

21 March 2025

Enabling and Customer Services

English Street
DUMFRIES
DG1 2DD

**TO ALL MEMBERS OF DUMFRIES AND
GALLOWAY COUNCIL**

Any enquiries please contact

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Dear Councillor,

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL – 27 MARCH 2025

I enclose for your attention the reports marked to follow for consideration at the meeting of Dumfries and Galloway Council which were not available at the time of the original despatch:

Item 20. NOTICE OF MOTION – MERCURE HOTEL, DUMFRIES - REPORT BY SERVICE DIRECTOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES (Pages 3 - 16)

Members are asked to: (1) agree to withdraw delegation from Social Work Services Committee and Economy and Infrastructure Committee; and (2) dependant on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Ian Blake and seconded by Councillor Jackie McCamon as set out in **Appendix 1**.

Item 21. NOTICE OF MOTION - CREATION OF A DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY REGIONAL EVENTS DIARY - REPORT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES (Pages 17 - 22)

Members are asked to: (1) agree to withdraw delegation from the Enabling and Customer Services and Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committees; and (2) dependent on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Tracey Little and seconded by Councillor Andy Ferguson as set out in the **Appendix**.

Item 22. NOTICE OF MOTION - DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCILS SUPPORT FOR WASPI WOMEN - REPORT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES (Pages 23 - 28)

Members are asked to: (1) agree to withdraw delegation from Enabling and Customer Services Committee; and (2) dependant on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Katie Hagmann and seconded by Councillor John Young as set out in the **Appendix**.

Item 23. NOTICE OF MOTION - ENDORSEMENT OF A YOUTH MOBILITY SCHEME WITH EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES - REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EDUCATION, SKILLS AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING (Pages 29 - 34)

Members are asked to: (1) agree to withdraw delegation from the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing committee; and (2) dependent on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Ben Dashper and seconded by Councillor John Young as set out in the **Appendix**.

Item 24. NOTICE OF MOTION - SCRAP THE BEDROOM TAX - REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ENABLING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES (Pages 35 - 38)

Members are asked to: (1) agree to withdraw delegation from Enabling and Customer Services Committee; and (2) dependant on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Ben Dashper and seconded by Councillor Tracey Little as set out in the **Appendix**.

Item 25. NOTICE OF MOTION - SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE - REPORT BY SERVICE DIRECTOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES (Pages 39 - 44)

Members are asked to: (1) agree to withdraw delegation from Social Work Services Committee; and (2) dependant on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Tony Berretti and seconded by Councillor Andy Ferguson as set out in the **Appendix**.

Item 26. NOTICE OF MOTION -EXTENSION OF SETTLED UKRAINIAN VISA SCHEME - REPORT BY SERVICE DIRECTOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES (Pages 45 - 48)

Members are asked to: (1) agree to withdraw delegation from Social Work Services Committee; and (2) dependant on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Linda Dorward and seconded by Councillor Carolyne Wilson as set out in the **Appendix**.

Item 27. NOTICE OF MOTION - FAIR FUNDING FORMULA: INCREASE SINGLE-LANE ROAD WEIGHTING FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY ROADS MAINTENANCE FUNDING - REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE (Pages 49 - 54)

Members are asked to: (1) agree to withdraw delegations from Economy and Infrastructure Committee; and (2) dependent upon the decision taken at 2.1, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Linda Dorward and seconded by Councillor Sean Marshall set out within this report and the **Appendix**.

Yours sincerely

Vlad Valiente
Assistant Director Governance and Human Resources

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NOTICE OF MOTION – MERCURE HOTEL, DUMFRIES

REPORT APPROVED BY SERVICE DIRECTOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

1. Reason for Report

1.1 Members are asked to consider the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Ian Blake and seconded by Councillor Jackie McCamon (**Appendix 1**).

1.2 The Notice of Motion was received by the Proper Officer at 10am on 5 February 2025. In accordance with Standing Order 13.1, Full Council is required to withdraw delegation to consider motions which concern matters that have been delegated to committees. The terms of this motion fall within the remit of the Social Work Services Committee and Economy and Infrastructure Committee.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

2.1 agree to withdraw delegation from Social Work Services Committee and Economy and Infrastructure Committee; and

2.2 dependant on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Ian Blake and seconded by Councillor Jackie McCamon as set out in **Appendix 1**.

3. Executive Summary (What is the report about?)

3.1 The Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Ian Blake and seconded by Councillor Jackie McCamon (**Appendix 1**) identifies the potential road traffic issues that may present significant risk to pedestrians and drivers on the New Abbey Road; and sets out the action being taken to address the issues raised in the Motion

4. Detail and Analysis

Background

4.1 The Motion refers to the procurement of the Mercure Hotel by Mears Housing in August 2023 Mears Housing is contracted by the UK Government Home Office to manage the Asylum Dispersal Estate by procuring Hotels and private accommodation to meet the needs of the service user group ie. Families or single males. the Mercure Hotel can provide one hundred and three bedspaces following the implementation of the Government Maximisation Policy. (room sharing) Numbers average at seventy-five males between the ages of eighteen and fifty years old.

4.2 In any discussions with all afore mentioned parties and were made aware of the use of the Mercure approximately three weeks prior to service user arrivals. Dumfries and Galloway Council involvement in the contractual discussions would have enabled the sharing of local knowledge and possible challenges that may have arisen due to location.

4.3 Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Resettlement Board oversees the Syrian, Afghan and management of the Ukrainian Resettlement Schemes. It was therefore good practice to utilise the knowledge and skills of the stakeholders who had a statutory

duty and responsibility to those asylum seekers who required support and so the Community Planning Partnership Board agreed the extension of the remit to include asylum seekers in June 2023

4.4 When the Mercure Hotel began receiving arrivals, an Asylum Seekers Liaison Group was formed with NHS, Council (Community Engagement and Social Work), Police Scotland, Home Office, and Mears representatives to promote partnership working. This Group therefore addresses the proposal in the Motion. The Group covers:

- ensuring early notice of new arrivals
- arrangements for the NHS to plan health assessments, respond to immediate health needs and GP registration
- Social Work to respond to age disputes and those deemed vulnerable to ensure safeguarding duties are met
- Lifelong Learning to arrange ESOL assessments
- Support from Third Sector organisations including provision of welcome packs with basic toiletries and clothing and health and wellbeing activities
- Police Scotland to arrange briefings including Road Safety advice, dealing with hate crime and other relevant information.
- ensuring safe transport and travel arrangements for the asylum seekers, residents and road users including a minibus for appointments
- agreeing communications messages and information e.g. Newsletter articles, wording for Briefings etc

4.5 Following assessment of the position, additional road signs were agreed with the Council's Roads and Infrastructure Team and were erected in September 2023, with the Home Office to cover the costs. Mears have recognised that the lack of a public bus service has led to groups of men walking up and down the New Abbey Road. A minibus service is provided by Mears to support the residents in attending appointments for health and ESOL. This service has not covered nights or over the weekends and this has been raised with Mears by partners involved in the Asylum Liaison Group.

4.6 There were a been a small number of concerns expressed by local residents, particularly in winter 2023/24, direct and through their Ward Members, about road and community safety. To date, Police Scotland have not reported any issues around road safety incidents.

4.7 Mears are responsible for the welfare of their service users within the Hotel and its grounds. All service users are adults and can go out at their own will. Police Scotland and Mears repeatedly share the relevant road safety information; however, the service users have experienced such levels of trauma that might affect their ability to process information. Their anxiety levels will be high as they attempt to try to navigate living in a new country under uncertain circumstances, as well as navigating language barriers and their understanding of road safety and risk is very different. As a welcoming region to all of those living in our region, we need to recognise the vulnerability of those who have sought sanctuary in our beautiful area.

4.8 The Motion explores the extension of the footpath with appropriate lighting.
Information and communication

4.9 An Elected Members Briefing on the Council's responsibilities for Asylum Seekers was given to Members by the Chief Social Work Officer in June 2021.

4.10 A Q and A (**Appendix 2**) was developed by the Resettlement Board and Mears and published online in August 2023, sent to Elected Members, and a hard copy hand delivered to the adjacent residents by Community Engagement staff, which provided an opportunity to listen to their concerns. Road Safety concerns did not feature at that time.

4.11 There is a dedicated email address for any queries or concerns about asylum dispersal which includes the contingency hotel and has been promoted to local residents and Elected Members and partners.

5. Council Plan Outcomes and Principles (How do the proposals contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic outcomes and impact the principles as published?) [Themes and Strategic Outcomes](#)

5.1 Principles

Support our communities.
Be a Responsive Council.

6. Implications and Risk

Financial: (what resources are required/is it budgeted for?)

There would be significant costs and resources required to assess, design and implement this project. The infrastructure implications and related costs are as a direct result of the decision of the Home Office and would therefore require the Council to seek Home Office assurance of funding in regards the costs.

Legal: (are there legal implications to be considered?)

There are no legal implications for the Council to consider at this time.

Workforce: (do the proposals have any implications for or impact upon employees?)

None

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment: (is the proposal such that an [Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments](#) is required?)

The report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy or propose a service change and it is therefore not necessary to complete an impact assessment.

7. Governance Assurance

7.1 Council Management Team and the Community Planning Resettlement Board have been consulted during the preparation of this report of this report and are in agreement with it contents.

Agenda Item 20

Report

Dumfries and Galloway Council

27 March 2025

PUBLIC

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	CONTACT DETAILS
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Approved by

CHIEF OFFICER	DESIGNATION
Charles Rocks	Head of Children, Families and Justice (DCSWO)

Appendices – 2

Appendix 1 - Notice of Motion

Appendix 2 – Q&A

Background Papers and Relevant Committee Decisions –

Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Resettlement Board remit and membership - [Resettlement Project Board - CommunityPlanning](#)

Support for Asylum Seekers - [Agenda for Dumfries and Galloway Council on Wednesday, 4th October, 2023, 10.30 am - Dumfries and Galloway Council](#) (item 14)

NOTICE OF MOTION – MERCURE HOTEL, DUMFRIES

This motion is tabled in respect of serious road safety concerns for the residents of the Mercure Hotel Dumfries and the public at large, using the A&10 Dumfries to New Abbey Road.

Approximately 18 months ago, the decision was taken by the Home Office to use the Mercure Hotel in Dumfries to accommodate Asylum Seekers while their individual applications were being processed. This decision was taken in conjunction with the Mercure Organisation, the Mears Group although at this time, Dumfries and Galloway Council were not consulted or involved in the process.

The Mercure Hotel is located some considerable distance out with the settlement boundary on the A710, with its entrance emerging onto the unlit road governed by the 60MPH national speed limit and with no footpath available. Since 2023, the Hotel has been used to accommodate around 60, predominately young males although due to the nature of the residents circumstances, this number varies.

Particularly over the winter months and during the prolonged hours of darkness, numerous concerns have been raised concerning groups of males, wearing dark clothing, walking with their backs to oncoming traffic causing a serious road safety hazard.

Many of these incidents have been reported through the EMES route, and several actions have been taken, including the provision of High Viz jackets and the Mears Group providing security and a minibus on-site.

Despite advice and the actions taken to date, the problem remains and again around 5.10pm on Thursday 16th January 2025, yet another near miss occurred where 5 males all wearing dark clothing were almost struck but this was only avoided due to the quick action of the driver. In general, the residents are reluctant to wear the high visibility jackets and although located at the hotel, the minibus does not appear to be in use.

The driver involved was so upset by the incident, that he spoke to the Security Staff on duty at the Hotel and attempted to report the incident to Police Scotland at the Loreburn Street Police Office, although no report was recorded. The driver has since been advised to request that the incident be formally recorded.

This is a significant road safety issue that requires to be addressed before a fatality occurs as in addition to the safety concerns of the residents, this could have a life changing effect on drivers and passengers, should a collision occur.

The undersigned propose that a multi-organisation working group be set up, including representatives from the Home Office, Scottish Government, Mears Group, Police Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway Council, to work together to investigate the way forward to solving this serious issue, including the feasibility of extending the footpath and associated lighting together with other measures thought necessary. Consideration to the provision of adequate funding for the necessary work should also be included.

Proposed by: Councillor Ian Blake

Seconded by: Councillor Jackie McCamon

Q+A on the Home Office decision to house asylum seekers in the Mercure Hotel outside Dumfries

In August 2023 the Home Office contracted a hotel outside Dumfries (Mercure Dumfries Cargenholm House Hotel) for the temporary accommodation of asylum seekers. Asylum seekers are on-site. This is part of asylum contingency accommodation measures that have been introduced to ensure asylum seekers are spread out more equitably across the UK while their asylum claims are processed.

All requests for further information on the decision making or policy background behind asylum seekers should be directed to the MP for the local area at John.Cooper.MP@parliament.uk. All requests for information on the daily running of this contingency hotel should be directed to Mears at aire.sdc@mearshousing.co.uk.

What is asylum dispersal?

Asylum dispersal refers to measures which ensure asylum seekers are accommodated more equally across the whole of the UK. In 2022 the Scottish Strategic Migration Partnership (hosted by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA)) agreed that any widening of asylum dispersal measures should be shared on a proportional basis among all 32 local authority areas in Scotland. Discussions take place between the relevant local public sector partners and Mears, the company contracted by the Home Office to support asylum seekers. Details are finalised about the dispersal housing being used, and arrangements are put in place well in advance.

What is asylum contingency accommodation?

Due to there being a significant lack of available accommodation for asylum seekers across the UK, as well as processing backlogs, the Home Office contractor Mears arranges contingency accommodation, usually hotels, which is very short term until longer term dispersal accommodation can be found somewhere in the UK. There is often little or no notice to local public sector partners about the selection of the hotels, or the arrival of the asylum seekers. The hotel contracted outside Dumfries is considered contingency accommodation.

On this occasion, a hotel outside Dumfries was selected and approved by the Home Office contractor [Mears](#) as contingency accommodation for single-male asylum seekers.

The below Q+As will help to answer questions about the contract and explain the wider context regarding asylum seekers. **Neither Dumfries and Galloway Council nor any of our community planning partners are involved in the decision-making or management of the hotel contract, so all requests for further information should be directed as above.**

What is happening locally?

The hotel and facilities

Why have the asylum seekers been placed in the hotel?

The Home Office is dealing with significant pressures while processing asylum claims and has identified the need to widen contingency accommodation provision across the whole of the UK. It is understood that a number of hotels in Scotland being used for this purpose.

Will there be other guests in the hotel?

The hotel will not be accommodating any other guests for the duration of the contract.

What is the position about Planning and Building Standards approvals, especially about the sewerage system?

All necessary Planning and Building Standards approvals were put in place for the hotel's opening in January 2023. The property continues to be used as a hotel and so there is no 'Change of Use' required for its use for asylum seekers. Mercure Hotel owners have a Certificate which allows them to have a temporary sewerage arrangement of a cesspit in place, with the application for a permanent arrangement of an overflow pipe, approved in July 2023.

Was Dumfries and Galloway Council asked if the hotel could be used for this?

Neither Dumfries and Galloway Council nor the community planning partners who lead on resettlement work locally were involved in making the decision to house asylum seekers in the hotel. The decision rests with the Home Office.

Does my councillor, MP or MSP know about the hotel?

Yes, councillors, local community planning partners and MSPs have been told about the Home Office's plan. These plans came into effect when a previous MP represented the local area, however the current MP has been made aware of the hotel contract.

The asylum seekers being accommodated**Will the people being accommodated be single persons or families?**

It is our understanding that the contract Mears has secured is for single-male asylum seekers. Rooms in the hotel are a mix of single occupancy rooms and twin rooms, with room sharing in place only where space and individual circumstances allow. Asylum seekers who meet specific exemption criteria are not required to share their room with another asylum seeker.

How long will the asylum seekers have been in the country and where have they come from?

The Home Office does not comment on individual cases, so will not be able to give background information on the asylum seekers; some may be newly arrived in the UK, while others may already have been awaiting a decision on their asylum claim for some time.

Asylum seekers come from many parts of the world. The most recent UK Government statistics indicate that the highest numbers came from Iran, Albania and Iraq.

Safety and security

How are local residents and businesses being supported?

Local community planning partners have assisted with this by visiting the adjacent properties to provide them with background information and clarity about the arrangements that Mears and the hotel have in place. Mears also held a meeting with the residents in adjacent properties.

Are the asylum seekers allowed to leave the accommodation?

Yes. Asylum seekers are not detained under immigration law, and they are free to leave the hotel. The Home Office expects the asylum seekers to return to the hotel at night to sleep, and any extended absence longer than 7 nights would be reported to the Home Office, but they are free to spend time in the community if they so wish.

In response to road and pedestrian safety concerns expressed by Dumfries and Galloway Council, Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Mears provides a bus shuttle to and from Dumfries. Road safety advice has been given to the asylum seekers and other measures are also being put in place.

Local Third-Sector partners have also supported with refurbishing donated bikes for some of the asylum seekers living in the hotel. Cycling safety training has been provided to all those with bikes, and the necessary safety equipment has been supplied.

What security has been put in place?

The safety of the asylum seekers and local people is of the utmost importance. 24/7 security provision is in operation at the hotel and Police Scotland is also taking measures including weekly visits to ensure the safety of everyone living in, living nearby, or visiting the hotel.

Mears also supply all arrivals at the hotel with clear guidance on Scots Law, which sets out the acceptable standards of behaviour which asylum seekers must demonstrate while living in Scotland and their rights. Regular information sessions are also held by Mears which focus on helping the men living in the hotel to understand the cultural context of Scotland including how to access social support groups, as well as acceptable attitudes toward areas like sexual health (including consent), harassment, and violent behaviour. This includes both expectations placed

on asylum seekers to behave according to the law, and their own expectations as to how others should behave toward them.

Police statistics show that people seeking asylum are more likely to be victims of crime than perpetrators of crime.

What security checks are undertaken on asylum seekers?

Asylum seekers are screened by the Asylum Intake Unit and are required to go through a security check including body scans and searches. If there is a security concern, asylum seekers will be detained. If there are no concerns, an assessment is made to ensure that the property/hotel is an appropriate place for them to be accommodated. The Home Office notify Mears of any previous known offences and perceived risks in advance of arrival.

Wellbeing and support

Who is responsible for asylum seekers' welfare in hotels?

Mears is responsible for the day to day running of the hotels and the welfare of the individuals being accommodated. A welfare officer is available to the asylum seekers on site seven days a week during business hours, and there is a 24/7 support helpline that they can seek support through during hours when no on-site welfare staff are available.

What is the position about the health of the asylum seekers?

Mears work with the local NHS to offer an initial health screening to each asylum seeker on their arrival in the region. Asylum seekers now access medical services when needed through the usual routes in the same way as any person living in the region.

What are you as a council doing to help?

Dumfries and Galloway Council has no role in the decision to house asylum seekers in this hotel - but is working closely with local partners, to arrange the right level of support to the local community and those being accommodated in the hotel.

The Council has limited statutory responsibilities to assist asylum seekers - it includes support for any asylum seekers involved in age disputes and looking after any service users who are under the age of 18 at the time of the conclusion of their age dispute. Along with local public and third sector partners, our Resettlement Board supports Mears and the hotel to ensure that the privacy and dignity of the asylum seekers is respected and protected, that they are welcomed into our community, and the impact on local people and services is minimised.

Our Council and local partners are working with other councils and organisations across Scotland to share good practice and ideas and ensure that we deal with any problems as quickly and effectively as possible.

Can asylum seekers claim benefits or work or drive?

Asylum seekers have very limited access to funds, receiving just £8.86 per week. Mears provides basic meals via the hotel three times per day, with snacks available. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work within the first 12 months of waiting for asylum applications to be processed. People who have claimed asylum in the UK can apply for permission to work in the UK if they have been waiting 12 months or more for a decision on their application for asylum, however they are only able to take work in a limited number of fields which are outlined in the Immigration Salary List. Asylum seekers are allowed to do volunteer work, but they cannot volunteer in any capacity with private sector organisations and must only do voluntary work for third-sector or public bodies. Asylum seekers are not eligible to drive in the UK.

If asylum seekers receive £8.86 weekly, how will they buy essential goods and clothes?

Mears will ensure that people's basic needs are met. Charities and the third sector seek and receive donations that give additional assistance to the asylum seekers during their stay. These organisations' websites and social media advise of the most appropriate items to donate.

What will the asylum seekers do for entertainment? How will asylum seekers spend their time?

Mears organise some activities, including exercise and recreation at the hotel and in some local venues, to assist in their wellbeing. Television and wi-fi is available. Online connectivity is essential for people claiming asylum. It allows them to liaise with the Home Office, progress their application, attend legal meetings and stay in touch with family around the world.

In addition, asylum seekers are being supported to attend English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) classes and are being encouraged to join in multicultural activities and make the most of the area and free events that are on offer. Some of the asylum seekers are also volunteering at various projects to help in the local community.

What provision is made for their faith?

Mears are ensuring that faith support is made available as part of their welfare commitment. Information about different faith communities in the region is available at the hotel, and asylum seekers are being warmly welcomed into worship and other activities by these groups.

Any faith-based dietary needs are considered by Mears and have been factored into the planning of the meal preparation.

Will asylum seekers be given priority to get local housing?

Asylum seekers are unable to get help with housing from the local council and they are unable to hold a tenancy. If they receive refugee status and permission to stay in the UK, they then have 28 days' notice to leave the hotel and can then look for help with housing. Most asylum seekers are likely to move to more urban areas where they could have more established communities and where there are more employment and housing opportunities.

How can I help with this work?

Charities and third sector organisations will advertise volunteering opportunities and any requests for donations - the Scottish Refugee Council, Massive Outpouring Of Love (MOOL), Dumfries & Galloway Trades Union Council and the Dumfries and Galloway Multicultural Association (DGMA) are all supporting this work and you can contact them on their websites or via their social media channels.

Understanding asylum more broadly**What is an asylum seeker?**

Asylum is protection given by a country to someone fleeing from persecution in their own country: so an asylum seeker is someone who has applied for asylum and is awaiting a decision from the Home Office. If they are granted asylum, they would be granted "refugee status" and would be able to begin the process of settling in the UK on a permanent basis.

What percentage of people seeking asylum are given refugee status and permission to stay in the UK?

Seventy-five per cent of people who claim asylum are granted refugee status (95% for Syrians, Afghans, Libyans, Yemeni and Eritreans).

How many asylum seekers are there in the UK?

Around 150,000 people across the UK have asylum-seeker status and are awaiting a decision by the Home Office.

Why do people enter the UK illegally?

To claim asylum in the UK, a person must be in the UK. It is not possible to apply from outside the country, and there is no asylum visa to enable people to travel legally to the UK to apply for asylum. Therefore, for people who do not have visa free travel to the UK, they must enter

irregularly, such as by small boat, lorry, or by using false documents, or on a visa for some other purpose, such as tourism or study.

What gender are the majority of asylum seekers?

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), women and girls make up about half of any asylum seeking, refugee or internally displaced population.

However, women and children may be left in refugee camps in neighbouring countries while the men leave the camp to take the risky and often deadly trip to another country.

Families that travel together in a big group have a harder time with the logistics. Women and children are also at much higher risk of sexual abuse, violence and exploitation by traffickers and organised criminal gangs on the route. Therefore, families may stay behind and wait until the men have applied for asylum and the rest of their family will then follow in a much safer way.

Does the UK have more asylum seekers and refugees than other countries?

No. The vast majority - 80 per cent - of the world's asylum seekers and refugees are living in countries neighbouring their country of origin, often developing countries. Turkey is the biggest refugee-hosting country in the world.

Why don't asylum seekers stay in the first safe country?

Most asylum seekers do stay in the first safe country they reach. However, the number one reason that asylum seekers give for continuing their journey to the UK is that they have family ties here. Other factors are more practical. For example, if they speak English, they have more chance of being able to find a job in the UK than elsewhere, and navigating everyday tasks like public transport or going shopping will be much easier.

It is not uncommon for asylum seekers to state their belief that the UK is a safe, tolerant and democratic country and refer to previous links between their own country and the UK.

There is no legal requirement for an asylum seeker to make a claim in any particular country.

Where do most asylum seekers in the UK live?

Approximately 50,000 asylum seekers live with friends or family, around 45,000 people are in independent asylum housing, and roughly 55,000 people are in asylum contingency hotels.

Page last updated: 31/07/2024



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NOTICE OF MOTION - CREATION OF A DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY REGIONAL EVENTS DIARY

REPORT APPROVED BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

1. Reason for Report

1.1 Members are asked to consider the Notice of Motion by Councillor Tracey Little, seconded by Councillor Andy Ferguson. The Notice of Motion is attached at the **Appendix** of this Report.

1.2 The Notice of Motion was received by the Proper Officer at 14.23 on 12 March 2025. It is confirmed that the Notice of Motion met the timeframe set for the invocation of Standing Order 15. In accordance with Standing Order 13.1, Full Council is required to withdraw delegation to consider motions that concern matters that have been delegated to Committees. The terms of this motion fall within the remit of the Enabling and Customer Services and Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing committees.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

2.1 agree to withdraw delegation from the Enabling and Customer Services and Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committees; and

2.2 dependent on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Tracey Little and seconded by Councillor Andy Ferguson as set out in the **Appendix**.

3. Executive Summary (What is the report about?)

3.1 This Notice of Motion has been raised to explore the creation of a Dumfries & Galloway Regional Events Diary, to act as a central record and public resource capturing key community events, festivals, milestones, and achievements from across the region.

4. Detail and Analysis

4.1 Members are asked to consider the following points, following an initial analysis of the request by relevant council officers (including consideration of potential duplication of existing private and public sector provision, and resource implications).

4.2 The Council, through the active Dumfries and Galloway Events Strategy 2023–2027 (DGES 23–27), makes every effort to encourage the region's events organisers to list their events on tourism and community websites.

4.3 The Council provides advice on how to do this through its Greener Events Toolkit, which has a dedicated section on festivals and events marketing, and through partnership working with public agencies and community organisations, including Dumfries and Galloway What's Going On (DGWGO), which is a private sector organisation based in our region. The Council meets regularly with the South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA), DGWGO and VisitScotland to discuss and take forward events marketing. The Council in February 2025 sent to these agencies the full list of events grants made from

the DGES 23–27 to enable effective marketing planning to take place to promote the individual events and the region as a whole.

4.4 The Council works closely with DGWGO, which is keen to promote what's on across the region. This partnership has led to a unique piece of work, a short form that events organisers fill in that enables their event to be listed on several events listings websites simultaneously, avoiding the need to do this work for every single website <https://moo4events.com/whatson/community/add/>. This collaboration is believed to be unique in Scotland and creates best value for the council in terms of minimising staff time required to have a comprehensive events listing solution for the region. It is an invaluable resource and can be used for the promotion of clusters of events happening within an overall programme, e.g., the 2023 Summer of Cycling events organised by Dumfries and Galloway Council. This template was extensively used to list cycling events that year.

4.5 Aside from private sector provision evidenced through search engine queries, such as the widely used and comprehensive Moo4 Events (part of DGWGO <https://moo4events.com/>, where organisations, community groups and members of the public can upload their events for free), the council also lists council events on its dgculture website. Other public sector provision includes the South of Scotland Destination Alliance, which has a widely used events listings page at [List Your Events - South of Scotland Destination Alliance](#). The SSDA is the strategic destination management and marketing organisation for the south of Scotland.

4.6 With regard to the physical publication to be placed in council buildings due consideration would need to be given to print and environmental costs, staff resource implications, frequency, and difficulty in presenting an up-to-date picture of the comprehensive events taking place across the region unless the publication was published/printed regularly.

4.7 With regard to any digital solution (likely a subsite on the council's website), due consideration would need to be given to set-up costs, governance and resource implications of implementing the scope of the motion. This work cannot be absorbed using existing resource and alternative budget would need to be allocated through the budget-setting process.

Next Steps

4.8 The Proposed Notice of Motion for consideration is that the proposed regional events diary would serve not only as a historical record but also as a valuable resource for promoting regional tourism, fostering civic pride, and enhancing collaboration between communities across the area. The diary could include:

- Key initiatives from Dumfries and Galloway Council.
- Major events, festivals, and celebrations from across the region.
- Community projects, achievements, and local success stories.
- Significant historical anniversaries and cultural traditions.
- Contributions from local businesses, schools, community groups, and volunteers.
- Natural events or environmental changes affecting the region.

4.9 In addition, the notice of motion asks that Dumfries and Galloway Council instructs relevant officers to develop a proposal for the creation, structure, and long-term

management of a Dumfries and Galloway Regional Events Diary, including guidelines for content submission, editorial oversight, and digital/physical access. And that draft framework should be brought back to council for consideration.

5. Council Plan Outcomes and Principles (How do the proposals contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic outcomes and impact the principles as published?) [Themes and Strategic Outcomes](#)

Principles

Support our Citizens

Support our Communities

Be a Responsive Council

Themes and Strategic Outcomes

Health and Wellbeing – to enable people from all financial backgrounds to enjoy a range of festivals and events at no or little cost across the region.

Economy – to drive forward the economy through the tourism profile generated by our festivals and events and the direct spend on festivals and events in the region.

6. Implications and Risk

Financial: (what resources are required/is it budgeted for?)

This cannot be absorbed using existing resource.

Legal: (are there legal implications to be considered?)

Potential risk of duplicating mechanisms already in place that could impact on private sector business models.

Workforce: (do the proposals have any implications for or impact upon employees?)

Yes, the work cannot be absorbed using existing resource.

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment: (is the proposal such that an [Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment](#) is required?)

This report does not propose a change in Policy, therefore it is not necessary to complete an Impact Assessment.

7. Governance Assurance

7.1 This is a procedural report and appropriate consultation has been undertaken.

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	CONTACT DETAILS
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Approved by

CHIEF OFFICER	DESIGNATION
Vlad Valiente	Assistant Director, Governance and Human Resources

Appendices – 1

Appendix – Notice of Motion

Background Papers and Relevant Committee Decisions - none

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NOTICE OF MOTION - CREATION OF A DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY REGIONAL EVENTS DIARY

I propose that Dumfries & Galloway Council explores the creation of a **Dumfries & Galloway Regional Events Diary**, to act as a central record and public resource capturing key community events, festivals, milestones, and achievements from across the region.

Background and Purpose:

Dumfries And Galloway is home to a rich tapestry of towns, villages, and communities, all contributing to the vibrant culture, history, and character of the region. By establishing a **Regional Events Diary**, we can create a lasting record of local life, capturing the diverse events, traditions, and community achievements that shape Dumfries and Galloway.

This diary would serve not only as a historical record but also as a valuable resource for promoting regional tourism, fostering civic pride, and enhancing collaboration between communities across the area. The diary could include:

- Key initiatives from Dumfries and Galloway Council.
- Major events, festivals, and celebrations from across the region.
- Community projects, achievements, and local success stories.
- Significant historical anniversaries and cultural traditions.
- Contributions from local businesses, schools, community groups, and volunteers.
- Natural events or environmental changes affecting the region.

Format and Access:

The **Dumfries and Galloway Regional Events Diary** could be maintained in both a physical format – housed in council buildings, libraries, or community hubs – and digital format, housed on the Dumfries and Galloway Council website. This would ensure broad access for residents, schools, visitors, and researchers.

The diary could also invite community contributions, allowing residents and groups to submit events and milestones for consideration, creating a collaborative and inclusive record of life across the region.

Benefits:

- Enhances regional identity and pride by celebrating the diversity and achievements of all communities within Dumfries and Galloway.
- Provides a valuable platform for promoting local events and tourism initiatives.
- Prevents event overlap.
- Preserves and showcases the cultural, social, and environmental history of the region.
- Encourages community participation and fosters closer connections between towns and villages.

Recommendations:

That Dumfries and Galloway Council instructs relevant officers to develop a proposal for the creation, structure, and long-term management of a **Dumfries and Galloway Regional Events Diary**, including guidelines for content submission, editorial oversight, and digital/physical access. A draft framework should be brought back to council for consideration.

Proposed by: Councillor Tracey Little

Seconded by: Councillor Andy Ferguson

NOTICE OF MOTION - DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCILS SUPPORT FOR WASPI WOMEN

REPORT APPROVED BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

1. Reason for Report

1.1 Members are asked to consider the Notice of Motion by Councillor Katie Hagmann seconded by Councillor John Young. The Notice of Motion is attached at the **Appendix**.

1.2 The Notice of Motion was received by the Proper Officer at 14.23 on 12 March 2025. In accordance with Standing Order 13.1, Full Council is required to withdraw delegation to consider motions which concern matters that have been delegated to committees. The terms of this motion fall within the remit of the Enabling and Customer Services Committee.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

2.1 agree to withdraw delegation from Enabling and Customer Services Committee; and

2.2 dependant on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Katie Hagmann and seconded by Councillor John Young as set out in the **Appendix**.

3. Executive Summary (What is the report about?)

3.1 The subject matter of this motion relates to the Council supporting the campaign led by Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) and reaffirming a commitment made at Full Council on 12 December 2017 which was subject to a previous Notice of Motion to ask Government to reconsider transitional arrangements and compensate women born in the 1950's affected by the changes to State Pension Age (SPA).

3.2 This Notice of Motion asks Full Council to oppose the decision taken on 17 December 2024 by UK Government not to compensate affected women for their loss of state pension income, to reaffirm support to the WASPI Women and to call on the Leader to write to UK Government to express the Councils extreme disappointment to deny compensation to the WASPI Women and call upon the UK Government to reconsider this issue, in line with previous political commitments and in line with fairness and justice.

4. Detail and Analysis

4.1 From the 1940s until April 2010, the SPA was 60 for women and 65 for men. As a result of increases in life expectancy and cost to provide state pensions, Government introduced legislation to review the SPA to protect public finances, to maintain the sustainability of the state pension over the long term and address inequality.

4.2 In 1991, the Government announced its intention to equalise State Pension age describing the policy rationale for the change, options for taking the policy forward and the financial effects of the change. The UK Government's intention was to equalise men and women's State Pension age at 65 with the drivers for the change being:

- women were increasingly playing an equal role to men in the economy. The change would enhance the future pension entitlement of many women
- people were living longer and healthier lives. A common pension age of 65 would strike a fair balance between generations
- to help Britain maintain its international competitiveness
- a State Pension age of 65 matched the trend in occupational pension schemes.

4.3 The changes were to be phased in over a 10-year period between 2010 and 2020. The long lead-in period was to allow people sufficient time to plan.

4.4 The ensuing Pensions Act 1995 provided that men's State Pension age would remain 65; women born before 6 April 1950 would retain a State Pension age of 60; women born after 5 April 1955 would have a State Pension age of 65; women born between 6 April 1950 and 5 April 1955 would have a State Pension age of between 60 and 65, depending on their birthday. The 1995 Pensions Act made no provision for how the changes to women's State Pension age would be communicated.

4.5 The Pensions Act 2011 sped up the timetable for raising men and women's State Pension age. Under the 2011 Act, the increase in women's State Pension age was accelerated so that it reached 65 by November 2018, instead of April 2020. The drivers for the acceleration, included increasing life expectancy and the need for the State Pension to be affordable. As a result of changes made by the 2011 Act, WASPI states that women across the UK are now dealing with financial hardship.

4.6 The WASPI campaign represents 3.8 million women and aims to achieve fair transitional state pension changes for 1950's women and is calling for Councils nationwide to show support for the aims of WASPI. The campaign argues that the changes brought in by the Pensions Act 1995 have hit particularly hard which, in their view, is imposed with a lack of appropriate notification. The accelerated equalisation brought in by the Pensions Act 2011 further increased the impact on this group. WASPI are calling on Government to implement a non-means tested bridging pension for women born after 6 April 1950 who are affected by the 1995 and 2011 Pension Acts and compensate those at risk and to give proper notification for any future changes.

4.7 The UK Government states that most women knew the state pension age was increasing and challenged the position there was inadequate or no notice of the changes to state pension age, both of which are key concerns of WASPI. The UK Government stated that the compensation, which could be up to £10.5billion, would not be fair or proportionate to taxpayers.

4.8 The Parliamentary Ombudsman carried out a review of the changes to state pensions in July 2021 and concluded that while the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) did publish accurate information about changes to State Pension age between 1995 and 2004 which was publicly available in leaflets, through education campaigns, other agencies and on the DWP website, they did not give due weight for the need for appropriately targeted or tailored information or written communications for those significantly impacted by the changes. The UK Government agreed that letters should have been sent sooner, however, rejected the Ombudsman approach to injustice or remedy.

5. Council Plan Outcomes and Principles (How do the proposals contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic outcomes and impact the principles as published?) [Themes and Strategic Outcomes](#)

Support our Citizens; Support our communities; health and wellbeing (help to tackle the causes and effects of financial hardship and poverty, inequality and increased cost of living.

6. Implications and Risk

Financial: (what resources are required/is it budgeted for?)

None

Legal: (are there legal implications to be considered?)

None

Workforce: (do the proposals have any implications for or impact upon employees?)

None

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment: (is the proposal such that an [Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments](#) is required?)

This report does not propose a change in Policy, therefore it is not necessary to complete and Impact Assessment.

7. Governance Assurance

7.1 This is a procedural report, and appropriate consultation has been undertaken.

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Stewart Clanachan	Human Resources Manager	030 33 33 3003

Approved by

CHIEF OFFICER	DESIGNATION
Vlad Valiente	Assistant Director Governance and Human Resources

Appendices – 1

Appendix – Notice of Motion

Background Papers and Relevant Committee Decisions

[Notice of Motion – Transitional State Pension Provision Arrangements for 1950s Women](#)

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NOTICE OF MOTION - DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCILS SUPPORT FOR WASPI WOMEN

Dumfries and Galloway Council commends the tireless efforts and campaigning of the WASPI women including those across Dumfries and Galloway. Many local campaigners have travelled to Westminster to add their voice to the campaign and highlight the injustice of the changes to State Pensions.

Dumfries and Galloway Council deplores the decision of the UK Government on the 17th December that WASPI women should not be compensated for their loss of state pension income.

Dumfries and Galloway Council, reaffirms their commitment to the WASPI women as agreed by full council in December 2018 that, fair transitional state pension arrangements must be put in place for all women affected.

Background

The WASPI Campaign was founded in 2015 and is fighting for justice for all women born in the 1950s, on or after the 6th April 1950 to 5th April 1960, who were affected by the changes to the State Pension Age.

These changes were implemented with inadequate or no notice and the campaign continues to call for fair compensation.

Recommendations

Dumfries and Galloway Council;

- Deplores the decision taken on the 17th December by UK Government that WASPI women should not be compensated for their loss of state pension income.
- Reaffirms our continued support to the WASPI Women campaign as agreed in December 2017
- Calls on the Leader to write to the UK Government to express our extreme disappointment to deny compensation to the WASPI Women and call upon the UK Government to reconsider this issue, in line with previous political commitments and in line with fairness and justice.

Proposed by: Councillor Katie Hagmann

Seconded by: Councillor John Young

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NOTICE OF MOTION - ENDORSEMENT OF A YOUTH MOBILITY SCHEME WITH EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES

REPORT APPROVED BY HEAD OF THRIVING COMMUNITIES

1. Reason for Report

1.1 Members are asked to consider the Notice of Motion by Councillor Ben Dashper and seconded by Councillor John Young. The Notice of Motion is attached at the **Appendix** of this Report.

1.2 The Notice of Motion was received by the Proper Officer at 14:23 on 12 March 2025. It is confirmed that the Notice of Motion met the timeframe set for the invocation of Standing Order 15. In accordance with Standing Order 13.1, Full Council is required to withdraw delegation to consider motions that concern matters that have been delegated to Committees. The terms of this motion fall within the remit of the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing committee.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

2.1 agree to withdraw delegation from the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing committee; and

2.2 dependent on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Ben Dashper and seconded by Councillor John Young as set out in the **Appendix**.

3. Executive Summary (What is the report about?)

3.1 This Notice of Motion has been raised for our Council to note and endorse the initial Youth Mobility Scheme (EU Countries) Bill in Westminster and encourage its progress through Parliament.

4. Detail and Analysis

Details on the Bill

4.1 The Youth Mobility Scheme (EU Countries) Bill is a Private Members Bill introduced at the UK parliament by James MacCleary, the Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes, on 15 January 2025. The primary objective of the bill is to mandate the Secretary of State to negotiate with European Union (EU) member countries to extend the UK's Youth Mobility Scheme to include applicants from these nations on a reciprocal basis; and for connected purposes.

4.2 The bill aims to re-establish opportunities for cultural and educational exchange between the UK and EU countries. By incorporating EU countries into the Youth Mobility Scheme, young people aged 18 to 30 from both the UK and EU would have the chance to live, work, and study in each other's countries for a specified period. The scheme seeks to enhance mutual understanding, provide valuable life experiences and address workforce shortages in sectors such as hospitality and tourism.

4.3 As of 17 March 2025, the bill is in the early stages of the legislative process at the UK

Parliament. The First Reading at Parliament was on 25 January 2025. This stage involved a formal reading of the bill's title without any debate from Members of Parliament. The bill is scheduled to have its second reading on 25 July 2025. During this stage, Members of Parliament will debate the general principles and purpose of the bill and a vote will follow to decide if the bill should proceed to the next stage. If the bill passes that stage it will have four further stages before requiring Royal Assent.

4.4 The bill has gained support from various sectors, including some businesses facing workforce shortages and supporters for cultural exchange. However, the UK Government's stance on the bill remains unclear. There are concerns that such a scheme might resemble previous freedom of movement arrangements, which the UK ceased post-Brexit. Both the current Labour government and the previous Conservative administration have expressed reservations about reintroducing mechanisms linked to free movement.

4.5 The Youth Mobility Scheme (EU Countries) Bill seeks to foster reciprocal youth mobility between the UK and EU member states. While it has started legislative proceedings, its future progression will depend on parliamentary debates and Government support.

Dumfries & Galloway International Trips and Exchanges

4.6 Our Council supports young people to take part in a range of international experiences both through our Schools and Youth Work Service. Nearly all Secondary Schools offer international trips to within the EU and further afield linked to both the curriculum and cultural and social offerings. These trips take place throughout the School year and see hundreds of young people get the opportunity to travel within the EU and further afield.

4.7 Our Youth Work Service has Global Education as one of its service priorities as part of that work regularly supports young people to go on International Youth Exchanges within the EU and further afield. This has included exchanges to France, Germany- linked to the Dumfries twinning link with Gifhorn, Taiwan and the United States of America. An example of this work is that young people from across the region are going to a 10 day Youth Exchange to the USA in October 2025 as part of an exchange and none of those young people have travelled overseas before. No Council funding is used for the exchanges as the young people are supported to fundraise the full costs of the exchanges over a 18 month period prior to it taking place.

Next Steps

4.8 The Proposed Notice of Motion for consideration is that our Council notes and endorses the initial Youth Mobility Scheme (EU Countries) Bill in Westminster and encourage its progress through Parliament.

5. Council Plan Outcomes and Principles (How do the proposals contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic outcomes and impact the principles as published?) [Themes and Strategic Outcomes](#)

Principles

Support our Citizens

Support our Communities

Be a Responsive Council

6. Implications and Risk

Financial: (what resources are required/is it budgeted for?)

None

Legal: (are there legal implications to be considered?)

None

Workforce: (do the proposals have any implications for or impact upon employees?)

None

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment: (is the proposal such that an [Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments](#) is required?)

This report does not propose a change in Policy, therefore it is not necessary to complete an Impact Assessment.

7. Governance Assurance

7.1 This is a procedural report and appropriate consultation has been undertaken.

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Mark Molloy	Service Manager	mark.molloy@dumgal.gov.uk

Approved by

CHIEF OFFICER	DESIGNATION
Harry Hay	Head of Thriving Communities

Appendices – 1

Appendix – Notice of Motion

Background Papers and Relevant Committee Decisions - none

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NOTICE OF MOTION - ENDORSEMENT OF A YOUTH MOBILITY SCHEME WITH EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES

Dumfries and Galloway Council believes that the support and advancement of young people should be at the heart of government policy.

Dumfries and Galloway Council notes and endorses the initial Youth Mobility Scheme (EU Countries) Bill in Westminster and encourages its progress.

Background

The huge benefits for young people to live, work, study and travel internationally cannot be understated. Establishing a UK-EU Youth Mobility Scheme would provide the young people of Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland, and the rest of the UK with a wealth of opportunities for personal growth across the European continent. Delivering such a scheme could mirror similar existing arrangements enjoyed with 13 other countries including Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Further, Dumfries and Galloway Council believes any established scheme should be fully reciprocal by nature, expanding inter-country relations and allowing our region to likewise benefit from the positive contributions young EU citizens make to our local economy and way of life.

Recommendations:

- Dumfries and Galloway Council commends the positive contribution that young people make to Dumfries and Galloway; both local and those visiting internationally.
- Recognises and endorses the role of international Youth Mobility Schemes towards the personal growth and advancement of our young people.
- Requests that the leader of the Council writes to the UK Government, and our local MPs, to lobby for their support for a Youth Mobility Scheme with the countries of the European Union.

Proposed by: Councillor Ben Dashper

Seconded by: Councillor John Young

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NOTICE OF MOTION - SCRAP THE BEDROOM TAX

REPORT APPROVED BY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

1. Reason for Report

1.1 Members are asked to consider the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Ben Dashper, seconded by Councillor Tracey Little. The Notice of Motion is attached the **Appendix**.

1.2 The Notice of Motion was received by the Proper Officer at 14:23 on 12 March 2025. In accordance with Standing Order 13.1, Full Council is required to withdraw delegation to consider motions which concern matters that have been delegated to committees. The terms of this motion fall within the remit of Enabling and Customer Services Committee.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

2.1 agree to withdraw delegation from Enabling and Customer Services Committee; and

2.2 dependant on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Ben Dashper and seconded by Councillor Tracey Little as set out in the **Appendix**.

3. Executive Summary (What is the report about?)

3.1 The subject matter of this Motion relates to the removal of the Social Sector Size Criteria (known as the Bedroom Tax) which is a UK Government power.

4. Detail and Analysis

4.1 Social Sector Size Criteria was introduced in 2013 for tenants in Social Housing who were in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing costs. Prior to 2013 there was no restrictions on the level of eligible rent for Housing Benefit / Universal Credit housing costs for Social Sector tenants. However, private tenants who have always had size restrictions on eligible rent, based on assessed need rather than actual rent charged.

4.2 From 2013 all Social Sector Housing Benefit / Universal Credit housing costs cases had their eligible rent restricted where the number of bedrooms were more than the assessed family need, based on the criteria set. There are 2 reduction levels, 14% if the household is deemed to have one extra bedroom and 25% where there is an assessed two or more extra bedrooms.

4.3 The Scottish Government agreed to mitigate the impacts of these restrictions through Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and this is administered through Local Authorities. In 2024/25 in Dumfries and Galloway there were approximately 1,174 Social Sector Size Criteria DHP awards with a total value of £1.89 million, which is fully funded by the Scottish Government. Since 2017 a total of £11.8 million has been spent in Dumfries and Galloway in the mitigation of the Social Sector Size Criteria.

5. Council Plan Outcomes and Principles (How do the proposals contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic outcomes and impact the principles as published?) [Themes and Strategic Outcomes](#)

Principles

Support our Citizens

Support our Communities

Be a Responsive Council

Themes and Strategic Outcome

Health and Wellbeing - Hep is provided to tackle the causes and effects of poverty, inequalities and increased cost of living

6. Implications and Risk

Financial: (what resources are required/is it budgeted for?)

None

Legal: (are there legal implications to be considered?)

None

Workforce: (do the proposals have any implications for or impact upon employees?)

Removal of the 'Bedroom Tax' would remove the administrative requirement to administer Discretionary Housing Payment top ups for affected cases.

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment: (is the proposal such that an [Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments](#) is required?)

This report does not propose a change in Policy, therefore it is not necessary to complete an Impact Assessment.

7. Governance Assurance

7.1 This is a procedural report and appropriate consultation has been undertaken

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Lorna Campbell	Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Manger	Lorna.Campbell@dumgal.gov.uk

Approved by

CHIEF OFFICER	DESIGNATION
Paul Garrett	Chief Financial Officer

Appendices – 1

Appendix – Notice of Motion

Background Papers and Relevant Committee Decisions - none

NOTICE OF MOTION - SCRAP THE BEDROOM TAX

Dumfries and Galloway Council commends the hardworking staff within our Welfare and Benefits Team.

Their continued administration of the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) has allowed mitigation, where possible, of the UK Government's Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC) – commonly known as the “Bedroom Tax”.

Since the introduction of the Bedroom Tax in 2013, the Scottish Government has invested upwards of £630m nationwide in negating this cruel and callous policy where possible; ensuring that those on the lowest of incomes are not unfairly penalised for living in social housing.

Locally, millions of pounds have been spent in Dumfries and Galloway to mitigate and nullify the bedroom tax on an ongoing basis.

In a housing emergency and cost-of-living crisis, Dumfries and Galloway Council believe that the Bedroom Tax should be scrapped altogether and urges the UK Government to do so.

Recommendations:

- Dumfries and Galloway Council welcomes the Scottish Government's long-standing mitigation of the UK Government's Bedroom Tax.
- Requests the leader of the Council to write to the UK Government urging the scrapping of the Bedroom Tax.

Proposed by: Councillor Ben Dashper

Seconded by: Councillor Tracey Little

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NOTICE OF MOTION - SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

REPORT APPROVED BY SERVICE DIRECTOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES.

1. Reason for Report

1.1 Members are asked to consider the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Tony Berretti and seconded by Councillor Andy Ferguson.

1.2 The Notice of Motion was received by the Proper Officer at 14.23 on 12 March 2025. In accordance with Standing Order 13.1, Full Council is required to withdraw delegation to consider motions which concern matters that have been delegated to committees. The terms of this motion fall within the remit of the Social Work Services Committee.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

2.1 agree to withdraw delegation from Social Work Services Committee; and

2.2 dependant on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Tony Berretti and seconded by Councillor Andy Ferguson as set out in the **Appendix**.

3. Executive Summary (What is the report about?)

3.1 The Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Tony Berretti and seconded by Councillor Andy Ferguson invites committee members to consider the third-year anniversary of the war against Ukraine and acknowledge that Dumfries and Galloway Council remains steadfast in its support of Ukraine and those Ukrainian Displaced People living in Dumfries and Galloway.

3.2 The Notice of Motion requests that the Scottish Government continues support to Ukraine at this global political impasse and recognises Ukraine as a sovereign state.

3.3 A number of recommendations are proposed and seconded within the Notice of Motion.

4. Detail and Analysis

4.1 The more recent global political position has left many Ukrainian Displaced People fearful of the future. Those of whom have lived in Dumfries and Galloway over the last two to three years have become independent of services and integrated well within local communities. Some have met their partners, extended their families and are contributing to the Scottish economy.

4.2 The Ukrainian community were given three years leave to remain on their initial visa's however this was to ensure that the UK Government and devolved government schemes were not a route to resettlement as directed by the UK and Ukrainian Government in February 2022. It would appear that nether governments envisaged the war against Ukraine to continue for so long.

5. Council Plan Outcomes and Principles (How do the proposals contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic outcomes and impact the principles as published?) [Themes and Strategic Outcomes](#)

- 5.1 Be a responsive Council.
Support our Communities.

6. Implications and Risk

Financial: (what resources are required/is it budgeted for?)

UK Government funding will continue for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme 2025/26/27 to accommodate the Ukraine Permission extension Scheme (18 months). Hosts payment will reduce to £350 per calendar month as from the 1st of April 2025 and will be paid for the duration of the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme. There are currently forty-five Hosts supporting approx. one hundred Ukrainian guests at this time.

All Welcome Hub Accommodation in Dumfries and Galloway is closed with Ukrainian guests having secured Private Lets, Registered Social Housing, or Host Accommodation, a number have returned to the West of Ukraine.

Legal: (are there legal implications to be considered?)

Homeless Services have a duty to provide accommodation when a Ukrainian family or individual presents to the Homeless Service.

Social Work have a statutory duties and responsibilities for child protection, Children in Need, Adult Support and Protection and Justice Services. National guidance was developed by Scottish Government in collaboration with the Ukrainian consular should there be a context of support or statutory intervention for the local authority.

Workforce: (do the proposals have any implications for or impact upon employees?)

The number of Ukrainian Displaced People living in Dumfries and Galloway has significantly reduced over the last year. With the introduction of the Ukrainian Permission Extension Scheme it is likely that those individuals who are resident in this area will make application to stay for the further eighteen months. With the exception of those families deemed to be vulnerable many are independent and have integrated well into Scottish society. A further reduction in staffing will be required and an exit strategy developed from the Resettlement Service Board for service supports.

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment: (is the proposal such that an [Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments](#) is required?)

The report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy or propose a service change and it is therefore not necessary to complete an impact assessment.

7. Governance Assurance

- 7.1 Council Management Team have been consulted during the preparation of this report of this report and are in agreement with it contents.

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Jan Hastie	Social Work Locality Manager for Resettlement, Asylum and Migration	Janice.Hastie@dumgal.gov.uk

Approved by

CHIEF OFFICER	DESIGNATION
Charles Rocks	Head of Children, Families & Justice (DCSWO)

Appendices – 1

Appendix – Notice of Motion

Background Papers and Relevant Committee Decisions - none

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NOTICE OF MOTION - SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Dumfries and Galloway Council notes the 3rd anniversary of the war in Ukraine and reaffirms our continued support to the people of Ukraine in the ongoing war with Russia. Council further notes the decision of full council in March 2022, which called for a lifting of visa restrictions to help Ukrainians resettle in the UK.

Dumfries and Galloway Council thanks the hard work of staff within the re-settlement team, and across a wide range of council services that support Ukrainian individuals and families within the region each day.

Dumfries and Galloway Council condemns statements made by President Trump that Ukraine is the aggressor in this conflict and notes, with dismay, the recent events in the United States, that prompted the responses of support from European leaders and the First Minister of Scotland.

Dumfries and Galloway Council urges the Scottish Government to continue its unwavering support for displaced Ukrainians, and to provide reassurances to them during this worrying time of uncertainty.

Dumfries and Galloway Council urges the UK Government to be steadfast in its commitment to supporting Ukraine, in partnership with Europe. Furthermore, in light of recent events in America, Council calls for the withdraw of the offer of a state visit to President Trump.

Recommendations

Dumfries and Galloway Council;

- Reaffirms our continued support to the people of Ukraine in the ongoing war with Russia.
- Thanks the hard work of staff within the re-settlement team, and across a wide range of council services supporting Ukrainian individuals and families.
- Calls on the Leader to write to the Scottish Government to continue the unwavering support for displaced Ukrainians.
- Calls on the Leader to write to the UK Government to call for their steadfast commitment in supporting Ukraine in partnership with Europe and request that the state visit offered to President Trump be withdrawn.
- Calls on the Leader to write to President Zelenskyy confirming our support to the people of Ukraine and express our extreme dismay at how he was treated by both the President and Vice President of America on the 28th February.

Proposed by: Councillor Tony Berretti

Seconded by: Councillor Andy Ferguson

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NOTICE OF MOTION -EXTENSION OF SETTLED UKRAINIAN VISA SCHEME

REPORT APPROVED BY SERVICE DIRECTOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

1. Reason for Report

1.1 Members are asked to consider the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Linda Dorward and seconded by Councillor Carolyne Wilson.

1.2 The Notice of Motion was received by the Proper Officer at 9.26am on 13 March 2025. In accordance with Standing Order 13.1, Full Council is required to withdraw delegation to consider motions which concern matters that have been delegated to committees. The terms of this motion fall within the remit of the Social Work Services Committee.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

2.1 agree to withdraw delegation from Social Work Services Committee; and

2.2 dependant on the decision at 2.1 above, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Linda Dorward and seconded by Councillor Carolyne Wilson as set out in the **Appendix**.

3. Executive Summary (What is the report about?)

3.1 The Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Linda Dorward and seconded by Councillor Carolyne Wilson identifies the complex educational issues facing Ukrainian children and young people living in Scotland.

4. Detail and Analysis

4.1 The Notice of Motion identifies the educational challenges that Ukrainian children and young people have and continue to experience since seeking sanctuary in the United Kingdom. Children and young people fled Ukraine having experienced the effects of living in a war-torn country. They arrived in the UK often displaying behaviours and emotional presentations as direct trauma responses. Few could speak any English and were mostly in the care of their mothers as they were expected to stay in Hotels far longer than was ever expected. Hotel accommodation was not conducive to their health and wellbeing and created new challenges for many to navigate. Schools were not equipped to accommodate the needs of such children and young people and Social Work often supported children, young people and families at this time.

4.2 Children and young people demonstrated their resilience and commitment to accessing education. Many continued to study online to ensure they were accessing Ukrainian lessons whilst also attending school in Dumfries and Galloway.

4.3 Children and Young people have continued to embrace learning and it is recognised that a return to Ukraine at the end of the Ukrainian Permission Extension visa would be detrimental to the health and wellbeing and particularly their educational needs.

4.4 The Notice of Motion proposes Dumfries and Galloway Council write to the UK Government requesting assurance that educational extensions will be provided to allow for an individual's educational journey to be completed within the UK.

5. Council Plan Outcomes and Principles (How do the proposals contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic outcomes and impact the principles as published?) [Themes and Strategic Outcomes](#)

5.1 Be a responsive Council
Support our Communities

6. Implications and Risk

Financial: (what resources are required/is it budgeted for?)

This would need to be financially costed by colleagues in Education services, with appropriate projection .

Legal: (are there legal implications to be considered?)

This will be at the direction of the UK Government.

Workforce: (do the proposals have any implications for or impact upon employees?)

Educational staff , service pressures within more densely populated areas .

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment: (is the proposal such that an [Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments](#) is required?)

The report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy or propose a service change and it is therefore not necessary to complete an impact assessment.

7. Governance Assurance

7.1 Council Management Team have been consulted during the preparation of this report of this report and are in agreement with it contents.

Author(s)

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Approved by

CHIEF OFFICER	DESIGNATION
Charles Rocks	Head of Children, Families and Justice (DCSWO)

Appendices – 1

Appendix – Notice of Motion

Background Papers and Relevant Committee Decisions – none

NOTICE OF MOTION -EXTENSION OF SETTLED UKRAINIAN VISA SCHEME

Since the war in Ukraine began on 24 Feb 2022, Dumfries and Galloway (D&G) has taken in nearly 800 Ukrainian refugees. As of October 31 2024, there were 270 Ukrainian guests (and 101 cases) still living within the community, which includes 177 adults and 93 children. We know how hard these families and the wider Ukrainian circle have worked to integrate and contribute to our region.

Many of these children have also worked hard to maintain their Ukrainian education through online lessons whilst going to local schools and have now integrated fully into Scottish mainstream education. That education is not recognised by Ukraine.

Should these young people return to their home country – a real possibility in 2026, given that their visas and rights to remain may expire ⁽¹⁾ – they would be significantly disadvantaged educationally.

Given the current uncertainty over Ukraine's future, the Labour Group call on D&G Council to write to the UK Government for an assurance that they will address educational extensions for any young Ukrainian person(s) in order to allow them to finish their education in the UK, whether secondary, college or university, in order to complete their education to a level that might be transferrable back to Ukraine, or another country of their choice, offering them stability and opportunity.

(1) On 18 February 2024, the UK government announced the launch of the Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme. This opened from 04 February 2025. Ukrainian nationals, or the family member of a Ukrainian national, living in the UK with existing permission on one of the Ukraine schemes, may be eligible to apply for UPE to continue living in the UK for up to a further 18 months.

Proposed by: Councillor Linda Dorward

Seconded by: Councillor Carolyn Wilson

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NOTICE OF MOTION - FAIR FUNDING FORMULA: INCREASE SINGLE-LANE ROAD WEIGHTING FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY ROADS MAINTENANCE FUNDING

REPORT APPROVED BY INTERIM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Reason for Report

1.1 Members are asked to consider the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Linda Dorward and seconded by Councillor Sean Marshall. The notice of motion is attached as an **Appendix**.

1.2 The Notice of motion was received by the Proper Officer at 09.26 on Thursday 13 March 2025. It is confirmed that the Notice of Motion met the timeframe set for the invocation of Standing Order 15. In accordance with Standing Order 13.1, Full Council is required to withdraw delegation to consider motions which concern matters that have been delegated to committees. The terms of this motion fall within the remit of Economy and Infrastructure Committee.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

2.1 agree to withdraw delegations from Economy and Infrastructure Committee; and

2.2 dependent upon the decision taken at 2.1, consider the terms of the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Linda Dorward and seconded by Councillor Sean Marshall set out within this report and the **Appendix**.

3. Executive Summary (what is the report about?)

3.1 Dumfries and Galloway has the third biggest road network in Scotland totalling 4202km of roads (excluding trunk roads), accounting for 8% of the network nationally.

3.2 The Dumfries and Galloway Roads network is heavily used by HGV's, forestry lorries and heavy farm vehicles and therefore significant pressure is put on some of the road's network.

3.3 The formula for funding allocation for roads maintenance from the Scottish Government is detailed within the Scottish Local Government Finance Settlement 2025/26: Funding Allocation Formula for Road Maintenance (link noted within the background papers) is based on a combination of road usage (59% weighting - determined by data from Transport Scotland) and weighted lane length (41% weighting). The weighted lane length is influenced by:

3.3.1 Road Length and Parking Data: Annual Return to Transport Scotland 2022

3.3.2 Kms of LA road length multiplied by number of lanes, and weighted (Principal Road x 1.0, Non Principal Road x 0.5, Peat roads x 1.0). A weighting of 0.442 is applied to lane length available for parking. Includes road built on peat.

3.4 Within the 2025/26 Local Government Finance Settlement, Dumfries and Galloway Council's share of Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) funding allocated to support Roads Maintenance was 5%, which is significantly higher than the Council's average share of all GAE resources of 2.86%. This is utilised to maintain the Council's roads network including surfacing, defect repair, gully and ditch emptying, signage and line marking. Streetlighting and winter maintenance service is not included within this allocation.

3.5 The Labour Group have proposed that the overhead costs are not directly proportional to the number of lanes and provided an example that unblocking a single-lane road drain does not take half the time/resource of a two-lane road.

3.6 This Notice of Motion asks Full Council to lobby the Scottish Government to increase the maintenance funding by reviewing the funding formula rather than simply looking to reduce speed limits and to:

- 3.6.1 review the single lane road weighting;
- 3.6.2 to work with rural Local Authorities to assess single-lane road overhead costs and their impact on funding formulas across all road-related allocations; and
- 3.6.3 to increase the weighting of single-lane roads for a fair funding formula.

4. Detail and Analysis

4.1 This is a matter for Members to consider as per the Notice of Motion.

5. Council Plan Outcomes and Principles (How do the proposals contribute to the delivery of the Council's strategic outcomes and impact the principles as published?) [Themes and Strategic Outcomes](#)

5.1 This initiative links directly to the Health and Wellbeing theme

6. Implications and Risk

Financial: (what resources are required/is it budgeted for?)

Financial impacts would require to be determined

Legal: (are there legal implications to be considered?)

No legal implications identified

Workforce: (do the proposals have any implications for or impact upon employees?)

This notice of motion would potentially increase work demands for the workforce and consideration would be required to increase the size of the workforce across the region.

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment: (is the proposal such that an [Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments](#) is required?)

The report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy or propose a service change and it is therefore not necessary to complete an impact assessment.

7. Governance Assurance

The Council Management Team has been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

Author(s)

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Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION
Karen Brownlie	Interim Assistant Director Transport and Infrastructure

Appendices – 1

Appendix – Notice of Motion

Background Papers

Scottish Government Finance – Green Book: 2025 – 2026 - [Scottish Local Government Finance - Green Book: 2025-2026 - Scottish Local Government Finance - Green Book: 2025-2026 - gov.scot](#)

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NOTICE OF MOTION - FAIR FUNDING FORMULA: INCREASE SINGLE-LANE ROAD WEIGHTING FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY ROADS MAINTENANCE FUNDING

One third of Scotland's Road network is accounted for by rural Local Authorities (LAs), namely Highland, Aberdeenshire and Dumfries and Galloway (D&G) Councils. D&G has third biggest road network, accounting of 8% of the road total and as at 2023 was responsible for 4202km of roads.

The Scottish Government Road Maintenance funding for LAs includes a calculation using physical "road length multiplied by number of lanes". Simplistically it follows that if a road has more lanes it gets more funding. Rural LAs including D&G, have a higher proportion of single-track roads. Maintenance on every road includes surface upkeep, ditch clearing, bridge repairs, signage, markings etc. The Labour Group would propose that overhead costs are not directly proportional to the number of lanes. For example, unblocking a single-lane road's drain does not take half the time/resource of a two-lane road.

In 2023, Transport Scotland announced rural roads accounted for almost two thirds (65%) of road deaths.

The Labour Group believe Scottish Governments maintenance funding formula ignores state of our roads in D&G and their use by HGV's and farm/forestry vehicles. We believe that gives single-lane roads only half the weighting of two-lane roads and unfairly disadvantages our region and other rural LAs. This affects residents of towns as well as those on single-lane roads, because the Road Maintenance budget is spread more thinly within rural LA areas.

Consequently, The Labour Group calls on the Council to lobby the Scottish Government to:

- review the single lane road weighting;
- to work with rural LAs to assess single-lane road overhead costs and their impact on funding formulas across all road-related allocations; and
- to increase the weighting of single-lane roads for a fair funding formula.

To improve health and safety on single carriageway rural roads, Scottish Government should increase the maintenance funding by reviewing the funding formula rather than simply looking to reduce speed limits.

Proposed by: Councillor Linda Dorward

Seconded by: Councillor Sean Marshall

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