion, for her work in developing 75 Kickstart opportunities within the Council and delivering more than 300 placements across the region with partners.

Industry partners are also recognising the value of this flexible work-based qualification that can be tailored to provide a pathway into sectors important to the local economy. An example of this has been in the land based sector where the Award has been embedded as part of the approach to Growing Rural Talent in partnership with both Borders College and SRUC Barony. This work is recognised winning the LANTRA Award for Partnership in 2021.

The Workplace Skills Award, alongside other projects such as Kickstart, are an entry point to an apprenticeship pathway in our Council. It has been used successfully as part of a pathway to become classroom assistants.



Testimony

"I feel lucky I was able to join Classroom Assistant training programme, as I was leaving school without a positive destination. The pilot training programme was developed by the Employability and Skills Service and Dumfries and Galloway College. The programme gave me 1 day of remote studying at the college and 2 full days of work experience at the Primary School, where I support young pupils and work towards Workplace Skills Award, Gold level. The flexibility the course offered has enabled me to gain relevant qualifications and experience needed to apply this year for the Classroom Assistant role".

Case Study

Kerbside Collection Service

In 2016, Dumfries and Galloway Council signed the Charter for Household Recycling in Scotland which included a commitment to improving household waste and recycling services and implementing the Code of Practice for Household Recycling in Scotland.

The Council Plan included a commitment to roll out a charter-compliant household recycling scheme across the region. In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and identified a series of actions to achieve net zero carbon status by 2025, including recycling more of our waste.

We knew that the average general waste bin in Dumfries and Galloway contained a lot of waste that could be recycled. Although the Eco-deco plant diverts much of this from landfill, turning it into a fuel source used to produce energy, it is much better to recycle. Recycling can help to reduce carbon emissions as it takes less energy to make recycled products than using raw materials.

We delivered a new kerbside collection service to make it easier for households to recycle more of their waste, for Dumfries and Galloway to contribute to ambitious Scottish recycling targets (recycling 70% of all waste by 2025) and ensure we can do our part to tackle the climate crisis.

The collection was introduced initially in the Wigtown area in November 2020 and was successfully rolled out across the rest of the region between March and June 2021. This



changed our waste and recycling services to improve the quality of the waste we collect for recycling and increased the amount of materials we recycle.

Clean dry materials are now collected in different bins then sent for processing and recycling. We introduced 2 new bins – one for paper, card and cardboard and one for metals, plastics and cartons. A weekly food waste collection service was also introduced for 6 of the region's largest towns (Dumfries, Annan, Stranraer, Dalbeattie, Gretna and Lockerbie). This equates to approximately 49% of the region's population and meets the statutory requirements placed upon us by Scottish Government which requires local authorities to collect food waste from urban areas. The remaining general waste is collected for processing at the Council's Ecodeco plant.

The new fleet is more fuel efficient than the previous one, and the collection routes have been re-optimised to reduce fuel mileage. We introduced our first zero emission waste vehicles and won the Transport News Scottish Environmental Operator of the Year Award 2022 for operating electric RCVs in rural towns.

The implementation of the new kerbside collection service was accompanied by strong public communications messaging. 15 Community Conversations were held in October and November 2019, with a total of 813 attendees. Conversations were attended by officers from the Waste Service and supported by ward officers. Elected member and community council sessions were held online before and after the rollout in 2021.

The new kerbside collection service was developed with a focus on simplicity and ease of use, with well-designed collection systems. The delivery of new bins was accompanied with a service guide and a collection calendar. To make the process as easy as possible, collection days remain the same.

The communications work and the simplification of the process both facilitated high participation rates. With rollout during 2021, the impacts on the recycling rates are yet to fully determined, but it can be seen that tonnages of recyclate recovered are significant.

The Council's Waste Services team won an APSE Bronze Award for the rollout of the new kerbside collection service during a pandemic. By making these changes in Dumfries and Galloway we are helping Scotland to move closer to more consistent recycling, meaning no matter where you live, the recycling service will be easier to understand and use.

Priority 2

Provide the best start in life for all our children – Key Highlights

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

We developed a resource pack for schools to run a breakfast club, or a morning snack initiative. This pack was 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, provides links to further nutritional information and guidance to ensure that there is good planning for the setting up of a club.

An Education Visitor Service telephone consultation service was set up to promote early intervention and building capacity with pre-school providers.

We began to deliver 1,140 hours in full from August 2020, following a phased approach which started in 2017. The expansion to 1,140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds became a statutory duty in August 2021. We deliver 62% and funded providers deliver 38% of provision across Dumfries and Galloway through 45 Council nurseries, 37 private and voluntary providers, and 36 childminders. 92% of children are currently taking over 600 hours (the number of hours that were offered before the expansion) with 55% taking the full 1,140 hours.

Introduced the Signs of Safety approach for all our child protection cases. Since we began implementation, we have seen a decrease in Dumfries and Galloway's Child Protection Register. This trend was expected, given the change in practice and our new approach to risk assessment and risk management.



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

We completed Phase 1 of the Dumfries Learning Town (DLT) project with a fully refurbished St Joseph's College which opened to pupils in October 2018. The second project in Phase 1 saw the creation of a new North West Community Campus, a shared 2-18 campus which replaced 4 schools (Maxwelltown High School, St Ninians Primary School, Lochside Primary School and Langlands). The campus has been operational since summer 2019 and provides an excellent facility within the heart of its community.

The Bridge in Dumfries was also constructed as part of Dumfries Learning Town. From June 2019, senior phase classes were timetabled to use the building and its facilities in a safe, supported way and in line with current school-working practice policies. Teachers and classes from across Dumfries and Galloway can access the building through existing booking systems. Use has risen from a starting position of around 20% to the current use of around 60% and the facility accommodates a wide range of activities.

We have moved to a cloud-based network for schools by implementing a Virtual Desktop Infrastructure. This means that learners and staff can access their school desktop and all software used at any time, from anywhere, using any device. This supports wider opportunities for learning to take place in school, between schools and out of the traditional school day.

A review was undertaken which scoped the number of existing facilities in our communities to identify the most appropriate areas of the school estate for our citizens to use as community hubs. Despite Covid pausing public use of our buildings, the review has equipped us to start promoting the community use of schools again in a targeted way so that they retain their place at the heart of our communities.



Raise ambition and attainment, in particular to address inequalities

Schools used the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to address literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing needs, reduce barriers and increase parental participation and engagement. Many schools used additional staffing to target individual and small group interventions and support to improve outcomes for young people. This was particularly important to mitigate the impact and effects of Covid, address changing circumstances and meet learning needs. During this time, headteachers redirected PEF money to support pupils and families in a number of ways including providing access to IT, purchasing software to enhance home learning, producing materials and resources to support home learning. Following a return to in person learning, schools identified resources and pedagogical approaches to ensure that pupils were appropriately supported to re-engage with school.

An increasing number of schools developed approaches to Play Pedagogy (integrating children's play experiences with curricular learning, giving pupils the flexibility to find their own solutions) in primary classrooms. This is supported locally and through a professional learning programme. The continuity of learner

experience and pedagogical approaches as they transition into school is particularly important in addressing some of the impacts of the disruption to children's experiences brought about by Covid.

With the establishment of the Care Experienced Education Team, 187 pupils were supported by teachers and support workers. Support workers make up three quarters of the team and focus mainly on health and wellbeing which was predominately required to support pupils re-engage with in school learning following the lockdown. During both periods of school closure, members of the team supported pupils remotely and in outdoor settings. Over 90% of pupils supported were in secondary schools, highlighting the increased focus on senior phase attainment.

The provision of key worker and vulnerable childcare during the pandemic was achieved through 12 childcare hubs. Emergency childcare for under 5s was provided at 4 of the 12 local authority childcare hubs, 5 private and voluntary providers, and 51 childminders. Provision was made available from 7am until 8pm at the hubs and at weekends if required continuing

throughout the school holiday period. This initiative provided for over 800 children receiving direct learning.

During periods of national lockdown, the DG STEM team produced and published weekly Learning at Home challenge packs. These packs provided additional opportunities for practitioners to share learning challenges across the curriculum, including maths and numeracy, with learners at early to third levels. Over the 19 weeks of remote learning, the DG STEM Challenges were downloaded 12,264 times. These challenges have also been used to support children requiring to self-isolate since schools reopened.

Club Sport provided carers with free access to all leisure and sport activities led by our Council and use of any council leisure facility. 'Care Experienced' describes children and young people who are currently or have previously been: Looked After at Home or Looked After Away from Home (foster, kinship, residential or secure care placements). We currently have 1,110 registered Club Sport members across our region.

Support children to be healthy and active

Our Active schools and community programme provided pupils the chance to take part in extra-curricular sport and physical activities in and out of school across our region. Through social media we promoted activities such as classes and competitions in dance, tennis, badminton, gymnastics, cross country, football, basketball, table tennis, orienteering, netball, cycling, hockey, and rugby. We hosted Easter holiday programmes and provided Playleaders Award for P7 pupils.

We have provided significant investment and support to communities to take forward 7 inclusive play areas

We introduced a programme of awards ceremonies to recognise sporting achievement and dedication in our region. A regional coaching awards was introduced in 2017 and continued annually until temporarily curtailed by Covid. In addition, annual area-based awards have been delivered by local sports councils with our support in Wigtownshire and Stewartry, whilst our council takes a lead on similar awards ceremonies in Nithsdale and Annandale where no sports councils exist. We acknowledged international sporting achievement with civic recognition.

Team of the Year – National Youth Work Awards 2022 (finalist) – for our ongoing community-based Youth Work, new projects related to counselling, mental health, and Covid support for young people.



Priority 2 at a glance



153 foster carers in 71 fostering households in 2020/21

8 children were adopted in 2020/21

91 children and young people living with a foster carer in 2020/21



89 referrals to **Youth Justice** for diversion in 2020/21

WIFI Upgrade

All **114 schools** across the region have now been completed.

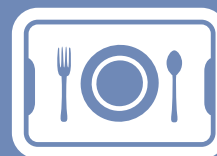
All schools have received upgrades to their bandwidth



66% of secondary school pupils achieved **5 plus awards at SCQF level 5** or higher in 2020/21, up from 59% in 2017/18.

38% of secondary school pupils achieved **5 plus awards at SCQF level 6** or higher in 2020/21, up from 29% in 2017/18.

Over **50%** of children and young people access school meals which require to meet the national nutritional standards.



Free school meals are available to all primary 1 to 5 children.

332 current kinship placements – **92 of these being Looked After Children** in 2020/21



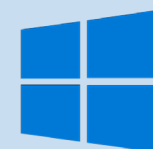
40% of secondary school pupils from deprived areas achieved 5 plus awards at SCQF level 5 or higher in 2020/21, up from 38% in 2017/18.

16% of secondary school pupils from deprived areas achieved 5 plus awards at SCQF level 6 or higher in 2020/21, up from 10% in 2017/18.

7 day per week service community based youth work in place.



All **Primary schools** are now upgraded to **Windows 10** operating systems.



Invested in excess of

£1.1m

in the infrastructure to support a digital curriculum during 2020-2022



All of our schools are delivering **2hr Physical Education**.



Provide the best start in life for all our children

Case Study

Family Support Team

The Family Support Team was formed on 30 November 2020 to lead and deliver on Early and Effective Intervention. The team consists of staff with wide-ranging skills. Since then, the number of children supported by the Team is 195, with a total of 125 families supported. Work continues with families across Dumfries and Galloway including working in collaboration with the Children and Families Social Work Services Area Teams, our partners and third sector organisations including NHS Drugs and Alcohol Service.

The reasons for referral to the service include: neglect, poor home conditions and poverty, physical abuse, sexual abuse, poor parental mental health, domestic abuse, drug/alcohol misuse, parenting capacity, help with routines and boundaries and managing challenging behaviour. In addition to these reasons, some children have been referred because of poor school attendance, mental health reasons, and isolation. We are also working with some families from pre-birth and supporting with early parenting.

Key successes include children remaining within their families and communities, and a reduction in the amount of children needing a statutory social work involvement. Working with more families on a voluntary basis means that social work intervention can come to an end in a planned, earlier timescale, when family safety and support plans have been achieved.

What makes our service different to other Social Work involvement with families is the amount of time we have available to families due to low caseloads and the flexibility of hours, with support being available early morning, evenings and weekends depending on the needs of families.



One example of the work of the team:

**Ryan (8) and *Rosie (6) are really challenging with their behaviour, Ryan has a diagnosis of ADHD and he and Rosie fight a lot including hitting out at their mum. Their mum does not have much support from family, and she was not confident taking the children out in public as she found their behaviour so difficult to manage, this meant the children spent a lot of time indoors which meant they were bored and even more difficult to manage.*

The Family Support Worker has spent time getting to know the family and building up a relationship with them all, listening to them and learning about the things they like to do and understanding the way their family works.

She has been able to help mum develop strategies to manage her children's behaviour and to organise activities at home and locally. Recently the family had a trip to a country park with the worker. They all had a lot of fun and this has increased their confidence as a family, mum is gaining the respect of the children who have seen her take control. Support will continue until the family are able to manage without additional support.

**All names have been changed for anonymity*

Case Study

Mental Health Support in Schools Project

The Youth Work Service delivered a pilot project to support with delivering low level mental health support and early intervention across Dumfries and Galloway within all secondary schools across the region in 2018/2019. Due to the independent evaluation of this pilot project showing the significant positive impact on young people, it was agreed to develop this model, in partnership with educational psychology, as the approach to counselling in schools within our Region.

The Mental Health Support in Schools project began in August 2020 and is funded by the Scottish Government for three years until June 2023. This project has been developed jointly as a partnership between Youth Work Services and Educational Psychology.

This work is targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap and supporting young people's emotional, behavioural, and mental health and offers a confidential, non-judgemental, and holistic approach to support young people's social and emotional wellbeing.

The project works alongside the community-based low level mental health support provided by the Youth Work Service. This provides 7 day a week support for young people within our region. We are the only Local Authority in Scotland to provide a 7 day a week service to support young people's mental health.

All school counsellors are qualified with the necessary skills and training and have successfully completed an accredited counselling skills training course through COSCA (The professional body for Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland). The staff have also completed Professional Development Award training in Youth Work. Every secondary school now has access to a named school counsellor for two days per week.

The counsellors receive ongoing supervision and the implementation of the project (including measuring impact) continues to be overseen by Educational Psychology and Youth Work.



One example of the work of the project:

Young Person (YP) had been referred by their Pupil Support teacher with specific concerns about their low self-esteem and behavioural issues such as anger. YP agreed to attend the sessions and felt that 1-2-1 support would help them to deal with several issues they were experiencing. YP shared that they struggled with friendships at school and in some classes that they can sometimes experience a lot of anger and frustration.

YP attended 8 sessions and was very open about how they felt, and a person-centred approach was used to enable the YP to talk through their problems and identify their own solutions at their own pace. YP explored various strategies to manage their feelings that were suggested by the Youth Information Worker and explored friendships, looking at healthy and unhealthy relationships toolkit and what makes a good friend. This enabled the YP to identify any issues that was affecting their friendships and provide the tools to communicate positively and set and respect boundaries.

YP explored their anger issues and looked at the difference between angry feelings and aggressive behaviour and gaining a better understanding of being assertive using various scenarios.

By the end of the sessions YP had begun to feel a lot more relaxed and started to regulate their emotions in a healthier way. They began to develop healthier relationships both with friends and family and began to identify triggers that had been causing these outbursts.

YP felt a sense of pride and shared with the Youth Information worker that the time talking about their feelings have helped them 'find their mind again'

Feedback

"YP engaged really well with the sessions and as we already had developed a trusting relationship they felt able to confide in me. YP also trusted me to share information to other agencies."

Youth Information Worker

"Seeing [youth information worker] every week was helpful because I could talk about ANYTHING without feeling judged."

Young Person

"I think the support has allowed the YP to have more reflective time to discuss the challenges they encounter. The YP appears to be more collected when discussing their issues."

Principal Teacher Pupil Support



Priority 3

Protect our most vulnerable people – Key Highlights

Tackle the causes and effects of inequality and poverty

We have invested £6.9m over the past 5 years through the implementation of the Anti Poverty Strategy.

We started the Intensive Family Support Service which has provided dedicated support for our most vulnerable families to break the cycle of poverty.

Our Taxicards supported the most vulnerable to attend critical medical appointments.

We delivered Winter Clothing and Free School Uniform projects.

Early provision of Free Period Poverty Products in all schools prior to the launch of the Scottish Government Funding.

Our Council received a Gold COSLA Award for Tackling Poverty within Dumfries and Galloway in 2018. We were one of the first to involve adults with lived experience of poverty to help shape policies and decisions.

We were awarded a Bronze COSLA Award for Service Innovation and Improvement in 2020 for the work done by our Homeless Housing Options Team to improve customer experience for service users.

During Covid, 10,700 Scottish Welfare Fund applications were processed, paying out £1.5 m in addition to 3,000 Free school meals and Holiday hunger payments. 34,943 Free School Meal boxes (193,335) were delivered directly to 19,678 households across the region.



Help older and vulnerable people live health and independent lives

Our 6 Activity and Resource Centres which provide day services for adults with learning disabilities closed in March 2020. We delivered the service in new ways, including delivering online and remote activities and support. Easy Read instructions were developed, and practical help offered for easier online access. Together with increased use of social media these resources have helped to reduce isolation, provide information and activities and enabled people to develop new friendships across the region.

As part of the Health and Social Care Partnership we developed a range of assistive technology tools to support people to remain independent and active within their own homes.

Our in-house Care and Support Services (CASS) has continued to provide Care at Home services to rural and hard to access areas of Dumfries and Galloway. In 2020/21, they delivered 292,000 visits to 572 service users, the variance in delivery being due to hospital admissions and service stops at the request of Service Users and their families.

We developed a physical activity training programme to support volunteers and staff working with older adults in the care sector and community settings. Endorsed by Scottish Care and Age Scotland, our 'Let's Motivate' programme recognises our age demographics, and the positive impact of physical activity on older adults and those with long term conditions.

During Covid we ensured that public information has been accessible to the Sight Loss and British Sign Language (BSL) communities across the region. The Council website now has the 'Recite Me' tool (audio) which is an accessibility tool for people with sight loss. All significant public information has been published in BSL signed format to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for the BSL community.



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

The Health and Social Care Partnership continued to support the delivery of the vision “People living happier, healthier lives in Dumfries and Galloway”. This included making care and support more accessible and meeting people’s needs; moving away from assessment-based approaches to working with people as partners to consider their own care and support; and creating integrated teams from the health and social care sector to deliver care and support differently.

We funded dedicated carers support to be delivered through the Dumfries and Galloway Carer’s Centre. This provided help to: reduce isolation; sustain caring relationships; strengthen relationships and shared interests with the cared for; access new opportunities/ experiences; and, provided breaks to allow carers to take their mind off their caring role and responsibilities.

Keep our communities safe

We implemented the Public Protection Partnership in 2018. This multi-agency partnership focuses on high-risk groups and has the responsibility for the delivery of services to the most vulnerable adults and children who are at risk of significant harm.

We became a White Ribbon Area in 2017 and raised awareness of domestic abuse, this included work with local football groups and information through the media. Other prevention work has involved engaging with more than 800 young people in schools and youth work, along with partners in the Police and Women’s Aid.

The work of our Dumfries and Galloway Resilience Team and DGVOST was recognised at the 2019 Scottish Policing Excellence Awards.

We created 4 Visitor Management Locality Hubs to make sure communities felt safe during increased visitor numbers as Covid restrictions were eased. More than 150 community and individual conversations took place to ensure communities were involved, leading to targeted signage, increased communications, visitor facilities, and 750 welcome packs for visitors.



In 2022, we received a COSLA Excellence Award for our work developing community resilience plans and helping communities and individuals by organising support around food, medical deliveries, managing volunteers and providing personal protective equipment.

Priority 3 at a glance

£10.4m

fuel bill savings through fuel efficiency installations in collaboration with Registered Social Landlords

£12m

in benefits claimed by **4,000** residents with assistance from Financial and Inclusion Assessment Team



80

evictions prevented by Welfare and Housing Options Support Team



Proportion of social care funding that is allocated using direct payments or personalised managed budgets increased from **5.68%** in 2017/18 to **6.09%** in 2020/21



247

adults were referred to Council physical activity sessions through social prescribing by NHS Partners since 2019



9,895

people have attended diabetes intervention classes delivered in partnership with NHS since 2019

Adult Support and Protection concerns screened by the Single Access Point 2020/21



Over **12,500 items**

of clothing have been donated and redistributed through the Free School Uniform Bank and Warm Winter Clothes Project.



In 2020/21 the Council spent

£19.25

per hour on providing care to support older people to live at home.



In 2020/21 the Council spent

£204

per person, per week on providing residential care for older people.

12

Primary and Secondary Schools currently have Credit Union Schools Savings Schemes operating throughout our Region.

The number of older people with long-term needs who are supported by the Council so that they can remain at home has increased from

59.59% in 2017/18 to **63.99%** in 2020/21



Stranraer Credit Union

has seen an increase of an additional **85%** in Membership between 2015 and the end of 2020.

Protect our most vulnerable

Case Study

Single Access Point

Early in the pandemic we had to ensure that those people shielding had access to essential supplies such as food and medicine. The Access to Services Team was important given the expertise within social work in supporting vulnerable people.

The shielding response was led and co-ordinated through the Local Resilience Partnership and offered one point of contact for people in need of assistance. Referral, if required was through our Solutions Centre for the provision of the nationally provided food parcels and prescription delivery, or the Communities Hub for a local response from the Third sector and communities who assisted with supplies and support at a local level.

The learning from this was used in the development of the Single Access Point. The Access to Services Team which had been established to provide a 'One Front Door' for Social Work Services was the basis to develop the new model.

Beyond the shielding response the team picked up support calls for the National Test and Protect initiative, provided the first point of entry for applications for the Self-Isolation grants and continued to co-ordinate emergency food support, prescription collections and support calls to counter social isolation and loneliness.

In 2020/21 they handled 66,574 calls.

The Single Access Point was expanded further when a small number of health staff joined the team to handle health calls related to community health support as part of the Health and Social Care Partnership. The model will continue to develop and improve to provide a consistent, high quality and sustainable service.

Critical to the success of the overall model is the support available to Call Advisors from professional staff from both Adult Care and Children and Families, including Senior Social Workers, Social Work Assistants and a Care Co-ordinator as well as professional health staff who together provide the professional and clinical oversight and decision making for the Single Access Point.



Case Study

Welfare and Housing Support Team

As part of the Anti-Poverty strategy, we created the Welfare and Housing Options Support Team. This team provides dedicated support to individuals and families who have found themselves to be in situations of very complex poverty.

The team help stop clients being made homeless through acting as a mediator between the client and the Registered Social Landlord or Private Landlord, support them to repay rent and Council Tax Arrears, as well as acting as debt advisors to ensure that they can get their lives back on track and out of the situation which they have found themselves in.

The service has often been a last resort for clients who have very challenging situations which they find themselves in need of vital support so that they can ever take control of their lives again. This was recognised through the winning of the Social Inclusion award at the UK Institute of Revenue and Rating Institute Excellence Awards in 2019.

The team were instrumental in helping distribute the additional Tenant Support Grant funding from Scottish Government in 2020/21, which was given to prevent evictions due to rent arrears built up due to Covid.

One example of the work of the project:

Single parent with 4 children all born prior to 2 April 2017. Customer referred by Homeless team as customer had rent arrears of £2,197 and imminently due in court. Registered Social Landlord was seeking payment in one lump sum.

Prior to speaking with the customer, it was established that the 2 child limit had been applied but was incorrect. This was raised with the Housing Benefit Team and arranged for them to correct and recalculate the Housing Benefit entitlement. This resulted in a back payment of £2,128.01 and an ongoing award of £65.35 per week. This was conveyed to the customer by telephone prior to appointment.

A home visit was then conducted by the Welfare and Housing Option and Homeless officers. At the meeting it was noted that there was no flooring in the lounge or hall, and with the carpeting on the stairs badly worn and lifting it presented a trip hazard. To improve the living environment an application was made and subsequently awarded to the Scottish Welfare Fund for a Community Care Grant. The customer was awarded £249.90.

A direct debit to pay the 2019/2020 council tax was arranged and as a result previous years council tax arrears were put on hold to allow her to pay without being pursued for more debt than she could manage.

Prior to the Welfare and Housing Support team support, the customer had been suffering from stress and anxiety and this had badly affected her mental wellbeing. With rent arrears cleared, the threat of eviction removed and full rent being paid going forward the customer's mental wellbeing improved.

Debt Managed: Council Tax £1,580.45



Priority 4

Be an inclusive Council – Key Highlights

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

We are more co-operative and transparent in our decision making. Council meetings are now accessible online and video recorded. The introduction of an Action Tracker for Committee decisions has provided members of the public easy access to decisions that have been made.

There has been significant improvement in our work with community councils. A monthly newsletter is now produced to assist them to carry out their statutory duty to gather and represent the views of their community in response to requests from community councils; we updated the Scheme of Establishment to provide for online meetings and electronic communications; supported community council elections; and have undertaken training sessions.

We were a finalist in the 2019 GoScotland Procurement Awards (social value category) in recognition of our co-production approach with third sector partners on representation and engagement.

We have delivered 6 Participatory Budgeting exercises to let local communities directly influence spending decisions in their areas on their local priorities. This has included £3m on Streetscene services, £700k on Tackling Poverty, and £300k through the Youth Work Service in the last two years.

We supported parental involvement in the education and engagement of our children and the wider school community. We have worked with the Regional Parent Council Forum on Headteacher Empowerment; Parental Involvement; Additional Support for Learning review.

In recognition of our commitment to consultation and engagement training, the Consultation Institute named Dumfries and Galloway Council as its 'UK Council of the Year for 2019'.



Community Council NEWS

March 2022

www.dumgal.gov.uk/communitycouncils

Some Winning News!

CoSLA's Excellence Awards, the annual celebration of Scottish Local Government success, took place virtually last week. The annual event recognises areas of best practice and innovatively delivering services. Scotland's 32 councils were invited to submit entries to a panel of judges drawn from local and national government and the private sector.

Dumfries and Galloway Council's Community Planning and Engagement Service won in the category for Stronger Communities, Especially in Light of COVID with its work on Community Resilience Strengthened Through COVID.

The Dumfries and Galloway project focussed on developing community resilience plans and groups that helped communities and individuals through the Covid pandemic by organising support around food, medical deliveries, how to manage volunteers with expenses, personal protective equipment (PPE), and ensuring that these plans and arrangements were sustainable. The submission highlighted the volunteer response and how the Council Officers supported them.



A video of the Council's entry can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/5o3b89i42yY>. Well done to everyone involved within our communities and our staff on the award.

New Volunteers Required

for our Dumfries and Galloway Tackling Poverty Reference Group

To make a positive difference to those experiencing poverty, a Tackling Poverty Reference Group was formed. This includes, and is increasingly driven by, a group of volunteers with direct experience of living in poverty. The volunteers come from across the region and a variety of groups involved in supporting issues around poverty. We are looking for new members to expand our group. Could You help us make a positive difference by supporting issues around poverty in Dumfries and Galloway? If you would like more information or would be interested in becoming a volunteer with the Dumfries and Galloway Tackling Poverty Group.

Please contact us to register your interest.
Telephone - 030 33 33 3000 or
Email - ChallengePoverty@dumgal.gov.uk



Go onto the website to find out all the latest news in connection with Covid 19 here

Empower our communities to make the most of their assets

We have supported a programme of Management Agreements and transfers for 36 buildings, mainly village halls, to help secure the future of these buildings to benefit communities.

Neighbourhood Champions Initiative was launched in 2019 to acknowledge and celebrate volunteers across the region. The event recognised individuals and groups for their civic pride and volunteering work in the community.

Community Sport Hubs have been set up so that sport clubs and communities have improved access to facilities.

We have secured more than of £400k towards sports events since 2017. This has contributed towards a variety of activities including world class events like the International Ice Hockey tournaments. We have also received £145k towards sports facilities, such as the Beechgrove Tennis Courts and Dalbeattie Community Sports Hub.



Increase equality of opportunity

Wellbeing activities were provided to 42,000 children, young people and adults. 2,606 volunteers supported these activities.

We have worked with partners to offer training, upskilling and support with CV's, job applications and interview preparation to help our communities to progress into fair work.

Flexible working arrangements and family friendly working practices are in place to support our workforce.

Through our smarter working approach and digital transformation we increased mobile and agile working. During our response to Covid, at home working for staff was used to ensure the delivery of our services.

Our Equality Outcomes were reported on a bi-annual basis and we worked closely with representative organisations for 'Protected Characteristics'. Our Equalities Mainstreaming Reports reflected significant improvements in the gender and race gap; and our new Equalities Outcomes for 2021-25 were also agreed, following extensive engagement with local equality groups.

We have updated our approach to Impact Assessment annually and it 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.

We strengthened the partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Disability Sport branch and Scottish Disability Sport to offer a range of weekly sessions and regional events in all 4 areas across the region. The introduction of Walkfit sessions has taken the focus away from competition and training and more on the physical and social benefit of being active, and this has made a real difference to those that take part.

We supported athletes and teams to participate at events regionally and nationally, including attending the Special Olympics Games at UK and World level – one of these events was the 2020 Special Olympics GB National Alpine Skiing Championships, held in Switzerland.



Along with NHS Dumfries and Galloway we established a joint LGBT+ staff network which aims to increase inclusivity and remain a workplace where all staff are accepted without exception, and policies and processes remain inclusive and considerate.

Priority 4 at a glance



Over
100
properties transferred
into community
management or
ownership



150
ward events
and community
conversations

Community sports
hubs

14

facilities partnership
agreements in place
with community
partners, up 6 since
2017



Over

180

staff trained in
Best Practice in
Consultation



2,795

physical activity
sessions for those with
a disability/additional
support needs



Over half (56.7%)

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



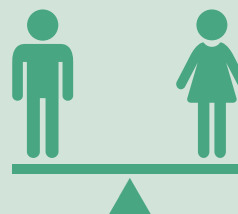
30,698

participants on
sessions for those with
a disability/additional
support need

Secured in
excess of
£400k
towards
sports events
since 2017



2,114
employees trained
in equality and
diversity since 2018



Gender pay gap

reduced from
5.99% in 2017/18 to
4.27% in 2021/22



Case Study

Community Asset Transfer

Our Community Asset Transfer Strategy and Procedure was agreed in 2017. It has been changed following feedback from organisations we have worked with, national developments and lessons learned (including a Scottish Government Independent Evaluation) and the Scrutiny Review on the Long-Term Implications of Community Asset Transfers (CATs).

The strategy helps to empower local people to make use of their assets to provide services to help our communities thrive. Community groups across the region have embraced the opportunity to manage and acquire land and buildings and CATs continue to be a popular method of supporting empowerment. So far, our Council has agreed over 100 properties into community management or ownership.

Our statutory Annual Reports evidence high satisfaction of organisations about our support, particularly the single point of contact Ward Officer. After a CAT we continue this support to the bodies to take their projects forward to meet the needs of their communities. Examples include:

- Nith Valley Leaf Trust in Closeburn which has built 5 Passiv houses.
- Housing created in the former Police Station in Langholm.
- The Men's Shed at Cresswell Gardens in Dumfries which offers unemployed men the opportunity to socialise and learn new skills, supports people with mental health issues.
- The Town Hall in New Galloway which aims to develop arts, leisure, and recreational activities.

We have given evidence to the Scottish Parliament and are recognised by Community Ownership Support Service, Development Trust Association Scotland to be sector leading.



Case Study

First Youth Council

We agreed a new Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy in 2018. This strategy set out that a new structure was to be formed in order that young people could have their voices heard within our Council. It was agreed that a new Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council was to be established from 2019, forming part of the legacy for 2018 Year of Young People.

Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council has a total of 35 representatives consisting of:

- 4 Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament
- 24 Ward Youth Councillors
- 7 Nominated Youth Councillors (one for each Minority group - Young Parents, LGBT Community, Young Carers, Gypsy Travelling Community, Ethnic Minority Additional Support Needs and Disability Groups and Care Experienced)

The Youth Council gives young people the opportunity to get involved in decision making and ensures that young people's voices are heard and acted upon.

There have been two joint meetings so far and a Joint Action Plan has been agreed. These meetings demonstrate the opportunities that our Council is providing to ensure that we listen to and deliver for young people in our region. Youth Councillors and MSYPs have consistently met with local Elected members and MSPs. They have recently set up three different regional committees, allowing them to focus on issues that are important to young people across our region, they are: Climate Change and Environment, Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Rights and Inequalities.

Key highlights of the first term of the Youth Council (2019-2021) include:

- Contributed to the Council's Transformation events, Cultural Strategy, Scoring Panel for the Holiday Food Programme, Delivery of Advocacy Training for Young People in the Stewartry
- Designed and delivered consultations across all 12 wards to find out the priorities of young people who live, work and study in those communities
- Developed Ward Action Plans
- Research project to measure the impact of Covid had on young people living in Dumfries and Galloway – worked in partnership along with the Council, Regional Parent Forum, NHS and Third Sector
- Co-production group for the Scottish Governments Summer of Play funding – established the priorities for the funding and scored over 80 applications
- Peer led engagement with over 150 young people with experience of CAMHS with the findings of this being taken to the Children and Young People's Mental Health Strategic Group for consideration

A priority for the next Youth Council will be to ensure that there is regular engagement with decision makers around 3-4 times a year to make sure that young people and Elected members can build good relationships in local communities.

As one of our Youth Councillors shared, "Overall we are really proud of the work undertaken by the Youth Council over the last 2 years".



Priority 5

Urgently respond to climate change and transition to a carbon neutral region – Key Highlights

In 2019, we declared a regional Climate Emergency. Our declaration was unanimously agreed and represented a clear change in our understanding and approach to tackling Climate Change as a Council.

We added a fifth Priority within the Council Plan to make sure that we consider carbon reduction in all our activities and decisions. This will help us move to a low and zero carbon economy.

We made an ambitious commitment for the region to be net carbon zero by 2025 and have started to implement a 12-point plan which provides the key actions we need to take.

We appointed an Environment Champion, formed a Cross Party Members Working Group and an officer working group to support of work to become a carbon neutral region.

We became a Carbon Literate organisation when we achieved our Carbon Literacy Bronze Award in 2020. We have a Carbon Literacy Engagement and Training programme in place. Carbon Literacy means “an awareness of the carbon dioxide costs and impacts of everyday activities, and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions on an individual, community and organisational basis”.

We supported the Youth Council to develop a Climate Change and Environment sub-group and their own action plan. This sets out what they and other young people in their Ward areas can do on a local level to combat climate change. They designed and delivered Climate Change events throughout the region to tie in with the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in 2021.

Our Carbon Route Map Plan sets out the detailed actions that will be taken, as a region and as a Council, to reduce our CO2e footprint.

Climate Emergency Regional Stakeholder Network has also been established and links have been made with sector partners to provide, share and develop best practice.

We have increased the Council’s electric fleet, introduced our first zero emission waste vehicles and have a fully electric bus in operation within Dumfries. We won the Transport News Scottish Environmental Operator of the Year Award 2022.

We continued improvements to the Council’s building assets to make energy savings. We adopted a new policy through Local Development Plan 2 that requires all new buildings to be more energy efficient.



We established a Citizens Panel across the region so that the people that live and work here have a meaningful say and can influence the actions we take to address the Climate Emergency.

Priority 5 at a glance

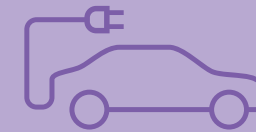
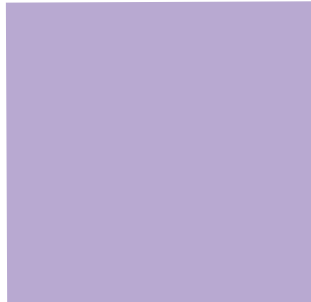


We declared a **Climate Emergency** – one of the first Scottish Local Authorities to do so

We appointed a **Climate Emergency Champion** to provide political leadership and representation on Climate Change



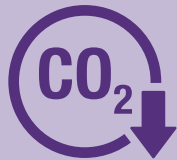
We became a **Carbon Literate Organisation** in 2020 and were the first non-metropolitan Scottish Local Authority to do so.



More than **200** electric vehicle charging bays across the region (both public and workplace).



The Citizens Panel and a Regional Stakeholder Network have been developed to support our region and communities reduce carbon emissions.



We made an ambitious commitment for the region to be **net carbon zero by 2025**. Our Carbon Neutral Strategic Plan provides a route map and the actions to be taken.



We approved our independently produced baseline emissions inventory for the region.



Decarbonised **25%** of our vehicle fleet



Urgently respond to climate change and transition to a carbon neutral region