

Business Plan with Research Report

Community Ownership of Drylaw
Neighbourhood Centre

March 2026



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1. Introduction

This document presents both a research report and a business plan. To ensure coherence, accessibility, and ease of navigation, all elements of the work have been brought into a single, consolidated document rather than producing a separate research report and business plan. This integrated approach enables all findings, insights, and evidence to be viewed together in context, supporting clearer understanding and stronger connections across the different strands of work.

While the detailed research summaries remain available in full within the appendices, an overview can also be found in Section 3 Research Findings. This provides a concise, centralised summary for readers who wish to see the combined evidence at a glance before exploring the supporting detail.

1.1 Background and original drivers

Drylaw Telford Community Association (DTCA) is a long-established, community-led Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) operating from the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre in North Edinburgh. It functions as a trusted community anchor organisation, providing accessible space, community-led activities, practical support, and opportunities for social connection across the Drylaw and Telford area.

The ownership structure is slightly complex with the City of Edinburgh Council owning the land on which the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre sits. DTCA raised funds to build the Centre and has a rolling lease from the Council with no ground rent to pay. All title deeds remain with the City of Edinburgh Council. DTCA are keen to explore community ownership of the site in order to protect the Centre and grounds going forward. The land is considered prime development land, creating a risk of future disposal for housing.

The Centre has been rooted in community activism since the late 1970s, with the current building opening in 1995 after decades of local campaigning. It maintains strong community leadership through a locally-representative Board of Trustees and an asset-based model that draws on community skills, volunteer involvement, and long-term relationships.

The community served by DTCA experiences significant and long-standing social and economic challenges, including poverty, poor physical and mental health, social isolation, disability, food insecurity, and limited access to green space. Many residents face multiple complex barriers simultaneously, with particularly acute needs among older adults, refugees, ethnic minority communities, and people with mobility or mental health challenges.

Local consultation indicates a strong need for accessible youth provision, broad community-based support, and continued access to affordable food. Isolation is a key theme, especially among older residents; some individuals have re-engaged with the community only through the Centre's targeted transport-supported activities.

The Centre plays a preventative, place-based role in addressing these interconnected challenges through inclusive programming, partnerships with specialist agencies, and sustained community relationships.

1.2 About the organisation

Drylaw Telford Community Association was incorporated as a SCIO on the 30th of December 2015, evolving from the previously unincorporated Drylaw Telford

Community Association. Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre opened in 1995 after years of campaigning for a community centre.

Vision: Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre will be the hub of the community where everyone is entitled to feel safe, respected and encouraged to achieve their full potential

Mission: Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre will provide inclusive services which meet the needs of all the local people and reflect the diversity of the community

Aims: to be the heart of the communities of Drylaw and Telford

Experience and Track Record

The Board have a long history of experience in running the Centre, with two of the six Trustees having been with the organisation for over 10 years. The Board has particular strength in working with people, community engagement and development, and financial knowledge. Full details of the Board Skills Audit are shown in Appendix 8.

The organisation has had the following achievements and successes:

- Used by approximately 200 people a week.
- Over 20 different groups operate from here each week.
- Provide 40 home-cooked meals from sharing freezer each week.
- Grow and provide access to free fresh organic fruit and vegetables for local community.
- Engage over 50s through Community Link Workers project.
- Develop Community Consultations to help shape and inform services.
- Developed key partnerships i.e. member of the R2 Network and North Edinburgh Arts, Edinburgh and Lothian's Regional Equality Council (ELREC)
- Facilitate the use of the centre by other groups who provide key support i.e. Stepping Stones who offer child and family services and Citizens Advice Bureau

1.3 Methodology

The underpinning research for this business plan uses a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data, qualitative information, triangulation with demographic and policy insights, and competitive analysis were all used to inform this approach.

Community Survey

A community survey ran between mid-January and late February 2026, receiving 122 responses. The survey could be completed online, with paper copies also available from the Neighbourhood Centre. The survey gathered data on:

- Patterns of current usage.
- Levels of satisfaction with the Centre's facilities and activities.
- Demand for new services or expanded provision.
- Perceptions of Drylaw as a place to live, work and visit.
- Appetite for buying the land in order to further develop activities within the Neighbourhood Centre.



Posters and Social Media posts promoting the community survey

Community Event and Drop-In

Community Enterprise staff ran a drop-in at the Centre on Monday 16th February between 10.30 - 1pm. Activities taking place over this period included the new café, the community larder, and the walking group. Substantive discussion took place with 18 people, mostly those taking part in these activities. The majority of people consulted live in Drylaw / Telford. Additional participants placed written comments on boards or feedback cards.

Stakeholder Interviews

A range of stakeholders were approached to take part in this consultation. Some chose to attend the community drop-in event or complete the online survey. However, four in-depth interviews were also undertaken with key organisational stakeholders, including representatives from: R Squared, Drylaw Parish Church, ELREC and Citizens Advice Bureau.

Stakeholders contributed specialist perspectives on:

- The complex, overlapping challenges and deprivation within the Drylaw & Telford area
- Gaps in community services
- Strong support for the CAT, and the opportunities, sustainability and stability it would bring
- Opportunities for partnership working and joint service delivery

Competitive Analysis

A structured review of similar or adjacent local facilities was undertaken, cataloguing community centres, religious institutions and cafes in the surrounding areas.

This analysis established:

- The extent and character of competition

- Clear market gaps
- Confirmation that Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre occupies a distinct niche, with no single competitor offering the same breadth of activities in the locality.

Demographic and Socio-Economic Analysis

A full statistical profile of Drylaw and Telford area was produced using data from the 2022 Census, NRS, SIMD, ONS, and local authority datasets.

Skills Audit

A skills audit was undertaken with 9 board and staff participants to assess governance capacity, operational competence and training needs.

Policy Alignment Review

A structured review of national and local policy frameworks (Community Empowerment Act, Community Wealth Building, Town Centre Strategy, LOIP, CLD Strategy, etc.) demonstrated strong alignment with the proposed community ownership project.

2. The Asset

2.1 Facilities

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre is a single-storey, purpose-built community building designed for full accessibility. The community centre is 263 sq. m, with an additional 27 sq. m of garage space. These buildings sit on 0.46 hectares of land. All rooms are located on the ground floor, with wheelchair-friendly circulation, accessible toilets, and inclusive seating areas, ensuring the building can be comfortably used by people with a wide range of mobility needs. Chartered Surveyors DM Hall prepared a valuation report in March 2026, giving a valuation of £200,000 market value or £12,500 annual market rent. DTCA are currently in negotiations with City of Edinburgh Council on a suitable purchase price for Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre – one which takes into account the significant community benefits already delivered by this community anchor organisation.

The Centre sits at 67B Groathill Road North, in a central position within the Drylaw/Telford neighbourhood, and is easily accessed by public transport, being only a short walk from local bus routes. Inside, the building contains a set of flexible multi-use

spaces, including a main hall and several rooms used for fitness sessions, social groups, youth work, community meals, cultural activities, advice sessions, and faith gatherings.

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre operates at very high levels of use, with an estimated 200 weekly users and up to 300 attendees at larger community events. Over 20 weekly groups operate from the building, demonstrating the adaptability of the interior spaces and the Centre's role as a busy hub for local residents. Alongside these activities, the Centre houses two key resources that rely heavily on the physical building and surrounding land: the Tool Library and the Community Larder.

The Tool Library, hosted within the Centre, provides access to gardening tools and practical equipment for local residents, supporting skills development, garden projects, environmental work, and sharing culture. Its inclusion on the Centre's main website reflects its integration with wider community projects and its alignment with the Centre's aims of supporting learning, affordability, and community resilience. It also supports the Centre's focus on gardening and growing.

Meanwhile, the Community Larder is an essential part of the Centre's food support work. It operates multiple times per week and ensures that users have reliable access to food; the Larder is also directly linked to the Centre's outdoor growing activities, with produce from the gardens contributing to its supplies.

These facilities—one supporting practical capability and the other supporting food security—are deeply embedded in both the building and its wider purpose.

2.2 Land

The land surrounding the Centre is a defining feature of the site. The grounds include well-maintained gardens, fruit and vegetable beds, and an orchard, which contribute significantly to the Centre's atmosphere and community function. Gardeners and volunteers work regularly on site to keep the grounds attractive and productive. In addition to established growing areas, the Centre continues to invest in outdoor improvements, such as constructing new paths and creating additional raised beds for

local groups, reinforcing the role of the land as a place for wellbeing, food production, and community connection.

The grounds are also used for practical, skills-focused outdoor activities, including regular free bike-servicing sessions delivered by ELREC, which rely on suitable outdoor space for repairs, demonstrations, and engagement. These activities highlight the multifunctional nature of the land: it supports food growing, environmental initiatives, social gatherings, active travel, and community development.

The outdoor space has also been used for creative sessions with children from local primary schools and special schools. Painting With Petals sessions were run by Art Buds Collective and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and the outdoor setting had a noticeable positive impact on the children attending (9-14 children weekly). “The able-bodied children constantly moved around whilst engaging in all the creative processes, clearly enjoying the garden, and refusing to move indoors during rain showers. The young people with disabilities were animated and smiling, engaging with their surroundings and activities,” stated the DNC’s project webpage.

Together, the building and the land form a cohesive and well-used community asset, where accessible indoor facilities are complemented by vibrant outdoor spaces. The presence of key resources such as the Tool Library and Community Larder further enhances the Centre’s role, making the site both a practical resource and a welcoming, inclusive hub for local residents.

Category	Details
Brief Description	Detached, purpose-built community centre on a large, fully enclosed plot.
Tenancies	Owner Occupied
Accommodation	Entrance vestibule, main hall, office, craft room, meeting room, crèche, gardeners’ office, kitchen, male/female/disabled WCs, various storerooms; detached garage on site.
Total Floor Area – Community Centre	263.27 sq. m / 2,835 sq. ft Community Centre: 242.17 sq. m (2,607 sq. ft) of ground-floor space, Mezzanine office: 21.1 sq. m (228 sq. ft)
Total Floor Area – Garage	27.15 sq. m / 292 sq. ft
Basis of Measurement	GIA
Total Site Area	0.46 hectares / 1.14 acres

Table - General property summary¹

The photographs on the following pages are credited to DM Hall.

¹ Taken from DM Hall Chartered Surveyors valuation



1 Front view of building entrance, including bike racks and accessible parking



2 Rear of building, with picnic benches, planting and space for outdoor activities



3 Community garden raised beds, situated in land to the rear of the building



4 Expanded view of the community garden and land



5 Main hall

3. Research Findings

3.1 Community Need

Local partners described Drylaw as an area facing multiple forms of deprivation, with many residents experiencing complex, overlapping needs including financial hardship, disability, mental health challenges, language barriers, and housing insecurity. Social isolation, especially among older adults and new arrivals, was a recurring theme.

This pattern can also be seen in the demographic analysis.

Young people aged 0-15 make up 19% of the local population, higher than the average across Scotland (16%). And at the other end of the scale, people aged 65 and over make up just 14% of the local population (Scotland average 20%).

The area is characterised by flats. Just 31% of local homes are a house or bungalow (Scotland 65%). 69% are flats, maisonettes or apartments (Scotland 34%). Many of these are socially rented (32%, compared to Scotland 23%) or privately rented (17%, compared to Scotland 12%).

Households in Drylaw generally align with what's seen across Scotland (proportion of people living alone, in families, etc), with the exception of single parent households, which sits slightly higher in Drylaw at 13% (Scotland 10%).

3.2 Views on the Centre

The Centre was universally viewed as:

- A trusted, safe, and welcoming hub
- A place offering stability and belonging, especially for vulnerable groups
- A Centre with strong staff, effective use of space, and valuable outdoor areas

The Centre is already well-used, particularly the community larder, drop-in café, and well-being/fitness classes. Survey respondents also use the Centre for events, meetings, and celebrations.

Impact of Community Ownership

Respondents were highly positive about the potential benefits of community purchase and development of the DNC land:

- 96% agreed it would tackle social isolation and increase participation
- 94% agreed it would improve health, wellbeing, and community cohesion
- 88% agreed it would help tackle food poverty

The proposal for community ownership was supported by 93% of respondents. Community ownership was viewed as a route to stability, independence, long-term investment, and the expansion of essential facilities. While a few comments raised concerns about financial sustainability, most comments reflected optimism, shared ownership, and pride.

All proposed ideas for future use of the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre in community survey received very high levels of support. The most popular included:

- Community activities and celebrations – 84% “support and would use”
- Community café linked to a garden – 81% “support and would use”

- Growing spaces, horticulture training, and community meals - over 90% support overall.

Other stakeholders highlighted gaps across the area in youth activities, mental health support, social connection, and affordable community spaces locally. Comments also emphasised a strong desire for children and youth provision, sports and fitness opportunities and skills development.

Two-thirds of survey respondents expressed interest in future involvement — joining as members, participating in projects, or engaging through community groups.

3.3 Competition and Partnership

A competitive analysis was carried out to understand the range of facilities and services available within the Drylaw and Telford area, and to assess where DNC fits within this landscape. The purpose was to ensure that current and proposed activities at DNC continue to complement rather than duplicate local provision, while also identifying opportunities for collaboration.

The Drylaw/Telford area has a limited number of multi-purpose community facilities, with most venues either faith-based or operating with narrow activity scopes. Provision is fragmented across small, independently run groups, with few large, accessible community hubs offering the breadth of activities provided at DNC. Café and food options exist locally but are commercial, lacking the affordability and community-focused ethos that characterises DNC's offer.

DNC is the only major non-faith-based community hub within walking distance of Drylaw offering a combination of:

- Multi-room indoor space
- Large community garden/outdoor area
- Larder and food support
- Café/social eating
- Regular weekly programme (20+ groups)
- Youth activities
- Skills workshops and events

Nearby churches (Drylaw Parish, Blackhall St Columba) and Blackhall Mosque run community groups, but these are limited in operating hours, primarily volunteer-led, and oriented towards their congregations. Their facilities are smaller, and activities tend to be single-purpose (e.g., toddler groups, coffee mornings, scouts/guides). These venues pose low competitive risk but offer high collaboration potential—particularly for shared outreach and low-cost hall hire alternatives. Drylaw Parish stated during interview that they would welcome work together.

Royston Wardieburn Community Centre is the closest potential competitor, offering hall space, groups, and youth activities. However, it is 1 mile away, and user feedback suggests that DNC is more accessible, and more embedded in the immediate community. DNC's outdoor assets also offer differentiation that competitors cannot match.

DNC is the most comprehensive, accessible, and community-driven centre in the immediate area, with distinctive strengths in outdoor space, food support, and low-cost inclusive programming.

Cafés in the area are commercial and not oriented toward community connection, free/low-cost social events, or food equity work. The Monday Breakfast Café at DNC is the only social, community-focused, low-cost food space, and the only offer linked to wider wellbeing activities, the larder, and support services. No other venue provides affordable meals alongside wraparound community support or intergenerational socialisation.

DNC sits in a strong, differentiated position due to:

- Its trusted reputation, particularly among vulnerable groups
- Its combination of indoor + outdoor community space
- Holistic services (food, wellbeing, skills, youth work, events) delivered under one roof
- A strong emphasis on affordability and social connection

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre works closely with other partners across North Edinburgh, and several organisations have expressed partnership potential, particularly for youth work, wellbeing, gardening, and community events.

3.4 Organisational Capacity

Whilst DTCA has been running as a SCIO since 2015, its history of running the DNC as an unincorporated organisation long predates this, with the Centre opening over 30 years ago in 1995. There is a proven track record of strong organisational capacity.

The Board have a long history of experience in running the Centre, with a recent skills audit finding particular strength in working with people, community engagement and development, and financial knowledge.

The Board could benefit from additional experience in planning & management – including items such as business plan writing, commissioning work and setting KPIs. Communications & marketing, governance and knowledge of employment law were other areas that could be improved.

Some project specific skills were areas where the Board skewed weaker. Market research/testing the market and fundraising through private sector were two specific areas that could hold the Board back when it comes to developing new activity at the Centre. This could be addressed through upskilling, recruitment or outsourcing support.

Full details of the Board Skills Audit are shown in Appendix 8.

3.5 Future Direction of Travel

The CAT is envisaged to support the long-term sustainability and success of the Centre, enabling DTCA to deliver on the community priorities, as demonstrated through the community and stakeholder consultation. 96% of survey respondents said Centre development would tackle isolation, so this is a priority for development.

The Centre will host more community activities and celebrations, launch a community café linked to a garden, host allotments and growing space, and provide horticultural training and learning opportunities. DTCA has the following objectives for the coming years.

1. Develop and deliver a new programme of youth activities for ages 8–18, co-designed with local young people.

Metric: Provide at least three weekly youth sessions, including one early-evening activity and one skills/sport-based session; attract a minimum of 40 regular young participants within 12 months.

2. Increase food production, increase garden volunteer sessions, and integrate garden produce into weekly community meals.

Metrics:

- Install 8 new community-managed raised beds within 9 months
- Deliver one monthly community meal using garden produce within 18 months.
- Engage 20 active garden volunteers within 12 months.

It is worth noting that these activities had over 90% support in the community consultation, so whilst these are ambitious aims, it is felt they are achievable.

3. Reduce reported loneliness among participants

Metric: Deliver a coordinated annual programme including monthly social events and quarterly cultural celebrations within 6 months.

4. Implement a new marketing plan to improve visibility of activities at the Centre.

Metric:

- Increase Facebook followers from 1.7k to 3k within 12 months.
- Install new signage within 6 months.
- Distribute 1,000 copies of the printed guide quarterly.

5. Extend opening hours by adding two evenings per week and one weekend half-day to improve access for working parents and isolated residents. (Note that this is depending upon securing staffing)

Metric: Increase building footfall by 20% in the first year, measured through registers and door counts. Footfall will be reviewed at 3, 6 and 9 months.

3.6 Financial Viability

There have been significant increases in income-generating activity – groups and activities contributed just 3% of income in FY23/24, and this increased to 18% in FY24/25. Similarly, room rental income increased from 10% of total income in FY23/24 to 18% in FY24/25.

The following table shows the percentage of total income from each income stream:

	FY23/24	FY24/25
Donation and Charitable Activities	81%	60%
Grants	79%	57%
Donations	3%	3%
Other Trading Activities	19%	40%

Groups Income	3%	18%
Room Rental	10%	18%
Shed Rental	6%	3%

- Rental income and activity income do not yet cover costs and are limited by the building capacity. Any further increases will be minimal. There is currently a flat rate for rental, with commercial renters and community groups being charged the same rate; higher commercial rates could be trialled for increased income. Ultimately, increased asset size is needed to unlock significantly more income.
- Shed rental reduced from FY23/24 to FY24/25 when tenant the Men's Shed moved to new premises, however with the shed and several storage containers and remaining outdoor space available to install more shed space, there is potential to increase 'outdoor' space rental.
- Community consultation shows a varying willingness to pay for activities and events, pointing to a need for tiered pricing to ensure affordable access for all while being financially sustainable.
- Community consultation also showed a lack of awareness of events. Attendance, and therefore income, could be increased through use of additional marketing channels.
- There is significant demand for a café, with 81% of survey respondents saying they would use this. There is potential for a café to be income generating.
- Community ownership enables long-term financial planning, and expansion and improvement of the building as well as outdoor provision.

3.7 Fundability

Evidence strongly supports eligibility for funding. The Centre has a strong track record of attaining funding, with 79% of total income from grants in FY 23/24 and 57% in FY 24/25. Past major funders include the National Lottery and the Bank of Scotland.

The Centre clearly delivers outcomes that align with the priorities of major funders. The Centre's work directly supports:

- anti-poverty impact (community larder, free/low-cost meals, affordable activities)
- health and wellbeing (walking groups, gardening, fitness classes, social connection)
- tackling isolation among older adults, refugees, ethnic minority communities and people with disabilities
- community resilience and preventative support in an area of high deprivation
- environmental and climate action (food growing, tool library, cycling, biodiversity)

Research shows very strong community backing, with:

- 93% supporting community purchase
- 96% agreeing that development would reduce isolation
- 94% agreeing it would improve health and wellbeing

- Very high support for new activities, garden expansion, café development, and youth provision

The Centre also demonstrates strong financial controls, diversified income streams (room hire, bike outlet, activities), and an ability to deliver multi-year funded projects — a key confidence factor for funders.

Stakeholder interviews (ELREC, CAB, local church) show:

- unanimous support for the asset transfer
- confidence in DTCA's leadership and community value
- commitment to deeper partnership working post-acquisition

Funders consistently emphasise the importance of value for money. DNC offers:

- a busy hub with 200+ weekly users and 20+ regular groups
- significant preventative impact - reducing isolation, improving wellbeing, supporting New Scots, providing affordable food
- outdoor assets and extensive community gardens
- trusted support in one of Edinburgh's most deprived areas

This combination of high need, high impact and low capital cost positions the project as highly investable.

4. Activity and Proposed Benefits

4.1 Vision and Approach

The overall vision is for

Vision: Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre is a welcoming, inclusive, community-owned hub where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities come together to connect, grow and thrive.

Mission: Our outdoor and indoor spaces work together to nurture community, food security, and environmental sustainability, empowering residents to shape the future of their neighbourhood.

4.2 What We Will Do

Community Asset Transfer

DTCA are seeking to take ownership of the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre site including the extensive grounds around the Centre. This land is currently owned by City of Edinburgh Council, which restricts DTCA in what they can do to improve the facilities and provision. The CAT has strong community support, with 96% of survey respondents in favour. As well as strong support from stakeholders, with one stating “Totally 100% for it, especially in an area like this. Absolutely 195% correct thing to do.”

Activities

The current programme at the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre includes a wide range of activities that support wellbeing, social connection, and cultural inclusion, such as:

- Walking group
- Parents and toddlers
- Yoga
- Keep fit classes
- Drama, line dancing, and Nepalese dance
- History group, games club, and crafting activities
- Gardening group
- Tea and Toast group for socially isolated residents, with transport
- Young at Heart group
- “Midnight and Beyond” tenants group
- Enable youth club (8–12 years, confidence support)
- General youth club provision
- ELREC bike group
- Community larder and food support activities
- Regular community meals and cultural events (e.g., Burns supper)

The Centre is used by three churches and by a Muslim prayer group, reflecting the Centre’s role as a multi-faith, multicultural community hub.

Community consultation called for more activities for teenagers, co-created with teenagers. It was recognised that well-intentioned adults may not know what teens today would like from the Centre, and that any activities for young people should be designed with young people. Some ideas suggested within the survey include youth groups, holiday clubs, training and skill development, and sports clubs for young people.

'Sport and fitness' was another common theme, with people suggesting more sports clubs to make better use of the existing facilities, as well as developing outdoor facilities such as exercise equipment or a skatepark.

Training and skills activities were also mentioned fairly frequently, and other ideas included events to integrate different communities (e.g. language classes).

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC) run a weekly cycling group, based from a shed in the DNC grounds. A stakeholder interview with ELREC revealed that discrimination against minority groups is a problem in the area, however stated that:

"The team [at Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre] has been phenomenal on what they've accomplished. It's almost a sanctuary for people. People we bring here are blown away by it. It has heaps and heaps of potential. It connects people and gives an opportunity for people to meet...Spaces like this, and the activities they provide, enable people who cross paths to meet and learn about each other."

ELREC noted that they have recently seen many refugees making use of the Centre and would like for them to have more opportunities to contribute to the centre and the community.

Another partner interview with Citizens Advice Bureau, who run a fortnightly session out of DNC, provided ideas for other support sessions that might be of use to local residents, based on the support requests she receives. Energy advisors, social activities for people new to the area, housing support, immigration & asylum support, and support for people with long-term disabilities and mental health struggles.

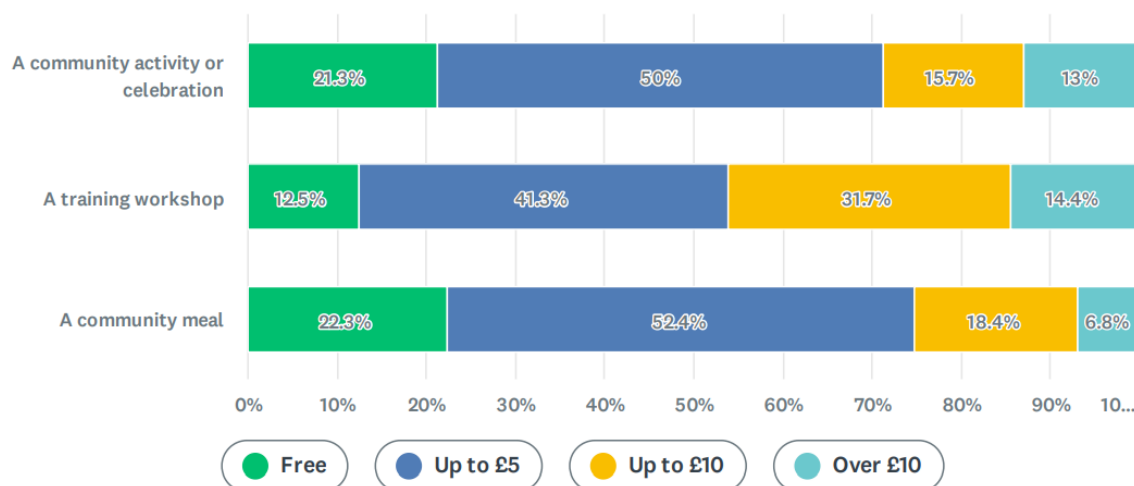
Income-Generating Activities

The Centre accommodates a wide range of partner organisations and ad-hoc bookings, including the Community Council, Citizens Advice Bureau, equality organisations, and refugee support services.

A bike outlet based at the Centre generates approximately £10,000 annually, contributing to core income. A commercial locker company has also expressed interest in locating on the site.

Room hires generate additional unrestricted funding. The building is operating at high capacity and cannot accommodate multiple simultaneous activities indoors, however there is potential for modest growth in income. Any significant further increase would depend on extension or capital improvements, which is consistent with the wider case for ownership and investment.

The survey respondents gave a mixed picture when it comes to willingness to pay for activities at the Centre, which probably reflects the mixed income levels within the local area. See the graph below for the amount survey respondents were willing to pay for different event types.



It is recommended that tiered pricing be trialled, with people on lower incomes asked to pay less and those on higher incomes asked to pay more. A three-month trial of this approach will enable the Centre to make sure the tiered pricing is simple, financially viable, easy for visitors to understand, and designed so staff and volunteers can administer it without extra burden.

This could be implemented for the community meals. Given that it is a new activity, it would be simpler to implement than trialling on current activities. The meal's planned monthly cadence would also give enough repetitions within the three-month trial period to assess success. An example of how it could be priced is as follows:

- Standard price of £5
- Concession price of £2 for people on low incomes, carers, students or anyone who feels they need it. This would be on a dignity-based approach with no proof required.
- Pay it forward price of £8 for those who wish to support the Centre and their neighbours

This pricing approach is intended to support the Centre's inclusiveness. As such, gentle inclusive messaging is encouraged, such as "Choose the price that feels right for you – everyone is welcome". Show pricing tiers clearly on promotional materials so that people know they are welcome right from the get go.

Evaluation of the trial will be based on attendance numbers, the proportion of people choosing each pricing tier, the overall income and financial viability, and any impact on repeat visitors. These quantitative indicators will be reviewed alongside qualitative indicators such as informal visitor feedback and comments, and staff and volunteer feedback on any additional administrative burden.

If successful, this tiered pricing approach could be rolled out across other events and activities at the Centre. It can also be communicated to Centre visitors as yet another example of DTCA listening to and accommodating community needs.

Example messaging could include: "You told us that inclusion was important at the Centre. We introduced tiered pricing to make sure everyone can join in, and we're proud to say that the community has shown up for each other. 40% of you paid the standard

price, 25% the concession price and 35% the supporter price. Thank you to everyone who came along and helped us keep sessions open to everyone!"

Outdoor Space

Outdoor space is central to DTCA's identity and mission. The community gardens, orchard, raised beds, and outdoor social areas form the context within which much of the Centre's community development work takes place. Gardening, food growing, and nature-based activity are core strands of delivery, improving wellbeing, reducing isolation, and enhancing environmental sustainability.

Key features of outdoor use include:

- Extensive gardening and food-growing activity
- An orchard
- A summer house used for community gatherings
- Ongoing work to develop accessible paths (supported by Community Payback)
- Eight planned community-managed raised beds
- Outdoor learning and wellbeing activities
- Integration of food grown onsite into the community larder and meals programme

The Centre is considering removal of the MUGA to expand food-growing space and increase outdoor capacity, reflecting community priorities around climate resilience, food security, and deeper use of green assets. The community survey did not explicitly gather thoughts on this; generally, support was higher for growing activities than sport, but further community feedback will be sought on this specific question.

Given that the Centre is aiming to use the outdoor space to tackle food poverty, sessions could be held with Community Pantry users to find out how the garden could best serve them. Key questions could include:

- Is it best to focus on staple foods that are easy to store like potatoes and onions, or to provide access to more expensive treats like lettuces and berries?
- These would require more frequent picking, which may be a barrier or may be just the useful task needed for a keen volunteer facing social isolation – getting out once a day to pick berries can be just as beneficial as getting out once a day to walk the dog!
- Are there foods that are culturally important to many of our Centre visitors we could grow, enabling delicious and varied community meals that represent the cultural backgrounds of all our visitors?

There is potential for collaboration with the Edinburgh Seed Network in expanding the garden's food production. Seed libraries not only provide free access to seeds, but the seeds are also specialised to local weather conditions and so can be more robust.

Current Challenges

Several operational pressures affect the Centre's ability to meet community demand effectively. The building is too small to host multiple activities simultaneously, limiting growth, reducing income potential, and constraining a very busy programme. An extension to the building is being considered as part of post-acquisition plans to meet ongoing and future demand.

While the organisation secures project-specific funding (including Lottery and Bank of Scotland support), core income remains tight, and funding beyond the next two years is uncertain. Additional unrestricted income and secure asset control are critical for longer-term viability.

There is a community-identified need for expanded youth activities. Existing provision is well-used but limited by space and staffing capacity. The site has experienced incidents of anti-social behaviour, adding to operational pressures.

4.3 The Benefit of Ownership

"If the centre belongs to the community, it would give the area a sense of pride that they can look after and help make decisions that benefit them."

"This neighbourhood centre is at the heart of the community and has the space, enthusiasm and love from the community to make this happen, grow and thrive."²

Drylaw Telford Community Association (DTCA) has been a cornerstone of the Drylaw and Telford community for more than three decades. The Centre is deeply trusted, heavily used, and central to the wellbeing, social cohesion, and resilience of local residents. However, while DTCA built and runs the building, it does not have ownership over the site. This presents both a limitation and a risk. Securing community ownership of the Centre and land through a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) would unlock significant development potential, safeguard the Centre's future, and strengthen its role as a community anchor organisation.

Community ownership would provide long-term security, protecting the Centre from the inherent uncertainty of operating on land that could, in principle, be repurposed. With this security, DTCA would be able to plan confidently for the future, invest in essential improvements, and expand its facilities to meet growing community need. Community ownership would ensure that a vital local asset remains in community hands permanently, shaped by local priorities and responsive to local aspirations.

A central benefit of ownership is that it would enable DTCA to advance its clear, community-informed development priorities. Ownership would unlock major improvements to the outdoor environment, which is fundamental to the Centre's identity. The grounds already support gardening, food growing, bike repair sessions, and outdoor wellbeing activities, but the space holds much greater potential. DTCA aims to maximise food-growing capacity with eight new community-managed growing beds. This would enhance food security, support climate action, and deepen engagement with volunteers and local groups.

² Supportive quotes from participant of Community Survey Feb 26

The land also provides opportunities to expand physical, social, and environmental wellbeing initiatives. Plans include installing an outdoor gym, expanding the orchard, and enhancing the existing gardens to support biodiversity and community learning. DTCA also intends to improve navigation and accessibility across the site, including new paths, better lighting, and more welcoming circulation spaces. These improvements can only happen if the organisation has secure control of the land.

In addition to environmental improvements, ownership would allow DTCA to introduce infrastructure that supports the area's long-term sustainability, such as electric vehicle charging points and solar panels to reduce energy costs and environmental impact. These measures would strengthen financial resilience while supporting local and national climate goals.

A further benefit of community ownership is the ability to develop new partnership opportunities. There is active interest from a commercial locker company that could bring new revenue into the organisation without displacing existing services. Likewise, improved facilities would make the site more attractive to partners such as youth organisations, advice services, cultural groups, and voluntary sector networks. With control over the land, DTCA could design the site layout to better support co-location, collaboration, and multi-agency working. In the longer-term, ownership of the site could enable expansion of the Centre itself to meet new demand.

All these developments contribute to a more sustainable organisation. Ownership would:

- Increase income generation capacity
- Reduce long-term financial risk
- Strengthen DTCA's case for future capital and core funding
- Support robust, forward-looking business planning

Funders typically seek strong asset security; therefore, owning the building and land would significantly enhance DTCA's ability to attract investment for capital projects, renewable energy, and new community services.

Importantly, DTCA is not seeking to broaden its mission but to deepen and strengthen what it already does so well: providing a safe, inclusive space where people connect, learn, grow, and feel supported. Community ownership will allow the Centre to expand youth provision—identified as a priority during recent consultations—and improve delivery for older adults, families, ethnic minorities, refugees, and those experiencing social isolation or economic hardship.

In summary, taking the site into community ownership is a transformative opportunity. It offers stability, unlocks development, enhances sustainability, and ensures the continued presence of a vital community anchor. Most importantly, it guarantees that decisions about this well-used and deeply valued site remain firmly in the hands of the community it serves.

4.4 Community Benefits 3

Section 5.5 sets out how these outcomes will be measured.

Through the services and activities outlined above, the project will deliver social, environmental and economic benefits for the community. Though impact will be wide-ranging this section has been structured around the Scottish Land Fund outcomes in order to facilitate an application later in 2026.

1. Communities achieve more sustainable economic, environmental and/or social development through ownership of land and buildings.

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre already delivers a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits as a busy, purpose-built community hub offering more than 20 weekly activities supporting wellbeing, social connection and inclusion. The Centre provides groups for older adults, families, young people, cultural communities and vulnerable residents, contributing directly to improved health, reduced isolation, and strengthened community cohesion. A stakeholder interview with tenant ELREC noted the recent increase in refugees visiting the centre and praised the DNC staff as being “absolutely fantastic”, providing “almost a sanctuary for people”. There is potential to expand provision for and outreach to New Scots, helping them to meet people and become a valued member of their new community.

Simply having a community owned space within the local area – a ‘third space’ where people can meet without cost of entry – is vitally important. “Spaces like this, and the activities they provide, enable people who cross paths to meet and learn about each other,” said tenant ELREC. Given the high levels of deprivation in Drylaw & Telford, this is “a lifeline” for local residents – as stated by a survey respondent. Evidence from the survey and interviews highlights strong demand for health & wellbeing activities, activities for teenagers, opportunities to engage with the community garden and outdoor spaces, and sports & fitness.

The Centre also plays a key role in local food security through its Community Larder, which ensures that residents “do not leave hungry or return to empty kitchens,” embedding dignity and access to nutritious food into its daily provision. Its extensive gardens, orchard and volunteer gardening programme create environmental benefits through local food growing, organic produce, biodiversity improvement and nature-based wellbeing activities.

Using Centre-grown produce in community meals will also provide residents with nutritious, organic, fresh meals. Introducing new vegetables, especially to children and young people who have had a hand in growing them, can be transformative to overall diet and attitude to foods. Community meal volunteers may also benefit from increased confidence in processing and cooking with fresh ingredients.

DTCA have made significant strides toward self-sufficiency in recent years, with activities income rising from 3% of total income in FY23/24 to 18% in FY24/25, and room rental rising from 10% of total income in FY23/24 to 18% in FY24/25. Ownership would support facilities expansion and improvements, supporting further income

³ These have been framed through the Scottish Land Fund outcomes in order to support a future SLF application.

generation and sustainability. “Network members would certainly make more use of the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre if the space were enhanced.” said Community Renewal Trust, with a network of 40 charities.

Drylaw supports local economic development through practical, skills-based activities including bike repair, volunteer-led learning opportunities, and a tool library, all of which contribute to a local circular economy and reduce costs for residents. Ownership of the land will allow the Centre to maximise this impact by expanding food-growing areas, increasing outdoor activity capacity, and developing new income-generating partnerships.

Ownership of the building enables a shift from a reactive, minimal maintenance model to a forward-looking, sustainable, low-carbon model. DTCA are already reducing waste where they can, with on-site composting. Ownership of the building would give DTCA the confidence they need to invest in solar panels and other energy efficiency improvements such as insulation and heating improvements. Through community ownership, DTCA can access capital funds such as CARES unavailable under the current rental agreement. This could result in a reduction in energy consumption, as well as any facility expansions meeting low-carbon specifications.

2. Communities have a stronger role in and control over their own development.

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre is explicitly community-led, founded through local action in 1995 after residents campaigned for a neighbourhood centre. Today it continues to prioritise community voice by delivering programmes shaped directly by local needs, hosting community groups and consultations, and providing open, accessible space for people to gather and participate actively in shaping their local area.

The site is already managed as a shared community asset, hosting faith groups, cultural organisations, youth provision, local clubs and neighbourhood groups. Its location and design make it space committed to delivering activities for a culturally diverse local community. Community ownership will deepen this democratic control by ensuring that long-term decisions about the land, gardens, building improvements and outdoor spaces remain in the hands of residents, rather than external bodies.

Community ownership is deeply supported, with all stakeholders interviewed and 93% of locals surveyed supporting purchase of the land DNC sits on.

Furthermore, survey respondents felt that purchasing the land would have important social benefits for residents. 96% agreed that purchase and development would tackle social isolation and get people more involved in their community, and 94% agreed that it would develop health and well-being and strengthen the community and bring people together. Respondents were slightly less convinced that development of the centre would help tackle food poverty, however 88% still agreed with this statement.

Some respondents gave further comments, including:

“If the centre belongs to the community, it would give the area a sense of pride that they can look after and help make decisions that benefit them.”

“This neighbourhood centre is at the heart of the community and has the space, enthusiasm and love from the community to make this happen, grow and thrive.”

The Centre works in partnership with local organisations - such as its community council meetings, ELREC cycling sessions, Citizens Advice Bureau sessions and regular groups - to coordinate development activity within the neighbourhood. Through ownership, Drylaw can extend collaborative capacity, strengthen local organising, and embed inclusive decision-making into future development planning. Stakeholders ELREC and Community Renewal Trust (with its 40 charity network members) both stated the intention to deepen ties and conduct further work together if the facilities were expanded.

Local groups who hire the main hall and other spaces benefit from affordable, accessible space to run activities which support the health and wellbeing and social connection of residents. The space also provides opportunity for people to take part in shaping their community, whether via volunteering, caring for the community garden, attending community meals and other activities, contributing to events and fun days. These actions, though small individually, build a shared sense of ownership and purpose.

With ownership, decisions about the site's use and services will be made via DTCA's community-led SCIO. The organisation is led by a local Board, with community insights, consultation and feedback a key part of decision making. The recent Board skills audit highlighted "working with people" and "community development" as key strengths. This makes the organisation well placed to manage the facility on behalf of the community.

3. Communities own well-managed, financially sustainable land and buildings.

Drylaw and Telford Community Association already demonstrates a strong history of stewardship of the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre.

Operationally, the Centre runs a diverse programme of services, indicating sustainable use of space and strong demand from community members, partner organisations and room-hire users. Its ability to host multi-use programmes (fitness, youth work, larder, community café, clubs, religious gatherings) shows robust facility management and experience in coordinating diverse tenants and user groups.

DTCA has successfully increased income from rental and activities significantly between FY23/24 and FY24/25 (from 10% of total income to 18% for rental, and 3% to 18% for activities). This shows significant commitment to and skill in running a financially sustainable centre. Crucially, these income streams are limited by the current facilities, with expansion required for any further significant increase.

Future plans — including solar panel installation, extended food-growing areas, EV charging points, improved accessibility and a potential building extension — demonstrate the Centre's commitment to long-term sustainability and carbon reduction, while preparing the organisation for enhanced financial resilience through increased room hire, enterprise activity, and partner tenancy.

DTCA are in the early stages of exploring community appetite for a garden café within the Centre. This could also bring an entire new revenue stream, again showing dedication to the financial sustainability of the facilities.

Ownership of the land will enable DTCA to manage the whole site holistically, secure future investment, and plan capital improvements with confidence, ensuring the asset remains financially sustainable and well-maintained for decades to come. It will also put the organisation in a stronger position for winning grant funding, particularly for any future capital works.

A skills audit of the team behind the current management and operations of the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre highlights a good mix of skills and experience on the Board, particularly in the areas of working with people, community engagement & development, and financial knowledge. There was also an appetite for training, recruitment and outsourcing support where needed to fill the skill gaps in project management.

A proactive maintenance plan will be used, with a significant sinking fund for any future major building repairs included within the financial projections. This maintenance plan will ensure the building is safe, warm, energy efficient, compliant and in good condition for many years to come. Regular inspections, PAT testing and repairs & maintenance will reduce the long-term cost and disruption of disrepair.

This Business Plan also includes financial modelling and a review of viability, and fundability in order to ensure that future plans for this community space are feasible and sustainable. Financial modelling shows that DNC is supported by a range of income-generating and grant funds. Total income is projected to grow from approximately £173,000 in 2024/25 to £222,000 by Year 5. See Section 3.6 Financial Viability for more information.

Current funding enables a dedicated staff team. Future funding applications to grow this staff team are in development. The Centre also has a range of regular volunteers in place to support its services and activities. Partner organisations are supportive and the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre plays an important role within the community anchors of North Edinburgh.

5. Delivering the project

5.1 Legal structure

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre was opened in 1995 after the people of Drylaw campaigned for a community centre to be created locally. Drylaw Telford Community Association (DTCA) was incorporated as a SCIO (SC022867) in December 2015, evolving from the work undertaken by the previously unincorporated Drylaw Telford Community Association (since 1994).

Objects of DTCA:

“The objective of the Association is to address the social, cultural, economic, educational and environmental needs of the population of our defined community, particularly among the most vulnerable in our community. We do this regardless of anyone's age, ability, religion, race, gender identity, or sexuality. We operate for everyone. Our defined community covers the following postcode areas: EH4 2 (Drylaw, Telford, Craigleith), EH4 4 (Muirhouse, Siverknowes), EH5 1 (Waterfront) and EH5 2 (West Pilton, Pilton and Wardie).

Our members face a wide range of challenges, including poverty, physical and mental health issues, social isolation, learning disabilities, and mobility issues. Many are older adults, refugees, or members of ethnic minority groups. Every aspect of our work is designed to help relieve poverty, to improve mental health through tackling social isolation and to advance community development. We do this through the delivery of activities, events and services aimed to educate, entertain, inspire and feed our members.”

Current structure vs. future trading subsidiary:⁴

Charities like Drylaw Telford Community Association can carry out trading and enterprising activity, but there are some restrictions on the type of trading that can be carried out.

- Primary Purpose Trading (where the trading activity directly contributes to the charity achieving its purposes as set out above) is allowed – must directly relate to the charitable purpose in the DTCA Constitution.
- Ancillary trading is allowed (where trading does not directly advance a charitable purpose but contributes to its success – e.g. gift shops/cafes not central to charitable activities).

This latter category carries restrictions relating to trading activity which does not advance the charity's purposes or provide public benefit (non-primary purpose trading).

⁴ (<https://www.oscr.org.uk/managing-a-charity/charity-accounting/charities-and-trading-guidance/>);

Non-primary purpose trading (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-and-trading#small-trading-tax-exemption>) can only be undertaken as long as there is no 'significant' risk to the resources of the charity. Whether trading is 'significant' depends on factors such as the nature of the business, turnover projections, investment from the charity and likelihood of return etc. Corporation tax will be due on profits from non-primary purpose trading, unless it falls within a specific exemption in tax law, or is below the small trading tax exemption applicable to charities (25% of total annual turnover up to a maximum of £80,000. Profits from non-primary purpose trading must be applied to the charitable purposes.

This table shows how the small trading tax exemption limits are applied:

Charity's gross annual income	Maximum permitted small trading turnover
Under £32,000	£8,000
£32,001 to £320,000	25% of your charity's total annual turnover
Over £320,000	£80,000

It is likely that the majority of trading activities at the Centre will continue to be strongly linked to DTCA charitable aims. However, any new trading activity should consider this guidance if there is substantial non-primary purpose trading planned in the future.

5.2 Policies and Procedures

DTCA already have a suite of governance, management and operational policies in place, as they are currently running the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre as a community space offering facilities, events, activities, and room hire.

Their ongoing management of the space demonstrates that established procedures and governance structures are already in active use. As they move toward future development and potential expansion, these existing policies will be reviewed, refined, and built upon to ensure they continue to meet community needs and support the next phase of the organisation's growth.

The following policies are outlined as key examples and are not an exhaustive list – any gaps will be reviewed and support requested from local Third Sector Interface/SCVO/Community Ownership Support Scotland as required.

1. Governance & Organisational

Governing document (SCIO constitution)

Board governance & code of conduct

Conflict of interest policy

Risk management policy

Data protection / GDPR policy

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy

Complaints policy

2. Safeguarding

Child Protection policy

Adult Support & Protection policy

Safer recruitment policy (including PVG procedures)

Safeguarding reporting & escalation procedures

3. Health & Safety

Health & Safety policy and statement

Fire safety & evacuation procedures

First aid policy

Incident/accident reporting procedures

Building risk assessments (incl. room use)

Activity-specific risk assessments (youth work, gardening, events)

Food hygiene policy (for larder, café, shared meals)

4. HR / Staffing / Volunteers

Recruitment policy (staff)

Volunteer policy & code of conduct

Induction & training procedures

Staff & volunteer behaviour/code of conduct

Grievance & disciplinary procedures

Expenses policy

Fair Work First statement

5. Financial Management

Financial management & controls policy

Delegated authority/spending approvals

Procurement & purchasing policy

Reserves policy

6. Building & Site Management

Building access & security policy

Room hire terms & conditions

Cleaning & facilities management procedures

7. Digital, Data & Communications

Data protection / GDPR (listed above)

IT & cybersecurity policy

Social media & communications policy

Information retention & disposal policy

Photography/filming consent guidance

8. Programme specific policies and procedures

Food provision policy (Community Larder & Café)

Gardening activity safety guidance

Youth work procedures & behaviour expectations

Events policy (e.g., Burns Night, Open Day)

Use of tools/equipment (tool library, garden tools, bike repair)

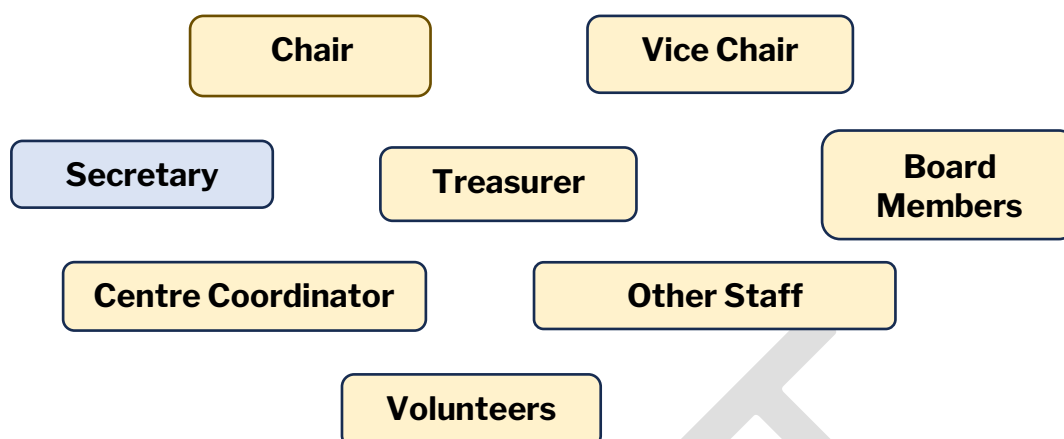
5.3 Board & Staff

The activities undertaken by Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre are overseen by a Board of Trustees. The board has 6 elected members who predominantly live within the Drylaw and Telford community, but all of whom are reside with the North Edinburgh area. The Board meets monthly and are actively involved in the strategic development of Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre and ensuring that the activities undertaken align to the organisational vision and mission and support and complement local and national priorities.

Currently there are four core members of staff (not including additional sessional workers):

- Centre Coordinator
- Social Link Worker (50+)
- Painting with Petals Lead
- Cleaner

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre Organisational Structure (2024)



5.4 Volunteering

Volunteers are an important asset to the organisation and the local community with dozens currently supporting a wide range of Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre activities. Volunteers come from a range of routes – from key partnerships, ad-hoc support and regular volunteering through funded programmes.⁵

Volunteers play a central role in the life of Drylaw Telford Community Association and are integral to how the group deliver its work. The volunteer team reflects the diversity of the local community and includes people of different ages, backgrounds, and life experiences, including refugees and people from ethnic minority communities.

Volunteer Contribution

Volunteers support and, in some cases, lead a wide range of activities, including community gardening, creative workshops, food preparation, shared meals, and community events. By drawing on the skills and interests of local people, the Centre is able to offer a varied and responsive programme that remains rooted in the community.

This approach increases participation, builds confidence, and creates opportunities for people to contribute in meaningful ways, rather than being passive recipients of services.

Support and Coordination

While volunteer involvement is central to the model, it is enabled by consistent staff support. Centre staff coordinate volunteers, provide guidance and training, ensure safeguarding and health and safety requirements are met, and maintain a welcoming and inclusive environment. This balance allows volunteers to thrive while ensuring activities are safe, well-organised, and sustainable.

Progression and Inclusion

⁵ OSCR records between 51-100 volunteers supporting the work of DTCA: <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/search-the-register/charity-details?number=SC022867>

Volunteering also provides opportunities for learning, skill development, and progression. For some volunteers, this has included gaining accredited training, such as food hygiene certification, and moving into paid employment. For others, volunteering offers structure, social connection, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Through volunteering and community involvement, people become active contributors to the Centre and to the wider community, strengthening social ties and building resilience at a local level. For example, DTCA recently supported 19 volunteers to complete Food Hygiene Level 2 training as part of their involvement in food preparation and community meals. Three of these individuals — all refugees — have since secured paid employment in the commercial food industry, with others currently exploring work or further training opportunities. This demonstrates how volunteering within a supportive community setting can lead to tangible progression, while also delivering immediate benefit to the wider community.

5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation help to ensure activities remain responsive to community need, deliver positive outcomes, and make effective use of resources. The DTCA approach to evaluation is proportionate, practical, and focused on learning rather than bureaucracy.

The Monitoring & Evaluation framework will track whether the Centre is achieving the long-term changes identified through consultation, including:

- A well-managed, financially sustainable community building.
- Improved social connection, increased participation and inclusion, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Improved health, wellbeing and community cohesion
- Tackling food poverty
- Increased access to affordable activities, culture, skills and support.
- A more sustainable, resilient, environmentally responsible community hub.

This system ensures that change is measured without imposing heavy data burdens on staff or volunteers.

Monitoring Activity and Participation

Attendance and participation are recorded across activities to understand who is regularly engaging with the Centre activities and programmes. This information helps to identify patterns, respond to changing needs, and ensure activities remain accessible to those who benefit most.

Some of the most relevant measures to capture include:

- Participation of young people, vulnerable adults, older people and disabled residents.

- Use of the community larder, community garden and all specific services within DNC
- Feedback on accessibility, pricing and welcome.
- Attendance at social activities
- Self-reported loneliness, confidence or connection (in short snapshot feedback from activities).

Capturing Outcomes and Feedback

Feedback is also gathered regularly from participants through informal conversations, group discussions, and regular opportunities for involvement in decision-making. For example, DTCA hold garden meetings where volunteers can shape how they would like the garden spaces to develop, influencing decisions about layout, planting, and accessibility.

Feedback from volunteers has directly informed recent improvements, including the development of new accessible paths to raised beds. One path currently under construction has been named “Andy’s Path” in recognition of the contribution of a long-standing volunteer, reflecting both learning from lived experience and the value placed on volunteer involvement.

Another example of learning in practice is the development of the ongoing food provision. In response to feedback from community members, the Centre moved from operating a small informal sharing shelf to establishing a dedicated community larder. The larder now operates from its own room, is volunteer led, and is open three times per week, increasing both access and dignity for people using the service.

Some of the relevant info to measure includes:

- Number and diversity of community members contributing to surveys and drop-in sessions.
- Number of jointly delivered services with partners, and satisfaction.
- Progression of volunteers into employment or further learning.

Learning and Improvement

Staff and Trustees regularly review participation data and feedback to reflect on what is working well and where improvements can be made. This learning informs practical changes to activities, spaces, and how staff and volunteer time is used. By embedding learning into everyday practice, the Centre can remain flexible and responsive, ensuring that community needs are met while making effective use of resources.

Relevant information and measures to include:

- Financial sustainability: income from hires, events and tenants.
- Space occupancy and hire patterns across all rooms.
- Green metrics such as waste diverted from landfill via composting

- Reliability and safety of the building (maintenance cycle, repairs completed).

Data Collection

This data collection plan is deliberately simple so as to be regularly and reliably collected by existing staff and volunteers.

Data source	Who will be involved?	What sort of info gathered?
Monthly Operational Data	Collected by staff, and reviewed each month	Space bookings & occupancy Activity and event attendance Community café income and attendance Volunteer hours Building issues logged & repairs completed Footfall estimates
Short Activity Registers	Group/activity leaders	Number of attendees Basic demographics (age group; postcode first half; concession/no-cost access) Optional: 1-minute wellbeing “check-in” scale (1–5)
6 monthly Volunteer Report	Staff and volunteers	Number of active volunteers Total hours contributed Roles performed Training or support needs
Regular Community Survey/Engagement	Staff/Volunteers/Board via activities, Facebook/social media polls, questions at community events	Satisfaction with DNC Barriers to use Views on activities/events What activities people want Perceptions of community connection, wellbeing
Annual Financial Review	Staff and Board	Total turnover by stream Profitability targets

		Reserve levels Cost of maintenance vs. unplanned repairs Progress on grants and funding
Sustainability Planning (3-5 years)	Board and Staff	A light-touch review combining: Business planning Impact data / case studies of individuals/groups Priorities for future

Impact and Future Planning

The data collected will be used to:

- Adjust pricing, programming and opening hours.
- Prioritise improvements such as signage, soundproofing, facility safety and café development.
- Demonstrate impact to funders, supporters and the community.
- Identify vulnerable groups who may still face barriers and adapt inclusive approaches.
- Guide long-term investment planning, including energy upgrades and expansions.
- Drive marketing
- This ensures that DNC remains community-led, financially sound, socially impactful and continuously improving.

5.6 Fit with SLF Eligibility

SLF Requirements	DTCA/Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre
Strong community control and appropriate legal structure	Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre is operated by Drylaw Telford Community Association, a two-tier SCIO where the majority of Trustees and Members must be drawn from the local community. ⁶

⁶ Clauses 10, 11 & 13, Drylaw Telford Community Association SCIO Constitution

	This is a long-established community-led organisation originally founded in 1995 (and SCIO established in 2015), demonstrating strong community governance and control.
Legal ability to own land/buildings	The SCIO structure of the Drylaw Telford Community Association ensures that this org can legally own land and property. The organisation also has extensive experience managing and operating the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre and associated land since it was developed and built by the org in 1995.
Asset lock in Constitution	Drylaw Telford Community Association has an asset lock within its constitution that outlines: <i>'Any surplus assets available to the organisation immediately preceding its winding up or dissolution must be used for purposes which are the same as or which closely resemble- the purposes of the organisation as set out in this constitution.'</i> ⁷
Geographical defined community	The Drylaw Telford Community Association (and Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre) is based in the Drylaw area of North Edinburgh. There is a clearly defined geographical community that covers the following postcode areas: EH4 2 (Drylaw, Telford, Craigleith), EH4 4 (Muirhouse, Siverknowes), EH5 1(Waterfront) and EH5 2 (West Pilton, Pilton and Wardie). ⁸
Open and inclusive membership	DTCA have an open and inclusive membership policy to encourage wide-ranging participation from the local community. The Constitution highlights: Membership is open to any local resident (or local worker) who is 16 years or older. The Trustees can also approve associate members from outside this area who are supporting the work of the Association. All members are entitled to one vote and general meetings or participate in the working of the Association. The majority of ordinary members and Management Board members should be resident in the defined community. No membership fee is payable – ensuring that there are no financial barriers to membership.
No private financial benefit	DTCA operates as a SCIO – whereby the Association applies all its resources exclusively for charitable purposes with no private profit distribution. All generated income is re-invested within the Centre to achieve its charitable aims. The Constitution also highlights a range of clauses that restricts any private benefit by Trustees or Members including

⁷ Clause 113, Drylaw Telford Community Association SCIO Constitution

⁸ <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/search-the-register/charity-details?number=SC022867>

	no employment by the Association for Members or Trustees and no remuneration for Trustee duties (aside from limited expenses incurred).
Transparent governance and decision-making structures	DTCA is governed by a skilled group of Trustees with deep knowledge of the Drylaw/Telford community. As a SCIO, the organisation operates under OSCR's regulatory framework, ensuring strong governance, transparency and accountability in all decision-making and financial management. The Constitution highlights: Annual General Meetings require reporting and director elections. Clear rules for meetings, notice periods, voting, quorum, and resolutions. Register of members and directors must be maintained (and accessible). Directors must follow a code of conduct and declare conflicts of interest.
Clear and lasting community benefit	Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre has provided a safe, trusted community space for over 30 years. Over this time, they have provided a clear legacy of benefits through social activities, wellbeing sessions, a community café, a larder, gardening opportunities, learning programmes, and multi-cultural groups, all contributing to long-term social benefit. The Constitution outlines clear community benefit goals from the work of the DTCA and Centre:⁹ <i>"We exist to address the social, cultural, economic, and environmental needs of the inhabitants of the areas outlined above, particularly among the most vulnerable in our community. We do this regardless of anyone's age, ability, religion, race, gender identity, or sexuality. We operate for everyone."</i> <i>"Our members face a wide range of challenges, including poverty, physical and mental health issues, social isolation, learning disabilities, and mobility issues. Many are older adults, refugees, or members of ethnic minority groups. Every aspect of our work is designed to meet their needs and improve their quality of life. We do this through the delivery of activities, events and services aimed to educate, entertain, inspire and feed our members."</i>

⁹ Clauses 4 and 5, DTCA SCIO Constitution

6 Risk Management

A range of potential risks have been identified which could impact on the success of the DTCA/Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre, along with actions required to mitigate these. A summary is presented here and a full risk register can be found in Appendix 2.

Summary:

DTCA demonstrates strong governance, financial controls, and risk management. The Board actively monitors sustainability, oversees budgets, and ensures compliance with all regulatory requirements. The organisation operates a mixed-income model combining grants, earned income, and partnerships, with proactive fundraising and a strong volunteer base supporting activity delivery.

Community ownership of the site at Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre would mitigate long-term risks related to land insecurity, facilitate diversification of income, and support the organisation's continued role in preventing isolation, reducing food insecurity, and supporting wellbeing in an area of high need.

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre is a highly valued, heavily used community asset delivering vital social, environmental, and wellbeing outcomes in one of Edinburgh's most disadvantaged areas. Its outdoor space, food provision, community-led activities, and longstanding trust make it central to community life. A Community Asset Transfer would secure this essential resource, enable long-term investment, unlock development opportunities, and strengthen DTCA's ability to deliver sustained benefit for local people for years to come.

7. Marketing

7.1 Context

Being part of a community was the biggest draw for people to use the centre, as found in the survey. Respondents wanted to see a range of interesting events, and to feel welcome. Promoting these events with a warm welcome via a range of communication channels to a diverse audience will help to build on the centre's success so far.

Community consultations and survey data show strong support for expanding activities and for the proposed community land purchase (93% in favour). Marketing will therefore play a crucial role in:

- Increasing awareness of current activities.
- Communicating the benefits of community ownership.
- Strengthening participation across age groups and demographics.
- Supporting long-term sustainability by boosting footfall, partnerships and potential hirers.

This marketing strategy sets out how the Drylaw Centre will grow awareness, participation and support for the asset transfer.

7.2 Audience

Local Residents

What drives them: A desire for a welcoming, local, affordable place to meet others, attend events, and access support. Many highlighted they simply do not know what is happening at the Centre.

What the marketing strategy will communicate: Clear, simple "What's On" information in multiple formats (online, posters, printed flyers); that the Centre is open, welcoming, and inclusive – particularly to New Scots; and affordable activities that suit a wide range of interests and ages.

Families with Children and Young People

What drives them: Strong demand for affordable, local activities for children and especially teenagers. A clear gap was identified for early-evening youth sessions. Family-friendly programmes should be inclusive of single parents, given the areas slightly higher-than-average proportion of single parent households.

What to communicate: Weekly family and youth activities, as well as one-off or seasonal events; activities co-designed with young people; safe, supervised and low-cost sessions for teenagers.

Older Adults and People Experiencing Isolation

What drives them: Routine, connection and low-pressure opportunities to socialise. Many described the centre as a "lifeline".

What to communicate: Social groups, gentle wellbeing activities and drop-in spaces; Friendly volunteers and staff, and a safe, inclusive environment; and that no purchase or membership is required to take part.

Vulnerable Groups and Support Organisations

What drives them: Accessible, predictable and affordable activities and venue. Responsiveness and care - one consultation respondent noted that volunteers had put down slabs outside so they could access the space.

What to communicate: Accessible facilities, including proactive steps taken for continuous improvement; the Centre's commitment to making concrete changes to cater to attendees; the stability and flexibility that will come with the CAT.

Groups and Orgs to Use/Hire Space

What drives them: Reliability, affordability, cleanliness, suitability of rooms, and good communication.

What to communicate: Clear room information (size, availability, cost, accessibility); professional and responsive management; the stability that a CAT will bring.

Funders, Donors and Investors

What drives them: Evidence of need, strong community support, sound governance, financial sustainability and demonstrated impact.

What to communicate: Clear data on participation, outcomes and demand (93% support for land purchase); a credible financial model with diversified income streams; strong governance and community ownership; impact stories from users, tenants and partners.

Strategic Partners

(e.g., Council services, CLD workers, local charities, employability services, NHS partners)

What drives them: Opportunities to collaborate delivering community priorities (wellbeing, inclusion, learning, food, climate action).

What to communicate: The Centre's role as a stable, accessible community asset bringing together people from different ethnic backgrounds; opportunities for co-delivery, outreach, and shared programming; community ownership providing long-term security for partnership activity.

Stakeholder quote: "Although I work for ELREC, I have a spiritual belonging here [at Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre]."

Volunteers

What drives them: Social connection, purpose, seeing the concrete impact they've made, and feeling valued.

What to communicate: A welcoming, supported environment; opportunities to contribute meaningfully to a valued community space; opportunities to meet new people.

7.3 Brand and Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

Brand



The Centre has an existing brand which is used across the website and Facebook profile but could be better implemented across Facebook posts to increase visibility / recognisability in audience's social media feeds. It will also be important to implement the brand consistently across the wider range of communication

channels recommended, including posters.

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre's brand is centred on being a welcoming, inclusive, community-led hub that provides meaningful opportunities for connection, support and engagement across all ages and backgrounds. Its Unique Selling Propositions (USPs) are:

A trusted, long-standing local space that residents described as a "godsend" and "a place people would be lost without".

A multi-generational, multi-faith, multi-ethnic environment for local residents.

A multi-use community space offering social groups, wellbeing activities, cultural events, youth programmes, and practical support in one accessible location.

Strong community support for ownership, demonstrating long-term commitment to keeping the space local and secure.

Visual

A stronger brand system, with consistent visuals, signage and messaging, would help residents understand that everything within the building is part of one community-owned place, making it easier for them to discover opportunities and engage more deeply. This is particularly important when footfall and awareness are central to the sustainability of the café and events programme.

Better branding, clearer signage and a more attractive façade could significantly improve passing-footfall and support any future growth plans for a range of activities, events and income streams such as the community café. A consistent brand would also help promote events, workshops and cultural activities more effectively, addressing the community's feedback that not enough people know what is happening.

Website

The Centre benefits from a clear, user friendly, up to date website. It is easily findable on search engines. When resources allow, some improvements could be made to further reflect the values and activities of the Centre.

Survey participants noted that they were unaware of events happening – an overhaul of the current Programme and Events pages, combining the two separate webpages into one, could help people find regular and one-off activities. Prominently displaying events on the homepage could help promote these further.

Featuring more photography from events could allow people to see for themselves how inclusive the Centre is. For example, seeing wheelchair users navigating the space will let other wheelchair users know that the space is accessible for them. It's important that this photography be natural and unstaged, and that consent is given by each person within the photograph for its use on the website.

7.4 Marketing Plan

Introduction/Aim

Effective marketing is essential to increase awareness, footfall, income and community engagement. This plan aims to reach all core audiences using a blend of local, low-cost, highly visible channels tailored to Drylaw's demographics and information-seeking habits.

Core Messages

Every communication should reinforce that:

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre is open, welcoming and community-owned

There is always something on: café, events, classes, groups and room hire

It is affordable and accessible, and no one is excluded by income or ability

It strengthens the town by giving a place for community to come together.

Marketing Channels

Signage:

Add bold new signage to ensure the building looks inviting from the outside.

Paint the storage containers to show what happens there and enliven the space – the Tool Library, and the Bicycle Library.

Engage the local men's shed to build a display board or A-board to promote events and café specials

What's On guide:

Consultation indicates many people want additional sources of information, not just Facebook. Consider a quarterly printed What's On guide for events and regular programming at the Centre. This could be distributed in local cafes, shops, schools & nurseries, GP practices & pharmacies, religious institutions and noticeboards.

Posters:

For events, markets, film screenings, classes and café openings placed at:

Bus stops

High-street windows

School noticeboards

Sports clubs and community halls

Local newspapers:

If not already established, build a relationship with your local paper's news desk.

Share press releases for major events, building improvements, funding successes, café launches, Christmas fairs, or partnership announcements. For each press release, give your local news desk a call to invite them along on the day.

Consider a regular "Community Hub Update" column or advertorial (low-cost).

Local radio:

Again, if not already established, build a relationship with your local radio news desk. This will be useful for community announcements, interviews and human-interest stories.

Third-Sector & Public Sector Partners:

Some partnerships to utilise include NEA Community Shed, Midnight and Beyond, Project Esperanza, Tinderbox Orchestra, Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council, North Edinburgh Arts, Stepping Stones, Spartans Football Club, Ferryhill Primary School, Oaklands School and Rowanfield School.

Cross-promotion in their newsletters and social media

Joint branding on events

Referral pathways ("If you attend X service, you may also enjoy Y activity at the hub")

Open days:

Consider holding open days and showcase weekends to explicitly welcome new people to the facility. These could include

Biennial "Showcase Weekend"

Café tasting days

Youth taster nights or bring-a-pal nights

Email Newsletter

Continue to grow a mailing list of residents, tenants, and volunteers.

Monthly newsletter with upcoming activities, highlights, photos and calls to action.

Sign-up prompts at events, in the shop, and at café tables.

Digital sign-up prompts in email signatures, and on the Instagram profile links, and as a Featured Post on Facebook.

Facebook:

The Centre has a solid Facebook profile, with 1.7k followers. Given the target population numbers 38,334, an ambitious yet realistic aim would be to reach 10% of the local population or 3.8k followers. This could be achieved by

- Daily/near-daily posts: events, behind-the-scenes, café specials, volunteer stories.
- Facebook Events for ALL workshops, screenings, fairs and community meetings.
- Short videos or reels introducing the Hub Manager, volunteers or regulars.
- Paid reach-boosting (£10-£20 per key event) to Drylaw.
- Community group cross-posting to “Drylaw & Telford Community Chat”. There are much larger Telford groups (“Telford”, “Telford Community Support”) so think about whether you want to include these too.

Instagram:

The Centre has an Instagram profile, which appears to be much newer and has just 135 followers. It appears that posts may be cross-posted across Facebook and Instagram, which is great as this saves significant time. This platform is used particularly by younger adults and parents. The Centre’s reach could be improved by high-quality photos of events, the gardens and café. Also, by adding a link to the Instagram from the website. Try using hashtags to reach new audiences, such as [#northedinburgh](#) [#muirhouse](#) [#drylaw](#) [#granton](#) [#pilton](#) as well as topical hashtags related to the activity you’re promoting i.e. #cafe, #fair, #communitygarden.

Twitter / X:

It appears that the Centre has an old Twitter / X profile that is no longer used. Remove the X link from the Facebook profile.

8. Funding and Finance

8.1 Valuation

Chartered Surveyors DM Hall prepared a valuation report in March 2026, giving a valuation of £200,000 market value or £12,500 annual market rent. The valued property “comprise a detached purpose-built community centre, situated on a large plot which is fully enclosed.”

Drylaw Telford Community Association are currently in negotiations with City of Edinburgh Council to agree a purchase price. Given the community benefits provided over the past 30 years by Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre, there is an positive expectation that a discount will be applied to the valuation.

The purchase price figure for Scottish Land Fund application will be updated as soon as this information is received from City of Edinburgh Council.

8.2 Cost and Funding Strategy

Cost Element	Amount and Details	Funder
Purchase of the asset	£200k but ongoing negotiations with City of Edinburgh Council to reduce purchase price.	SLF £TBC
Land and Buildings Transfer Tax ¹⁰	With community benefit discount this figure may reduce below £150,000 - estimate no LBTT at this time.	N/A
Legal and professional fees		SLF £5000

Funding Strategy

A conditions survey is underway through DM Hall (still in progress). The post-acquisition plan is to continue to use the Centre as it is – with an aspiration of adding additional capacity by extending the Centre building. This remains a long-term aim for DTCA for which community ownership is a critical driver – however, plans for this currently are in an early stage of development. The funding strategy below highlights a range of key funds Drylaw Telford Community Association will explore to support future plans and growth opportunities.¹¹

¹⁰ <https://www.revenue.scot/taxes/land-buildings-transaction-tax/non-residential-property>

¹¹ This funding strategy is specifically linked to key development for the building and land around the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre. It includes a selection of key funds for activities and programmes however it is not a complete list of all the funds that DTCA will apply to for project-based working.

Fund	Details	Amount ¹²
National Lottery Community Fund	Staff salaries and project-based activities	£50,000
EVOC Community mental health and Wellbeing Fund	Staff salaries and key activities	£15,000
Roberston Trust	Poverty relief activities and transport	£10,000
Awards for all	Salaries and activities	£15,000
Impact Fund	Volunteering work	£5,000
Longstone Trust	Painting with Petals project	£5,000
Edinburgh Airport Charitable Trust	Growing projects and Pantry/Larder	£5,000
ECCAN	Growing project	£2,500
CARES	Provides grants to community organizations for installing renewable technologies (solar, heat pumps) in community buildings, with grants up to £80,000.	Up to 80% of cost for solar panels on Centre - £20,000
CSGN - Growing Food Together Fund	Provides capital (and revenue) funding for creating or improving food growing spaces.	New infrastructure to support additional growing spaces post-acquisition of land - £10,000

¹² Based on previous successful funding grants and continuation of activities/services

Capital funding (N.B: building extension work timeframe 5+ years)¹³		
Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF)	Funds capital improvements, such as new infrastructure, refurbishment of vacant or derelict buildings, and community hubs to create jobs and boost local economies.	Contribution to future capital build costs for Centre extension (new hire spaces and potential for extended Garden Café space)
Garfield Weston Foundation	Will fund up to 10% of capital project budgets. For local community projects, grants are unlikely to exceed £30k.	Contribution to future capital build costs for Centre extension
Clothworkers Foundation	The Clothworkers' Foundation offers capital grants through its Open Grants Programme, supporting UK-based charities and non-profits with capital needs such as building purchase, renovation, equipment, vehicles, or digital infrastructure. Focus on a particular disadvantaged client group.	Contribution to future capital build costs for Centre extension Large Grants: over £15,000, typically capped around £150,000, for organisations with turnover under £10 million.

8.3 VAT and Tax

The cash flow shows that the enterprise is likely to be over the VAT threshold (£90,000 in any 12-month period) and may need to be VAT registered. This may facilitate VAT reclaim on build costs. However, a full VAT assessment will need to be undertaken at the next stage to verify this. The assumption is to develop the model that best suits the VAT situation. The organisation can opt to tax voluntarily which could save VAT on the build. This causes potential cash flow issues but reduces the fundraising burden.

This will need to be assessed by a VAT expert during the planning of the larger capital renovation. Some of the activity may be managed via a subsidiary which can also complicate the VAT situation.

8.4 Income and Sustainability

The income model for Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre is based on an established and diversified mix of grant funding, participation income, trading activity, and room hire, reflecting its role as a busy, multi-use community hub. Unlike start-up models, the financial projections are grounded in audited financial performance for 2023/24 and 2024/25, providing a robust and evidence-based foundation for future sustainability.

¹³ Not currently modelling in financial projections due to early-stage of development for Centre expansion

The Centre currently generates income from four primary streams:

- Grants and charitable income, including support from the National Lottery and Bank of Scotland
- Group income, derived from subscriptions and participation fees across a wide programme of activities
- Room hire, including regular bookings from community groups, partner organisations, and faith groups
- Trading income, including the bike outlet and other small-scale activities

The financial modelling demonstrates that no single income stream is sufficient to sustain the Centre independently. Instead, sustainability is achieved through a balanced portfolio, combining unrestricted earned income (room hire, trading and group income) with restricted grant funding.

Total income is projected to grow from approximately £173,000 in 2024/25 to £222,000 by Year 5, reflecting:

- Continued optimisation of room hire and utilisation of existing space
- Increased participation in activities and modest improvements in average contribution levels through tiered pricing
- Gradual expansion of trading and partnership activity
- Conservative assumptions regarding grant income, with stability in the short term and modest growth reflecting potential funding opportunities following asset ownership

Growth assumptions are deliberately tapered over time to reflect the physical constraints of the existing building, which limits the number of activities that can take place simultaneously. This ensures that projections remain realistic and do not assume unconstrained expansion.

The Centre operates a year-round programme of activities, resulting in relatively stable income across the year. Modest seasonal variation has been applied in the cashflow projections to reflect operational factors such as holiday periods, school terms, and increased activity in spring and autumn months. These variations are conservative and do not materially affect the overall financial position.

Overall, the model demonstrates that Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre is already operationally viable, with future sustainability strengthened through incremental income growth, diversification, and improved utilisation of existing assets.

Potential future plans include extending the building to include more community spaces, spaces for hire, potentially developing a garden café, and further development of growing and green initiatives on the site. Some of these ideas are at a very early stage of development and as such represent longer-term aspirations made possible through community ownership.

8.5 Expenditure

Expenditure has been modelled based on audited financial performance, reflecting the real operating structure of an established community anchor organisation. The model

assumes a stable and proportionate cost base, with modest growth aligned to activity levels and inflation.

Costs are broadly grouped into:

- Staff costs, representing the largest component of expenditure and essential to delivering a safe, inclusive and consistent programme
- Programme and activity costs, including delivery of community activities, events, and outreach
- Building and operational overheads, including utilities, insurance, maintenance, IT systems and administrative costs
- Professional and compliance costs, including accountancy, independent examination, and governance support

Staffing remains the core cost driver, reflecting the Centre's delivery model, which combines professional coordination with volunteer-led activity. A 5% annual increase has been applied to staff and core operational costs to reflect inflation and incremental growth in activity.

Most expenditure is assumed to be incurred evenly across the year, reflecting the Centre's consistent, year-round programme. However, certain costs including professional services, independent examination fees, and some governance-related costs are treated as annual or periodic costs and have been allocated to a single point within the year for modelling purposes.

The model also incorporates a planned approach to long-term maintenance and financial resilience. From Year 3 onwards, when operating surpluses stabilise, an annual allocation of £10,000 will be introduced to be set aside as a sinking fund.

This sinking fund will support:

- Planned maintenance and future capital repairs
- Replacement of building systems and infrastructure
- Improvements to accessibility and environmental performance

Introducing a sinking fund strengthens the long-term sustainability of the asset and reduces reliance on reactive or emergency funding for major repairs. This approach reflects good practice for community asset ownership and aligns with funder expectations.

8.6 Financial Projection

The financial projections demonstrate a stable and sustainable operating position over the five-year period, with income growth broadly aligned to increases in activity and controlled cost inflation.

The model shows:

- Annual income increasing from approximately £173,000 to £222,000 by Year 5
- Expenditure increasing at a slower but consistent rate, reflecting inflation and programme growth

- A sustained annual surplus of approximately £17,000–£19,000, providing a stable operating margin

Unlike start-up projects, the Centre does not experience an initial deficit phase. Instead, the projections reflect an existing operational model that is already viable, with incremental improvements over time.

These surpluses allow the organisation to:

- Build financial reserves
- Contribute to a planned sinking fund from Year 3 onwards
- Strengthen resilience against funding uncertainty
- Support ongoing development of services and facilities

The projections are intentionally conservative and reflect:

- Realistic growth in room hire and participation income
- Cautious assumptions regarding grant funding
- Recognition of capacity constraints within the existing building

The monthly cashflow (Appendix 1) demonstrates that the Centre maintains a positive cash position throughout the year, with only minor variation due to the timing of grant receipts and annual expenditure items.

Overall, the financial modelling confirms that Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre is:

- Financially viable in its current operation
- Capable of generating consistent surpluses
- Able to build reserves and plan for long-term maintenance
- Well-positioned to sustain and grow its activities following community ownership

The projections therefore support the case that community ownership will secure and strengthen an already functioning and sustainable asset, rather than being required to establish viability from the outset.

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre								
23/24, 24/25 Audited Financials and Projection Su Year		23/24	24/25	1	2	3	4	5
Income								
Donation and Charitable Activities		112,516	104,847	109,792	110,069	115,572	121,351	127,419
Grants		108,943	99,579	104,261	104,261	109,474	114,948	120,695
Donations		3,573	5,268	5,531	5,808	6,098	6,403	6,723
Other Trading Activities		26,100	68,579	79,465	86,292	90,607	93,325	96,125
Groups Income		3,939	31,811	34,992	37,791	39,681	40,871	42,098
Room Rental		13,761	31,368	36,073	39,681	41,665	42,914	44,202
Shed Rental		8,400	5,400	8,400	8,820	9,261	9,539	9,825
Total Income		138,616	173,426	189,258	196,361	206,179	214,676	223,543
Expenditure								
Raising Funds		1,834	-	1,834	1,926	2,022	2,123	2,229
Charitable Activities		138,268	157,460	167,555	175,709	184,265	193,241	202,660
Total Expenditure		140,102	157,460	169,389	177,635	186,287	195,365	204,889
Net Income / (expenditure)		(1,486)	15,966	19,869	18,726	19,892	19,311	18,654
Balance								
Total Funds Brought Forward		90,611	89,125	105,091	124,960	143,686	163,578	182,889
Total Funds Carried Forward		89,125	105,091	124,960	143,686	163,578	182,889	201,544

Appendix 1: Financial Projections

Please refer to attached excel file.

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Appendix 2: Risk Register

Staffing includes Centre Coordinator (CC) & Social Link Workers (SLW).

Risk	Impact	Probability	Existing Controls	Action Required	Responsibility
BEFORE & DURING TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP					
Agreeing a price and concluding missives	High	Low	Willing seller: solicitors engaged	Maintain dated deal timetable; weekly legal calls; escalate blockers early; agree a long-stop date	Board
Legal/title issues surfaced by due diligence (burdens, consents)	High	Low–Medium	Initial legal review	Full title & property searches; clarify burdens/consents; secure warranties	Board
Valuation or funding gap (grant/lender shortfall)	High	Medium	Early funder contacts	Phase works; diversify funders; prepare bridging/working-capital option	Board
Surveys reveal major defects (roof, electrics, asbestos, extractor)	High	Medium	Known roof/extractor issues logged	Commission full building & M&E surveys; set 10–15% contingency; prioritise safety-critical fixes	Board; CC
Insurance gap during transfer (change of interest)	Medium	Low	Broker engaged	Confirm cover from exchange to completion; verify PL/EL continuity	Board
Project timeline slippage pre-completion	Medium	Medium	Indicative timeline	Back-plan from deadlines; agree milestones; use weekly RAG reporting	Board
POST-ACQUISITION: FINANCE & GOVERNANCE					

Insufficient working capital	High	Low–Medium	Working capital identified in cash flow; local fundraising	Activate fundraising plan; secure standby facility (e.g., SIS); tighten debtor/creditor terms	Board
Insufficient reserves to manage cash flow	High	Low	Board experience; weekly monitoring	Approve reserves policy of at least 3 months	Board; CC
Financial mismanagement / weak internal controls	High	Low–Medium	Digital finance systems; board oversight	Document finance procedures; monthly P&L by stream; annual independent review	Board; CC
Fundraising pipeline slips	High	Medium	Prospect list started	Map deadlines; run parallel bids; have scope-reduction option; keep funders briefed	Board
VAT/tax errors (primary vs. non-primary trading; MTD)	Medium–High	Low–Medium	Awareness raised in plan	Take VAT/tax advice pre-registration; ring-fence non-primary trading in subsidiary if needed	Board
Negative publicity / reputational hit	Medium	Low	Strong community goodwill	Approve comms protocol; single spokesperson; 48-hour response SLA; publish “what we learned”	Board; SLW; CC
POST-ACQUISITION: PEOPLE					
Difficulty retaining staff	High	Medium	Competitive salaries	Fair Work practices; supervision & CPD; rota planning; wellbeing support	Board
Loss of key board members	Medium	Medium	Broad skill mix	Succession plan; staggered terms; trustee induction; targeted recruitment (finance/H&S/retail)	Board

Volunteer burnout / insufficient volunteers	Medium	Low	Volunteer policies	Role descriptions; rota; recognition; avoid replacing core paid roles	CC
Staff/volunteer conduct complaint	Medium	Low	HR policies	Clear code of conduct; grievance/disciplinary routes; swift, fair handling	Board; CC
OPERATIONS: BUILDING, SAFETY & WORKS					
Energy price volatility	Medium	Medium	Careful estimates	Commission M&E options; pursue CARES; reduce kWh/m ² via controls/LED	CC
Building condition worsens (roof leaks, extractor failure, damp)	High	Medium	Temporary fixes; issue log	Prioritise roof/extractor Phase 1; planned maintenance schedule; repair reserve	CC
Cost overrun / contractor failure	High	Medium	Multi-quotes; outline scope	Competitive tender; fixed-price elements; retention; QS/light cost control	Board; CC
Operational disruption during works	Medium	Medium	Flexible rooming	Programme around big bookings; decant plan; proactive comms to hirers/tenants	CC
Health & Safety incident	High	Medium	Clear policies	Annual H&S review; risk assessments (workshop/kitchen/events); incident reporting	CC
Fire safety non-compliance	High	Low	Alarms/extinguishers present	Annual FRA; drills; maintain exits & lighting; hot-works permits; logbook	CC

Safeguarding / safer-spaces breach	High	Low	Safer Spaces policy planned	Finalise policy; appoint Safeguarding Lead; training and reporting routes. PVG	CC
Food safety/allergen incident (café/catering)	High	Low–Medium	Commercial kitchen; trained staff	HACCP; allergen matrix; temp logs; EHO liaison; staff training records	CC
Data protection/cyber incident	Medium	Low	Cloud systems	Data Lead; MFA; backups; DPIAs; staff training; incident playbook	CC 1
Utility outages (power/water/heating)	Medium	Medium	Standard supplier SLAs	Critical contacts; portable kit; building-wide comms plan; refund policy	CC
Vandalism and damage	Medium	Medium	Local relationships	CCTV/alarms; external lighting; quick repairs; police liaison	CC
Asbestos discovery during works	High	Low	None confirmed	Asbestos survey pre-works; licensed removal if found	CC
PROGRAMME, TRADING & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE					
Complaints from customers / service users	Medium	Low	“Strong plan”; timetabling	Customer-care standards; response SLAs; accessible feedback channels	CC
Low footfall/awareness	High	Medium	1.7k Facebook following	Deliver marketing plan; improve signage; monthly “What’s On”; local posters	SLW; CC
New competition (venues/café)	Medium	Medium	Unique community centre for community benefit	Emphasise USPs; loyalty offers	SLW; CC

Programme fails to meet community expectations	Medium-High	Medium	Strong engagement record	Rapid feedback loops; adjust pricing/content	SLW; CC
Pricing backlash (affordability concerns)	Medium	Medium	Tiered pricing principle	Publish concession policy; show cross-subsidy; monitor concession take-up	Board; CC
Card terminal or Wi-Fi outage (café sales drop)	Medium	Medium	Multiple devices	4G fallback; offline slip procedure; test before trading periods	CC
Noise complaints from neighbours	Medium	Low-Medium	Event management know-how	Sound checks; curfews; SPL monitoring; stewarded doors; neighbour comms	CC
Transport/parking limits reduce attendance	Medium	Medium	Central bus links	Promote bus routes; stagger timings; signpost car parks; encourage car-share	CC
Accessibility shortcomings for disabled users	Medium-High	Medium	Step-free access; accessible toilets	Co-design fixes; clear wayfinding; bookable adjustments; staff training	CC; SLW
RESILIENCE					
Loss of major partner	Medium-High	Medium	Strong relationships	Regular account management; flexible packages; pipeline for replacements	SLW; CC
Severe weather/flooding event	High	Low-Medium	Standard insurance	Emergency plan; review drainage; critical contact lists; data off-site	CC
Pandemic/health emergency	High	Low	COVID learning	Hygiene SOPs; hybrid options; refund policy; comms templates	Board; CC

Insurance cover gaps or inadequate limits	High	Low	Broker on file	Annual cover review; confirm trustee and event liability; review limits	Board
Regulatory change (rates relief, licensing, charity law)	Medium	Low-Medium	Network awareness	Renewal calendar; TSI/SCVO updates; periodic legal check-ins	Board

Research Appendices : Research and Feasibility

Introduction

To ensure this report is coherent, accessible, and easy to navigate, all the elements of this work have been brought into a single, consolidated document. This integrated approach enables all findings, insights, and evidence to be viewed together in context, supporting clearer understanding and stronger connections across the different strands of work.

While the detailed research summaries remain available in full within the appendices, a complete overview of all research findings can also be found in Section 3 of the main report. This provides a concise, centralised synthesis for readers who wish to see the combined evidence at a glance before exploring the supporting detail.

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Appendix 3 : Demographics

The demographic report provides a summary of key data for Drylaw/Telford in the City of Edinburgh.

The specific output areas included in this report are based on the National Records Scotland definition of the designated community councils. Per the NRS, there are 333 output areas within the community defined by Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre.

The area includes the following postcode areas:

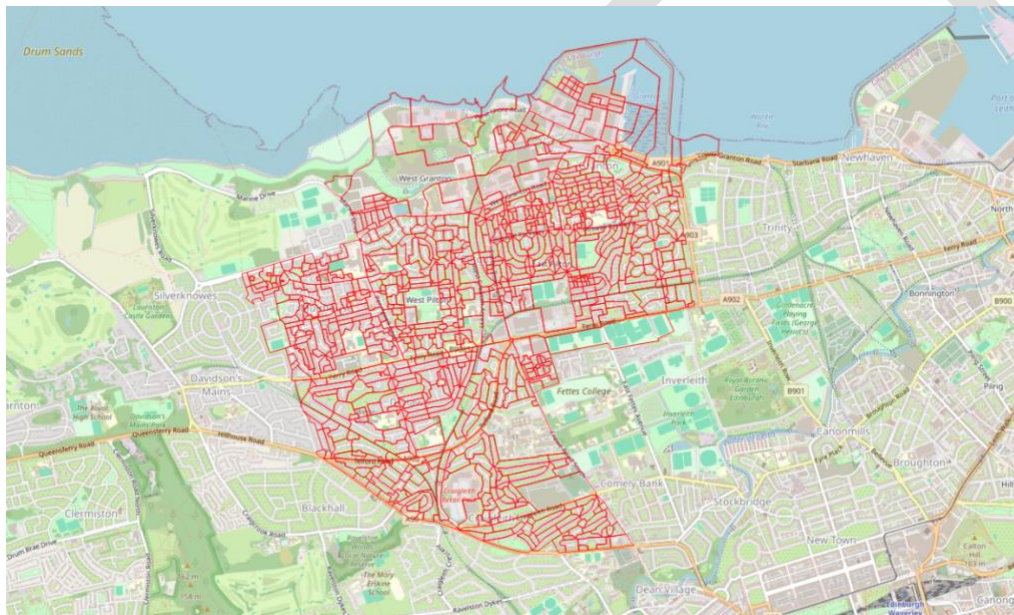
EH4 2 – Drylaw, Telford, Craighleith

EH4 4 – Muirhouse, Silverknowes

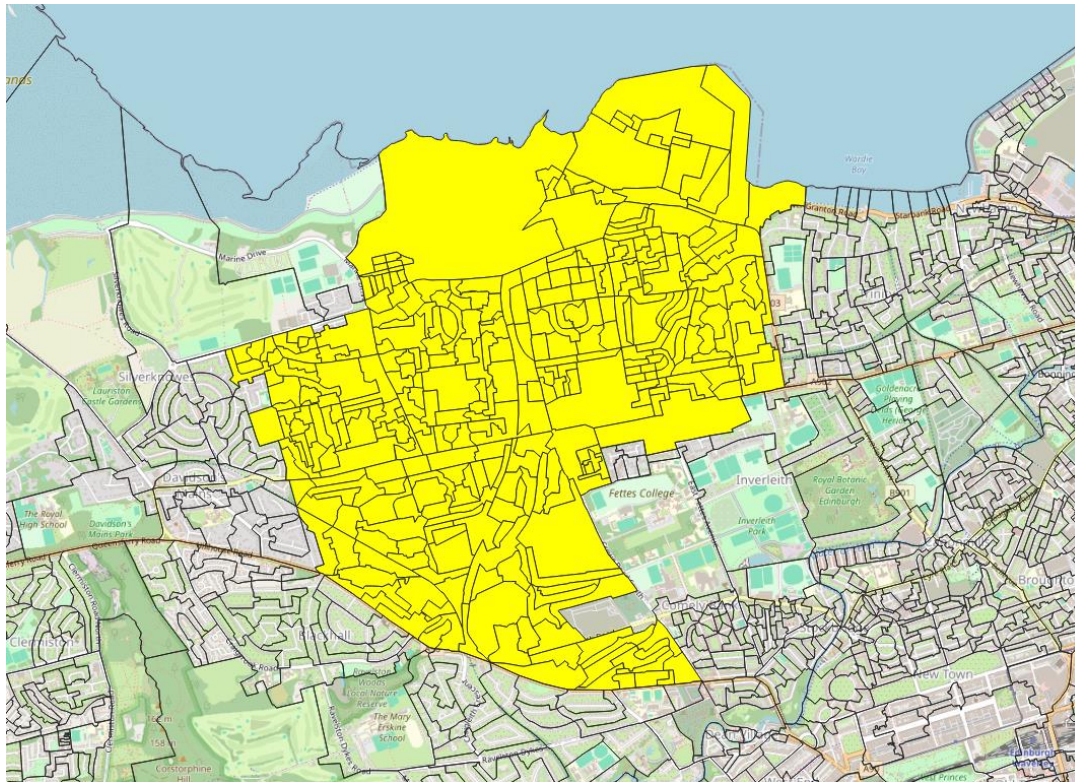
EH5 1 – Waterfront

EH5 2 – West Pilton, Pilton, Wardie

All postcodes within this area are shown on this map in red:



Output areas for the 2022 census were matched as closely as possible to these postcodes. The resulting map can be see here:



Note on Boundaries and availability of data

Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this report is from the 2022 Census. Per the Data.Gov website, “Output Areas (OAs) are the key geography for dissemination of small area statistics from the Census. OAs are large enough for Census statistics to be released without infringing confidentiality. They are designed to have relatively small numbers of households (in the range of 25 to 89) and population (≥ 60), while nesting within Council areas.”¹⁴

When referring to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Index, data is gathered from the closest fitting data zones. Data zones are small area geographies designed to have roughly standard populations of 500 to 1000 residents, and are composed of Output Areas.

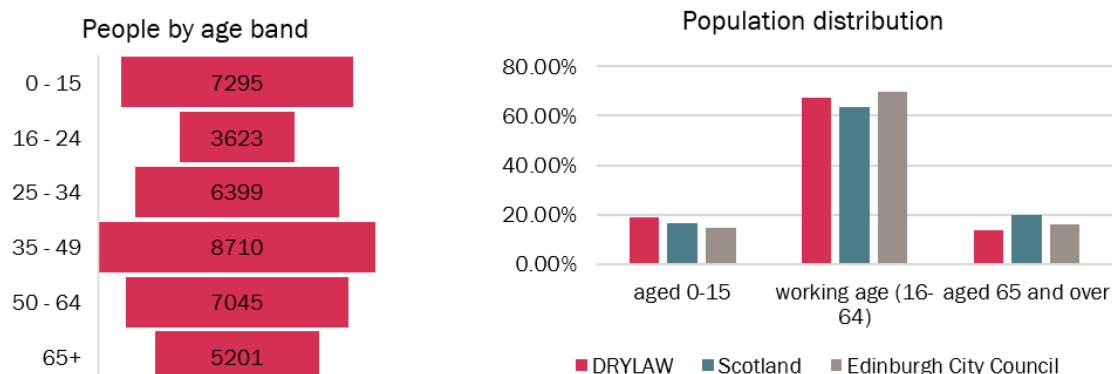
Demographic Analysis

The total population of the defined area is 38,334 people. Individuals aged 0-15 make up 19% of the population, which is higher than the City of Edinburgh average (15%) and the average across Scotland (16%).

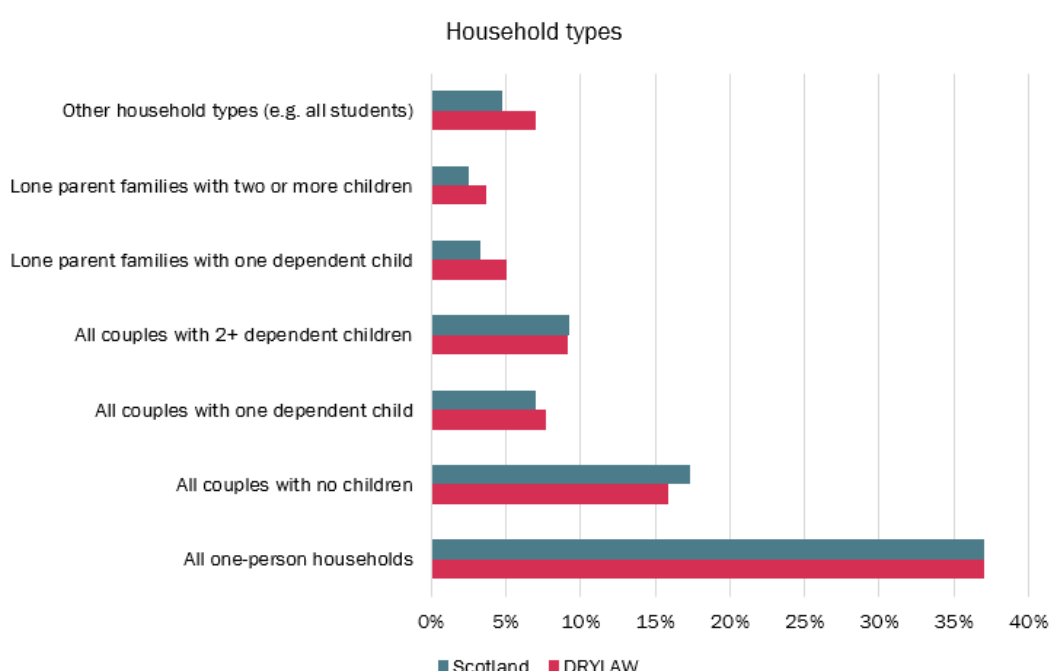
Working age individuals (16-64) represent 67% of the population which is higher than the percentage across Scotland (64%) but lower than the rate in Edinburgh City Council (69%).

Individuals aged 65 and over make up 14% of the population in Drylaw and Telford. This is lower than Scotland as a whole (20%) and slightly lower than the proportion in the council area (16%).

¹⁴ <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/92d0e6e6-c869-4e17-a8ee-70cd291829fa/census-2022-output-areas>



Housing



There is a total of 17,716 households in the defined area.

Many of these figures are in line with Scottish averages but there is a higher-than-average number of lone parent families.

	All lone-parent families	Lone parent families with one dependent child	Lone parent families with two or more children
Drylaw and Telford	13%	5%	4%
Scotland	10%	3%	3%

31% of homes in the defined area are a house or bungalow which is low when compared with Scotland as a whole (65%). A very high number of homes in the area are flats, maisonettes or apartments (69%), compared with 34% across Scotland.

The number of homes owned by residents is lower than average, Drylaw 50%, Scotland 63%. 32% of homes in the area are socially rented (Scotland 23%). The number of privately rented homes is also higher than the national average, 17% compared with 12%.

According to Right Move ([House Prices in Drylaw](#)) house prices in Drylaw had an overall average of £342,794 over the past year. The majority of properties sold were flats, selling for an average of £250,232. Overall, the historical sold prices in Drylaw over the last year were 6% up on the previous year and similar to the 2021 peak of £342,451.

The Office for National Statistics ([Office for National Statistics Web-site](#)) reports that the average house price in Edinburgh was £297,000 in November 2025, up 5.7% from November 2024. This was higher than the rise in Scotland (4.5%) over the same period.

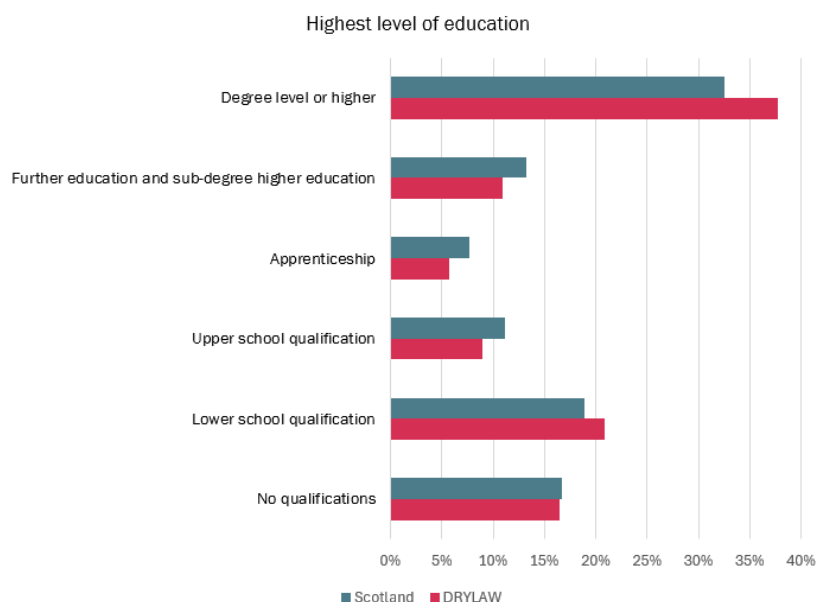
The UK House Price Index ([UK House Price Index Web-site](#)) reported that in the year to May 2025, house prices in the City of Edinburgh increased 7.6%, higher than the rise in Scotland (6.4%) for the same period. It also states that the average house price in Scotland was £192,000.

Vehicle Access

According to the 2022 census, 41% of households in Drylaw have no access to a car or a van. This is higher than the Scottish average of 26%.

The detail behind this figure shows that the number of households with access to one car or van is very close to the national average. The difference comes for households with 2 cars or vans (13% for Drylaw/Telford and 24% nationally) and those with access to 3 cars or vans (2% in Drylaw and 5% across Scotland).

Education



The number of people in the defined area who have a degree or similar is 38%, slightly higher than the national average of 32%. The number of people with no qualifications is the same as the national average. Rates for other forms of education are all slightly lower than average.

The following schools are found in the defined area¹⁵:

- Ferryhill Primary School - 339 pupils
- Craigroyston Primary School - 326 pupils
- Granton Primary School - 439 pupils
- Wardie Primary School - 440 pupils
- St David's RC Primary School - 334 pupils
- Rowanfield Special School, a "multi-agency school for primary aged children with severe and complex social, emotional, communication and learning needs."
- Catchment secondary schools are St Augustine's RC High School (948 pupils), Broughton High School (1276 pupils) and Craigroyston High School (741 pupils).

Health, Disability and Caring Responsibilities

People who say they are...	DRYLAW	Scotland
In very good health	47.64%	47.95%
In good health	31.59%	30.89%
In fair health	13.83%	14.22%
In bad health	5.36%	5.30%
In very bad health	1.60%	1.64%

People whose day-to-day activities are limited by disability	DRYLAW	Scotland
limited a lot	10.15%	10.76%
limited a little	12.66%	13.34%
not limited at all	77.27%	75.90%

Data shows that residents in Drylaw and Telford rate their health in a similar way to those across Scotland. The number of people whose day-to-day activities are limited by disability is also similar to the Scottish average.

8,745 people in the defined area have a disability which limits their day-to-day activities to some extent.

3,270 people have a physical disability and 4,787 are reported to have a mental health condition.

3,989 people in the defined area provide unpaid care. Figures are generally in line with national statistics with slightly more people in Drylaw and Telford providing less than 19 hours of unpaid care per week.

¹⁵ Data from data.gov.uk Scottish School Roll and Locations - data.gov.uk

People providing unpaid care	DRYLAW	Scotland
<19 hours a week	5.73%	6.62%
20-34 hours a week	1.16%	1.17%
35-49 hours a week	1.23%	1.19%
50 or more hours a week	2.75%	2.88%
All unpaid carers	10.75%	11.86%

Economic Activity

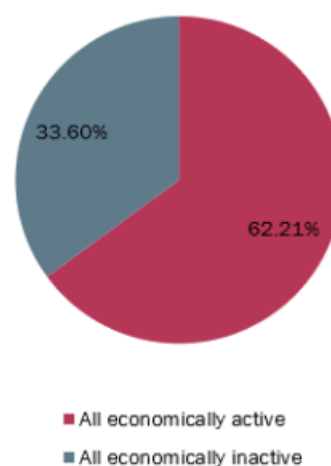
People classed as economically active include:

- 51.88%** who are employees, of which:
 - 38.90%** work full-time
 - 13.00%** work part-time
- 8.13%** who are self-employed, of which:
 - 1.39%** have employees
 - 6.74%** have no employees
- 2.30%** who are unemployed and available for work

People classed as economically inactive include:

- 16.14%** who are retired
- 4.30%** full-time students
- 4.24%** looking after home or family
- 6.16%** long-term sick or disabled

People aged over 16 classed as economically active



In terms of economic activity, there is a relatively high percentage of people in the defined area who are “economically active”, 62% compared with 57% nationally. 52% of respondents are employees compared with 48% across Scotland.

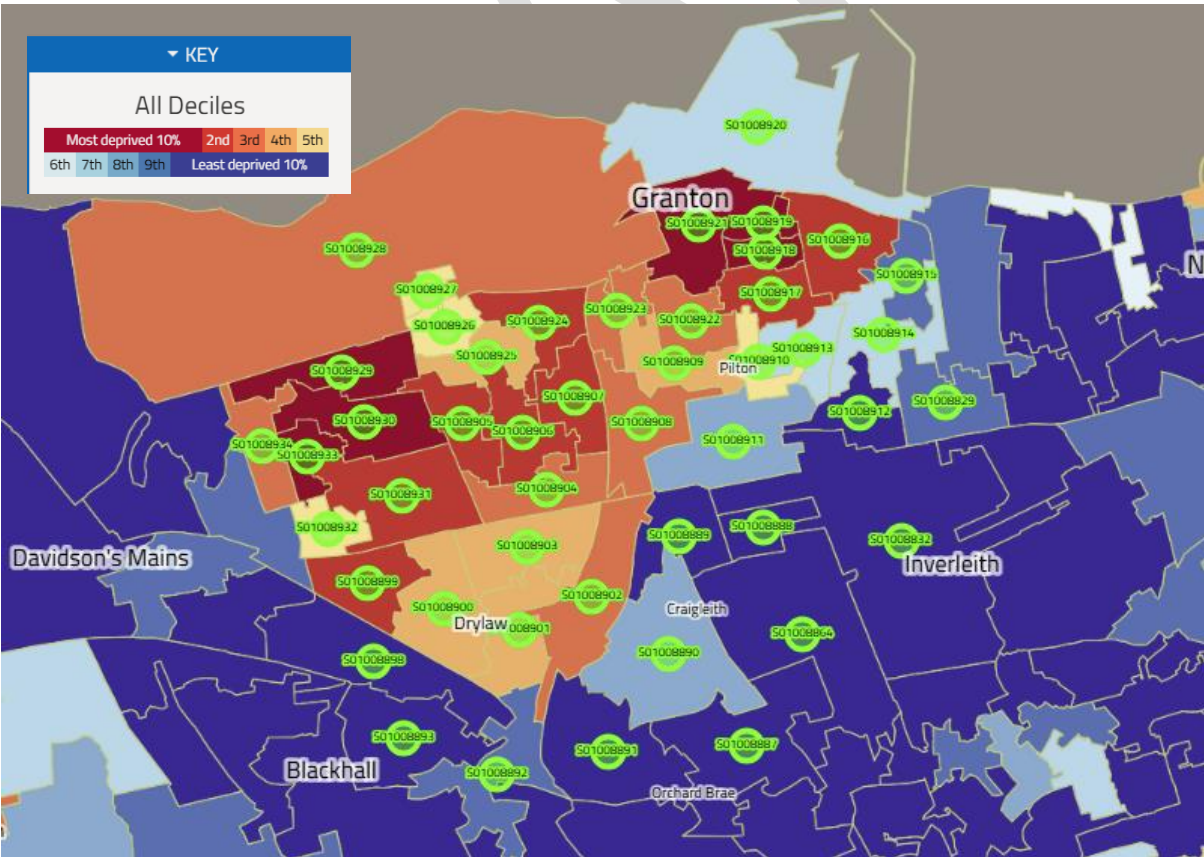
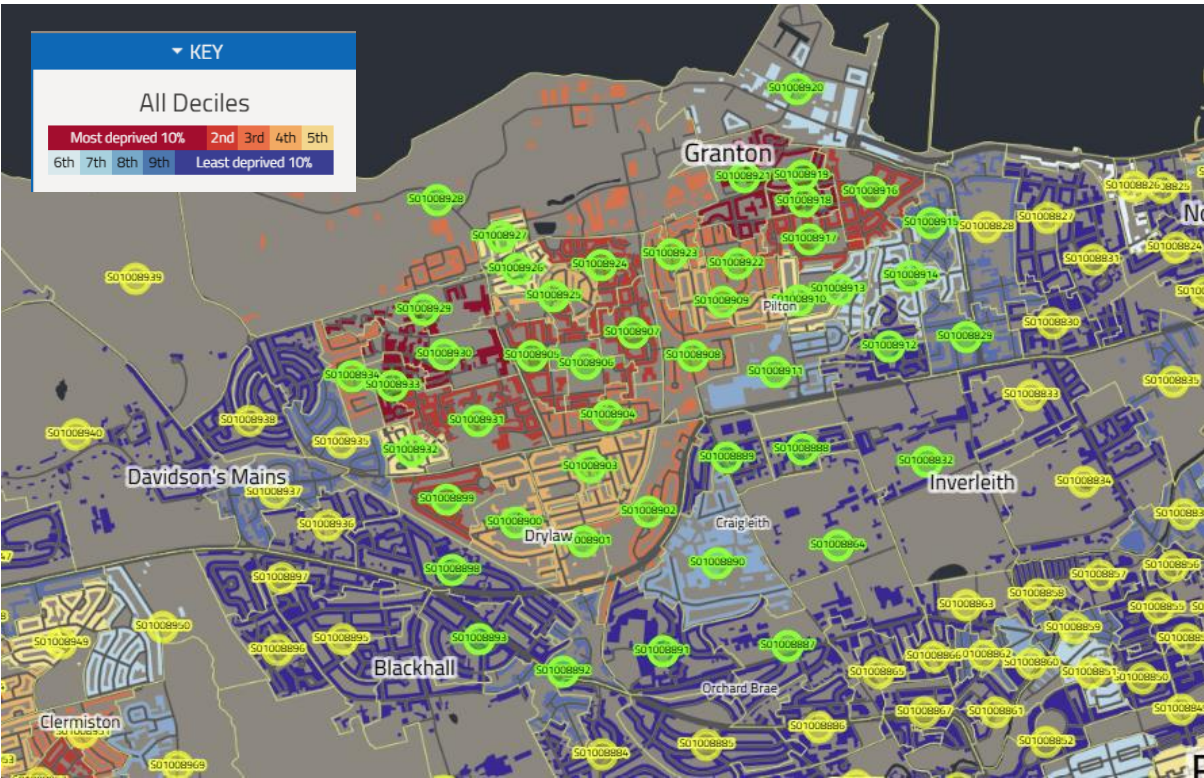
The numbers of people who are self-employed and unemployed are similar to national averages.

The proportion of people who are economically inactive is lower than national figures, this is largely due to a lower number of retired people in the defined area. 16% of the population in Drylaw and Telford as opposed to 23% nationally.

Deprivation levels

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) measures the level of deprivation across 6,976 data zones in Scotland. The SIMD combines data across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, geographic access to services, housing and crime. Areas coloured red are ranked as most deprived, through to orange, blue and dark blue (least deprived).

The images below are taken from the SIMD website and show the general levels of deprivation in the defined area.



The defined area for Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre is very large and complex, including 47 data zones with varied levels of deprivation. However, this area of North Edinburgh includes areas of significant deprivation. The highest levels of deprivation linked to the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre are outlined in the 6 zones shown below. These zones are all in the 1st decile, meaning that they rank the highest in Scotland in terms of deprivation across a variety of factors like education, health, employment and crime.

DRAFT

Appendix 4 : Competitive Analysis

This document details findings from a competitive analysis, which was conducted to identify facilities and services in the Drylaw and Telford area that may act as partners/competitors for activities within the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre. This Centre offers valuable community space for local meetings, local events, and activities including exercise classes, youth activities and community lunches. This space also supports a community larder and a new café space which has been well received by the local community. These activities would be continued following any CAT transfer of the land associated with this Centre. The community has also been consulted on future plans if this CAT were to be successful – new activities included an expansion of the community garden/outdoor space, new activities for teenagers, longer opening hours for working parents.

The purpose of this competitive analysis is to build a picture of the services and facilities the community has access to at present, and to make sure that proposals for the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre continues to fill a gap in local provision and will not adversely impact on other organisations or businesses.

Community Centres

Venue:	Facilities:	Use and activities:	Pricing:
Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre	Wheelchair accessible, toilets & baby changing, WiFi, device charging, tea/coffee facilities, hot food, large community garden, meeting rooms, hall space.	20+ weekly groups (yoga, toddler groups, drama), warm hub sessions, breakfast café, community larder, walking groups, events, gardening, skills workshops, hall hire, support groups.	Many sessions free; some classes £2-£3; community larder £3 entry.
Drylaw Parish Church (0.1 miles away)	Church hosting some community groups. Hall hire available.	Coffee mornings, talks, yoga,	Church-run groups appear to be free. Community groups do not list pricing.

		dance, girl guides.	
Royston Wardieburn Community Centre (≈1 mile away)	Large public community centre; multiple rooms; open weekdays 9am–9pm; accessible facilities.	Community groups, classes, events, youth activities, hall hire.	Not published online.
Blackhall Mosque (0.8 miles away)	Community-focused mosque with young, diverse attendance. Website does not list spaces for hire.	Toddler group, coffee mornings, Arabic classes and talks	Appear to be free
Blackhall St Columba Church (0.8 miles away)	Church hosting many community groups. Hall hire available.	Lunches, coffee mornings, knitting club and talks, sports & dance, scouts & girl guides, choirs	Church-run groups appear to be free. Community groups do not list pricing.
Poltonhall Recreation Ground (1 mile away)	Whilst there is no venue, this rec ground is used for football for young people.	Football for young people	
Inner Space at Dalry – 183 Creative & Cultural Hub (2 miles away)	Hireable hall/creative space located at 183 Dalry Road; multipurpose rooms.	Workshops, classes, meetings, creative events.	Pricing not shown (listed as bookable venue).
The Space at Dalry – 183 Creative & Cultural Hub (2 miles away)	Event/hall hire, cultural venue, flexible layout; same site as Inner Space.	Functions, meetings, classes, creative programmes.	Pricing not shown (booking required).

Cafes

Venue:	Facilities:	Use and activities:	Pricing:
Monday Breakfast Café (inside Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre)	Hot breakfast rolls (sausage, egg, tattie scone), tea/coffee; social seating area; weekly pop-up within community centre. [nen.press]	Weekly community breakfast event offering social connection and low-cost food. Mondays 9–11am. [nen.press]	Pricing not fully itemized, but intended to be low-cost; no formal menu published.
Brunchies (Ferry Rd)	Sit-in café, serves breakfast & lunch items (toasties, bagels, soup, desserts); open 7 days. [Brunchies]	Local daytime café used for meals/coffees; suitable for casual meet-ups. [Brunchies]	No price list published online (menu available on business website).
Home Bakery (Groathill Rd N)	Café–bakery serving breakfast, rolls, pies, cakes; credit/debit/NFC accepted; vegan options; takeaway service. Open 06:00–14:00. [intravel.net]	Popular for breakfast, baked goods, takeaway food; used by locals for low-cost morning meals. [intravel.net]	£1–£10 per person (verified).
Lora's Café (Telford Rd)	Coffees & teas, soups & salads, sandwiches, burgers, cakes	Simple, classic.	£1 - £10 per person
Abingers (Craigcrook Road)	Coffees & teas, soups & salads, paninis, cakes	Eclectic, informal, cozy.	£1 - £10 per person
Craigcrook (Craigcrook Terrace)	Coffees & teas, breakfast rolls.	Deli & coffee shop.	£1 - £10 per person
Café Modern One	Coffees & teas, sandwiches, cakes. Premium.	'Seasonal, sustainable, made from scratch'.	£10 - £20 per person

		Indoor and outdoor seating.	
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Appendix 5 : Community Drop-in Event

Background

Drop in at the Centre on 16th February 2026

Community Enterprise staff ran a drop-in at the Centre on Monday 16th February between 10.30 - 1pm. Activities taking place over this period included the new café, the community larder, and the walking group. Substantive discussion took place with 18 people, mostly those taking part in these activities. The majority of people consulted live in Drylaw / Telford.

Views on Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre

Attendees were asked for views on the Centre. Feedback was unanimously positive:

- The Centre provides a place for people in the community to meet and socialise. Without it, there would be no place for people to meet their neighbours. The Centre enables people to form connections. One attendee who lives by themselves noted that the Centre had helped to reduce their social isolation. Some participants had become friends from attending the same activities at the Centre.
- The Centre has a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. Staff were praised by several attendees (on the basis they help to create this atmosphere). One attendee noted staff had laid down slabs outside so the outdoor space was more accessible for them.
- The Centre provides a space for people to engage with different cultures: it has hosted an evening for people to learn about Sudanese culture; and a Burns night.
- For people who have immigrated to the UK, the Centre had provided a means of getting to know people, as well as practical support with food and clothing etc. It has provided place for volunteering (community volunteering can support visa applications). Some attendees with a migrant background reported that attending activities at the Centre had helped to release stress/trauma from their experiences of displacement /immigration.
- A number of those spoken to have volunteered or informally helped out with activities at the Centre (e.g. making sandwiches for the walking group). One supported person at the Centre helps to cut the grass (with support from Centre staff) – this is a source of pride. Two volunteers described their experience as being like a family – with some disagreements at times, but with real care for each other at the core.
- The Centre was described as “a godsend”; and “people would be lost” without it.
- Participants noted the range of activities which take place at the Centre: the walking group; litter picking; Tea and Toast; the new café; events like Burns night and birthday parties; craft events; bike maintenance etc.
- The outside area is well used. The green space is valuable for supporting mental health, including in children.

Views on the proposed asset transfer

Attendees were asked for views on the proposed asset transfer, and whether they were supportive or not supportive.

One attendee was not sure, and requested more information on which specific parts of the site were owned by Drylaw Telford Community Association and which were currently owned by the Council.

All other attendees were supportive of the asset transfer:

- This provides long term security. Attendees wanted to see the Centre remain here for the long term, and for the activities they enjoy to continue.
- It provides more flexibility in relation to the outdoor space: the shed could be revitalised, raised beds put in etc.
- It enables the building to be extended or reconfigured if needed.
- One attendee described the asset transfer as “a no brainer” – the Association is already looking after the site and land.

Questions from attendees which were discussed in the session related to (1) the extent of the land owned by the Association and leased from the Council; (2) the end date of the current lease from the Council; (3) funding available to cover the purchase; and (4) how to become a member of the SCIO.

Suggestions for future development

The emphasis was on continuation of current activities which the attendees value; and continuing to provide a valuable social space for the community. The new café was commented on positively as something which can bring more people into the space.

Specific ideas included:

- Increased opening hours: e.g. current opening hours don't suit working parents, but they are an important part of the community also. Later and weekend opening was the most frequently suggested idea. The community larder could also open for an hour later on to make the service more accessible.
- Activities for teenagers: mentioned several times as a gap. Attendees commented that (1) young people want to take part – but at present, there aren't the activities to give them a reason to come; (2) activities for teenagers need to be developed with their input – older people forget what it was like as a teenager; (3) this could help to reduce antisocial behaviour (4) activities for young boys was specifically suggested – this group is less engaged in activities at the Centre just now.
- More activities for children were suggested.
- More promotion of the Centre: some people in the community don't know what is offered. Promotion should use more channels than Facebook. There are also opportunities to promote the community larder more – e.g. setting up referral arrangements with the job centre and continuing to build links with local businesses.
- Free barber service – hosted in the Centre.
- Activities for men. There is the bike maintenance and tool library; but activities like tea and toast don't involve many men.

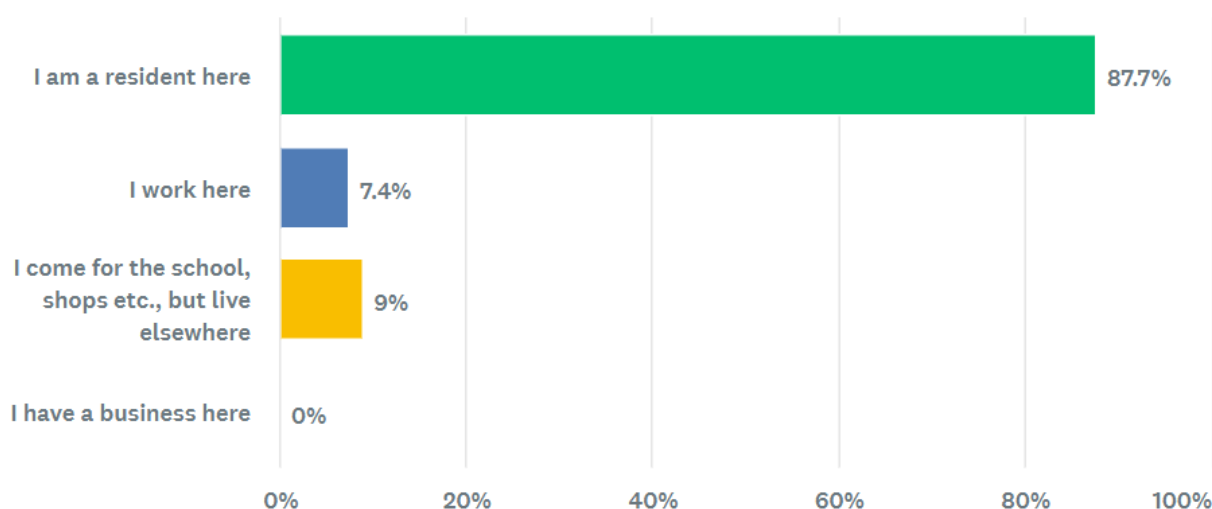
Appendix 6 : Community Survey

A community survey ran between mid-January and late February 2026, receiving 122 responses. The survey could be completed online, with paper copies also available from the Neighbourhood Centre.

122 people completed the survey, and the survey represents the views of 433 people.¹⁶

The majority of respondents live in Drylaw (88%). Other respondents include people who work in the area, or come to the area for school, shops or other services.

What is your connection with Drylaw...?

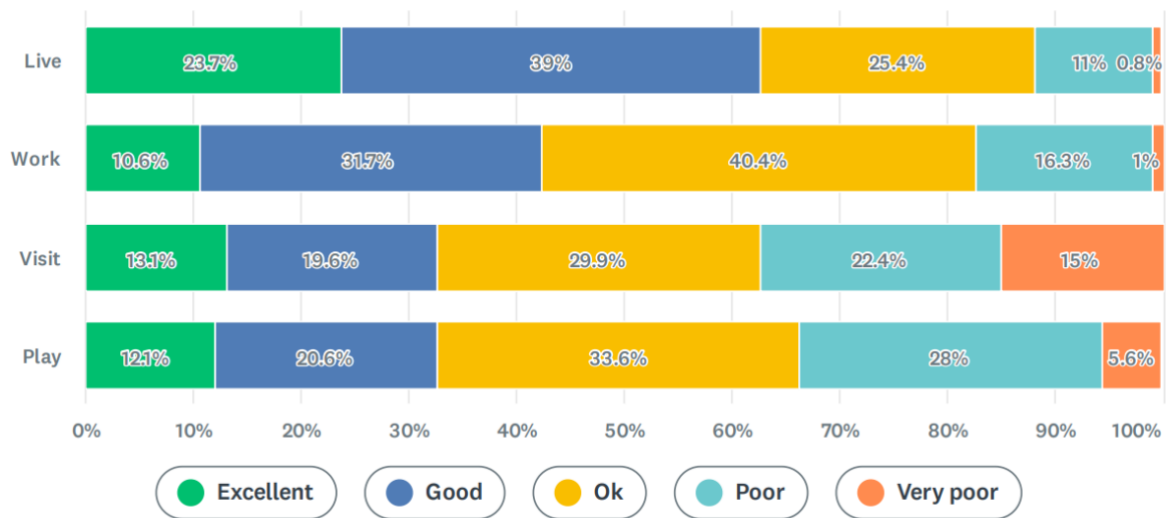


Views on the community

We asked respondents to rate the community as an area to live, work, visit and play. Respondents were mainly positive about the area as a place to live, with 63% of respondents rating it as good or excellent, and only 12% rating it as poor or very poor. Respondents were less positive about the community as a place to visit or play, with only 33% rating it as good or excellent in these areas. 37% classified it as a poor or very poor place to visit. Opinions about Drylaw as a place to work were middling, with most rating it as good or ok.

¹⁶ To understand how many people's views are represented by the survey, we asked respondents to highlight if they are replying on behalf of multiple people (e.g. a household or community group), and if so, how many.

Overall, how do you rate this community as an area to live, work, visit or play?



21 respondents left further comments in response to this question. Some people expressed positive opinions about life in Drylaw, but many highlighted issues with anti-social behaviour, maintenance and littering, and access to adequate outdoor space and play facilities for children and young people.

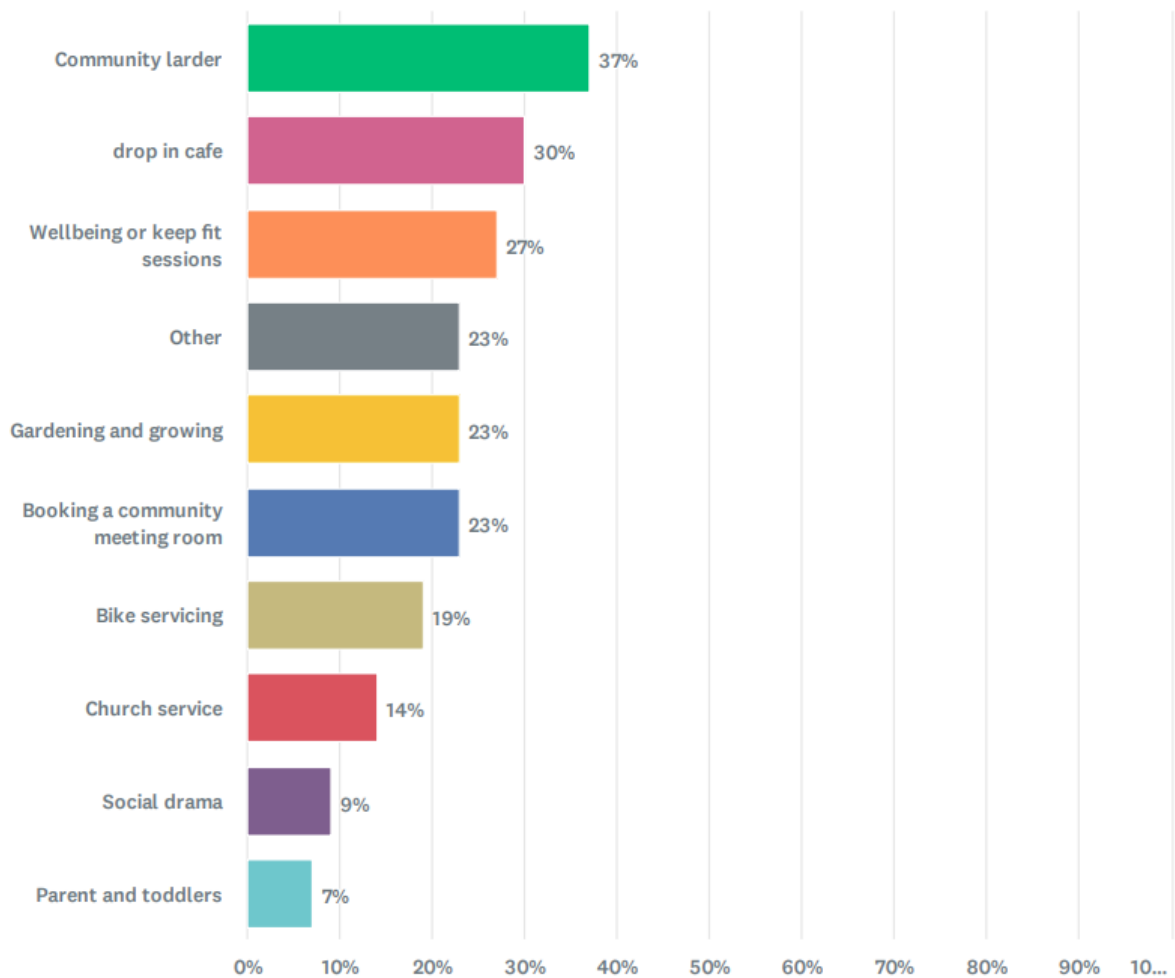
Current and future uses for the Neighbourhood Centre

Do you currently use the centre? If so, how?

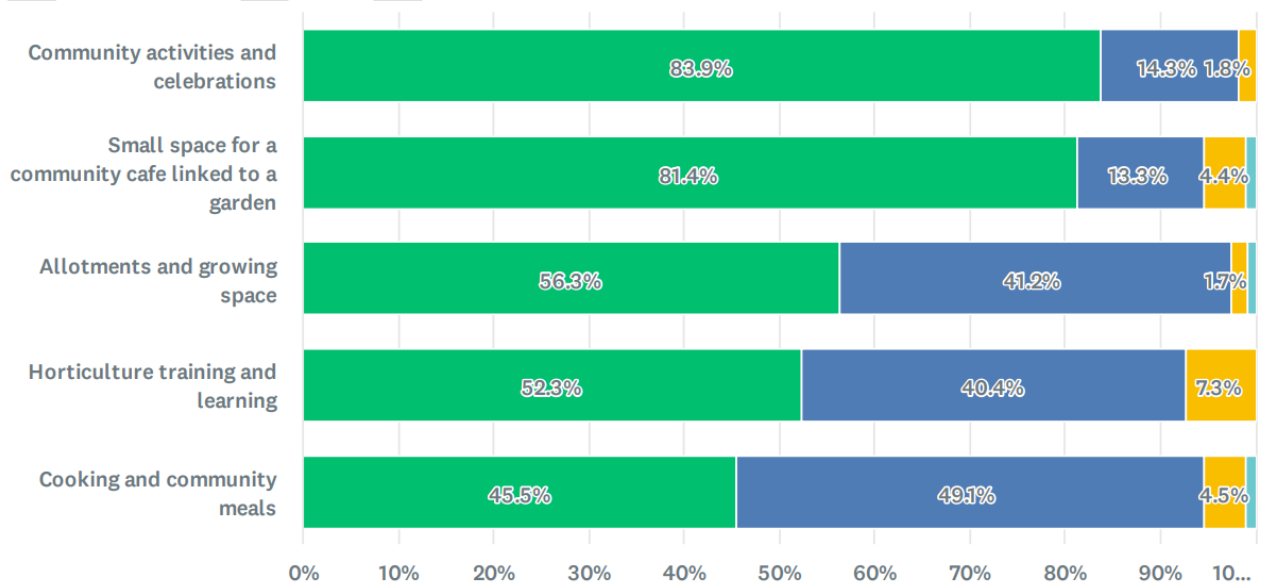
Respondents were asked how they currently use the neighbourhood centre. The community larder was the most commonly used feature of the centre (selected by 37% of participants). The drop-in café and well-being or keep fit classes were also popular options (selected by 30% and 27% of participants). Respondents who selected 'other' included those who visit the space for special events and celebrations, or for meetings.

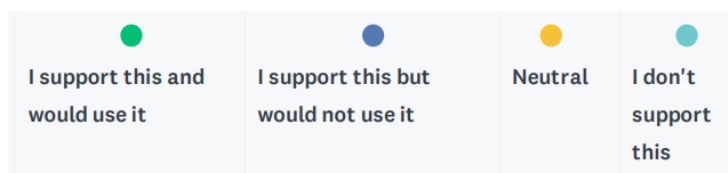
Do you support the following potential activities at the centre?

Respondents were provided with possible ideas for future uses of the centre and asked to rate their level of support. All ideas received very high levels of support. 'Using the centre for community activities and celebrations' was the most popular option, and would be most widely used by respondents, with 84% saying that they 'support and would use' this. 81% also said they would use a community cafe linked to a garden. Fewer respondents said they would use allotments and growing space, horticulture training and learning, and cooking and community meals. However, these ideas were still popular, with over 90% of respondents expressing some kind of support for each of these options.



We already operate here but there are ideas for future activity. What are your views on each of these ideas?





26 respondents left comments with further ideas for the centre.

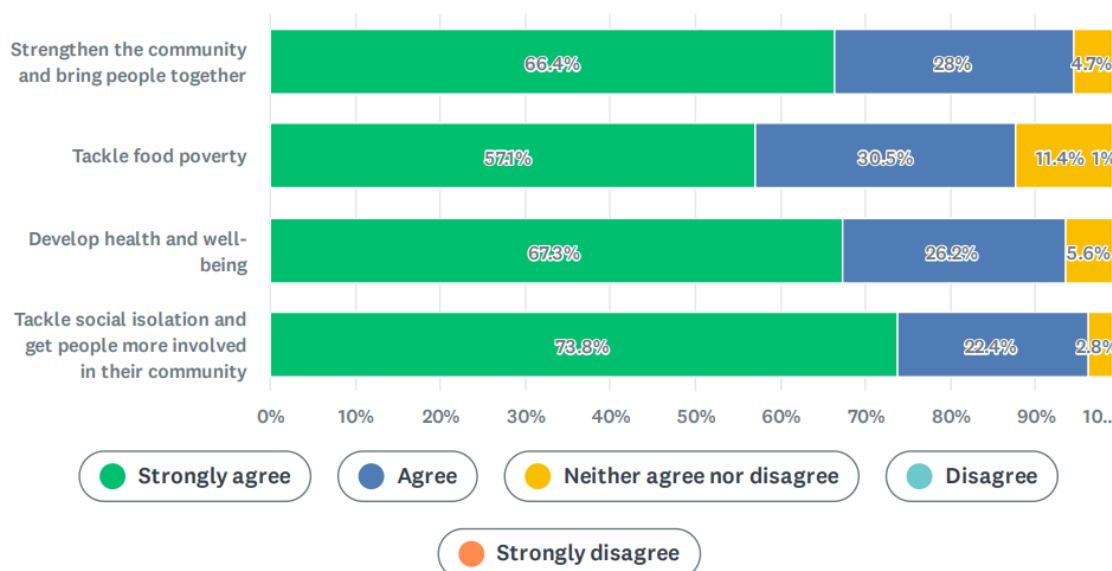
'Children and young people' were most frequently mentioned in these comments, with ideas proposed for youth groups, holiday clubs, training and skill development, and sports clubs for young people.

'Sport and fitness' were another common theme, with people suggesting more sports club using existing facilities, and development of outdoor facilities such as exercise equipment or a skatepark.

Training and skills were also mentioned fairly frequently, and other ideas included events to integrate different communities (e.g. language classes). Some people suggested expanding the building and the opening hours.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Buying the land and developing the centre further will:

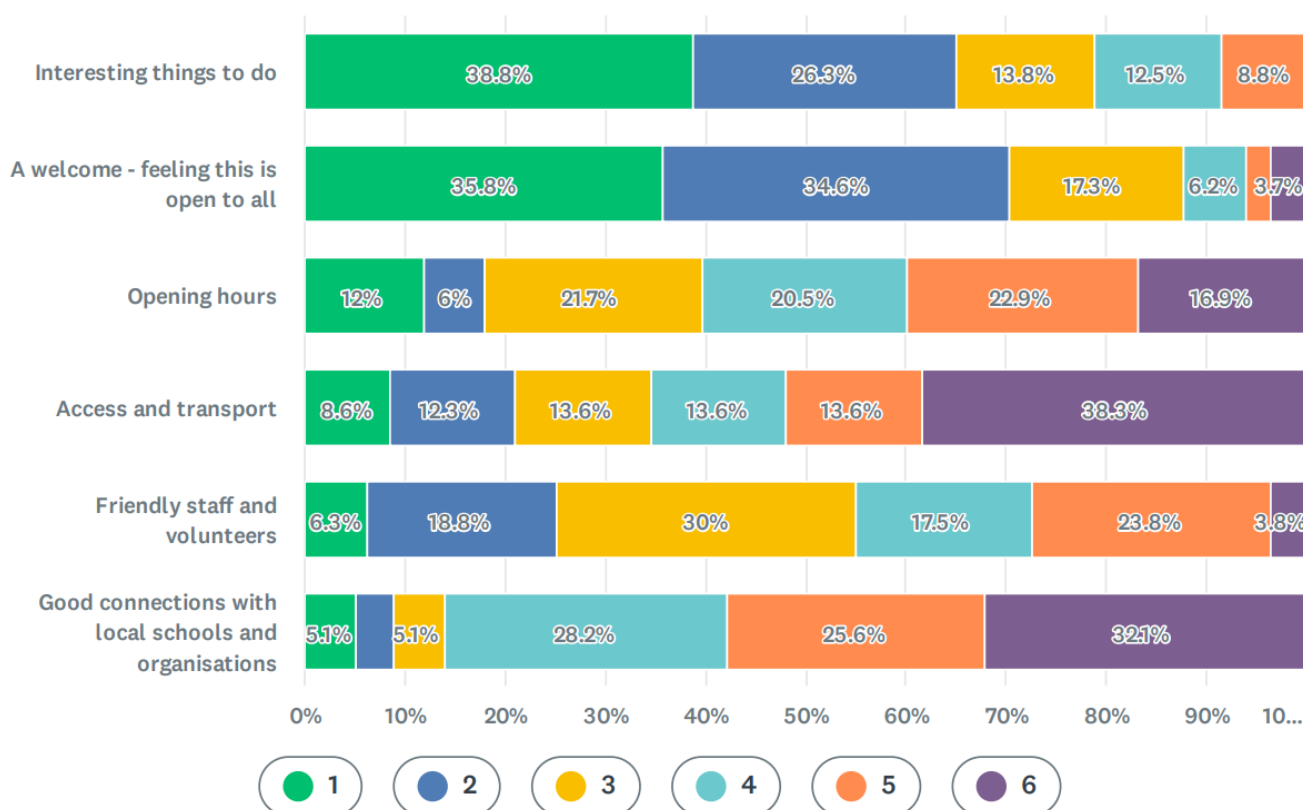
When asked about the potential benefits of buying the land and developing the centre, respondents were very positive. 96% agreed that purchase and development would tackle social isolation and get people more involved in their community, and 94% agreed that it would develop health and well-being and strengthen the community and bring people together. Respondents were slightly less convinced that development of the centre would help tackle food poverty, however 88% still agreed with this statement.



The survey also asked respondents what would attract them to use the centre more. Respondents identified 'interesting things to do' and 'a welcome – feeling this is open to all' as particularly important, with 65% and 70% ranking these as the first and second most important things that would attract them to use the centre. 'Good connections

with local schools and organisations' were least important among respondents, with 58% placing this as the least or second least important option.

What is the most important thing that would attract you and your family and neighbours to use the space more? Use the arrows or click and drag to put these in order of importance, with 1 as most important.

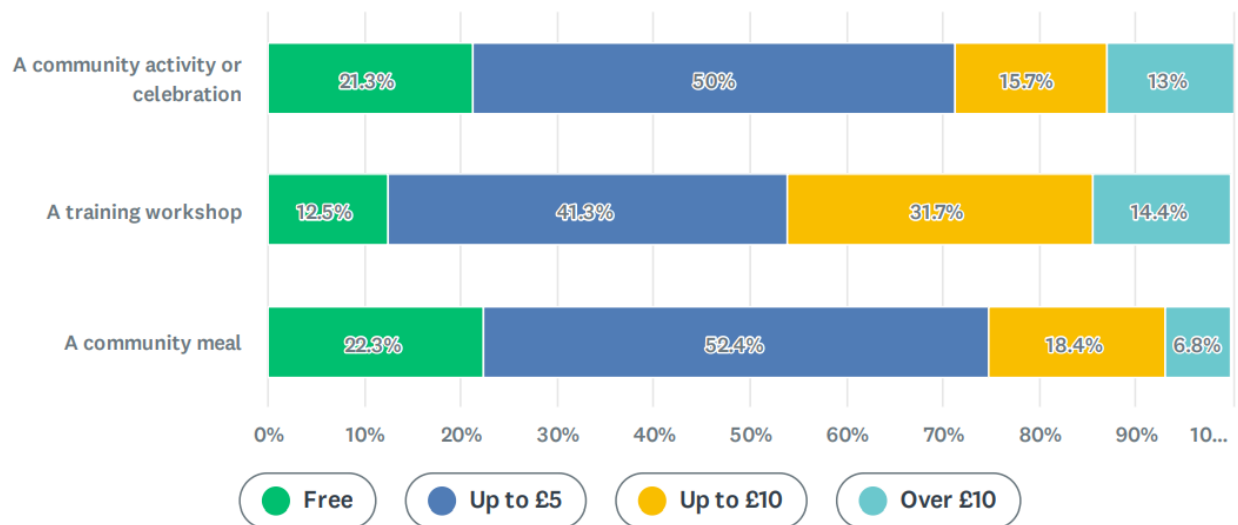


In order to create a sustainable facility, we will need to generate some income from those who can afford it, what would you expect to pay for the following? This can be charges or donations.

The survey asked respondents how much they would be willing to pay or donate for different events at the centre.

For a community activity or celebration or a community meal, around half of respondents would be willing to pay up to £5, with a smaller number suggesting they would pay more.

A significant number (21% - 22%) would expect to attend these events freely. Respondents would be willing to pay slightly more for a training workshop, with 41% selecting the option 'up to £5' and 32% selecting 'up to £10'.

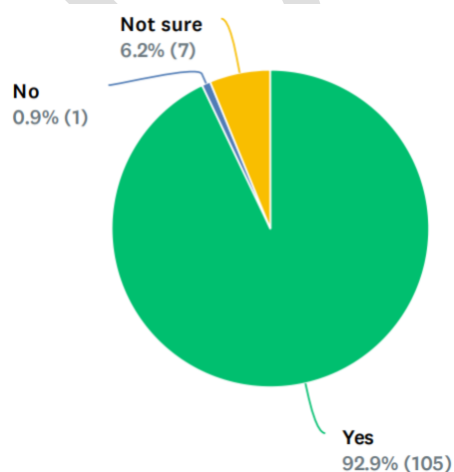


Overall, do you support the community purchase of the land at Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre?

As shown by the chart below, there is a large amount of support for community purchase of the land at Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre, with 93% of respondents saying they were in support. 17 people also left written responses to this question. Some expressed concerns about financial sustainability, however comments were largely positive. Comments included:

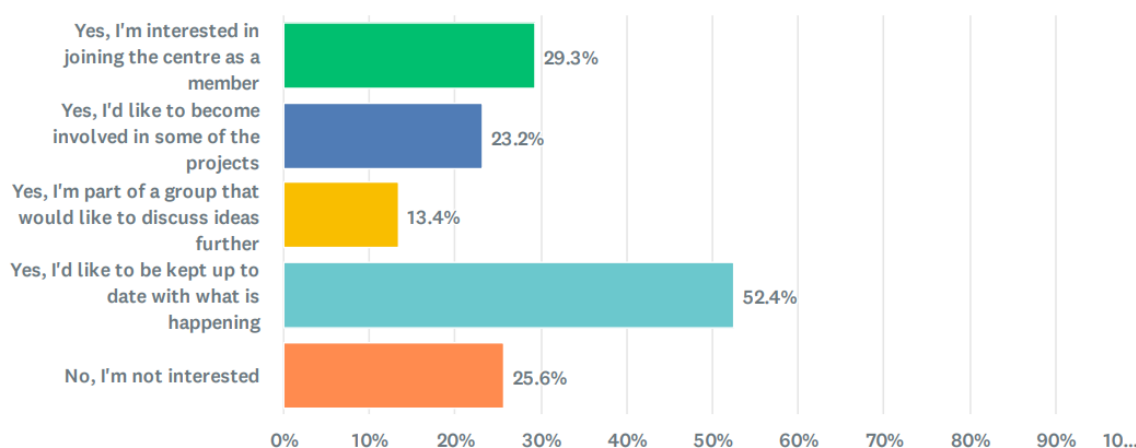
'If the centre belongs to the community, it would give the area a sense of pride that they can look after and help make decisions that benefit them.'

'This neighbourhood centre is at the heart of the community and has the space, enthusiasm and love from the community to make this happen, grow and thrive.'



Finally, respondents were asked about their interest in future involvement in the project. Most participants said they would like to be involved in the project to some degree. 66% said they would either like to join as a member, to become involved in some of the projects, or are part of a group that would like to discuss ideas further. 52% of respondents said that they would like to be kept up to date with what is happening.

We are keen to include as many local people as possible. Are you interested in getting involved?



Appendix 7 : Stakeholder Interviews

A range of local partners and stakeholders were approached between Feb and March 26 to collect views and perspectives on the potential community asset transfer of land linked to the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre. These interviews aimed at exploring views on the local area, perceptions of need, local priorities and views on the DNC plans for the future. In total, 4 local partners participated and a summary of these interviews is presented below.

Local Community:

The area experiences high levels of multiple deprivation, including financial hardship, low educational attainment, and limited opportunities.

Many residents face complex, overlapping challenges: long-term debt, disability, mental health difficulties, immigration issues, language barriers, homelessness, and housing insecurity.

Social isolation is particularly prominent, especially among older adults and new arrivals.

There is a strong sense that the community is underserved relative to the wider city.

Despite the challenges, stakeholders emphasise a strong sense of local identity and long-standing community ties.

Views on Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre:

The Centre is viewed as a key community hub that provides safety, belonging, and stability.

Staff are consistently described as supportive, caring, and highly competent.

The Centre is very busy and uses its space effectively, but existing rooms are insufficient for demand.

The garden and outdoor spaces are widely recognised as major strengths that contribute to wellbeing and community cohesion.

The Centre is trusted, particularly by vulnerable groups, refugees, and people in crisis.

Local Gaps in Provision:

Clear demand for more youth provision, including after-school, breakfast, and holiday activities.

A need for additional mental health and wellbeing support, responding to rising community distress.

Desire for more social activities that help new residents connect and reduce isolation.

Lack of affordable venue space in the area during evenings and weekends, limiting community activity.

Some stakeholders noted that staff capacity, not just building size, limits what the Centre can deliver.

Views on Community Asset Transfer:

Strong unanimous support for community ownership.

Ownership is seen as offering stability, independence, and protection against the risk of land being used for other purposes.

Stakeholders believe a CAT would unlock investment, support long-term planning, and enable growth.

The proposed developments (garden expansion, building extension, improved layout) were widely supported and seen as logical and necessary.

The outdoor environment is understood as offering significant untapped potential, including food growing, community activity, and environmental benefits.

Some stakeholders highlighted the importance of ensuring the board has the right skills for ownership and expansion.

Partnership and Collaboration:

Strong appetite for deeper partnership working between local organisations.

Opportunities exist to share underused facilities, coordinate services, and create joint programmes.

The Centre is already seen as a natural convenor for multi-agency work.

Collaboration is strongest where staff have capacity and active facilitation is in place.

Stakeholders value the existing partnerships around food support, cycling activities, and community events.

Better promotion of existing partnerships (e.g., with advice services) could increase uptake.

Future Developments:

Potential to expand cycling workshops, repairs, training, and active travel initiatives.

Scope for additional gardening, environmental and outdoor programmes, including long-term planting.

Interest in developing new community resources, such as a tool library.

Desire to broaden the Centre's role as a place where different groups mix, enhancing community cohesion.

Challenges and Concerns:

Concerns were limited, but included:

- Ensuring sufficient staff capacity to manage expanded operations.
- Ensuring the leadership team has appropriate governance and management skills for ownership.
- Navigating building layout issues to prevent activity clashes or bottlenecks.

Overall, stakeholders were overwhelmingly positive about the Centre's capability to manage change.

Very high levels of confidence in the Centre's leadership, direction, and community value.

Strong belief that community ownership is the right step and will benefit the area.

Recognition that the Centre is already making a significant positive impact and has the potential to do much more.

The Centre is experienced not just as a service, but as a supportive, welcoming sanctuary for many residents.

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Appendix 8: Skills audit

Nine Board members completed the skills audit. For every skill set audited, Board members are asked to rate their skills with 0 being no experience and 5 being high level skills/expertise.

Summary of key findings

Areas where the Board demonstrate strong experience and/or knowledge overall are working with people, community engagement and development, and financial knowledge.

Skills and knowledge among the Board are mixed in the areas of planning and management, communications and marketing, and governance.

The Board is less experienced in project specific skills, and in some areas of communications and marketing and fundraising. These areas would benefit from attention, whether that is upskilling the Board, recruiting another member that possesses the appropriate skillsets or outsourcing support.

Board members expressed interest in developing their skills, particularly in project specific skills, management and planning, fundraising, and community engagement.

Planning and Management

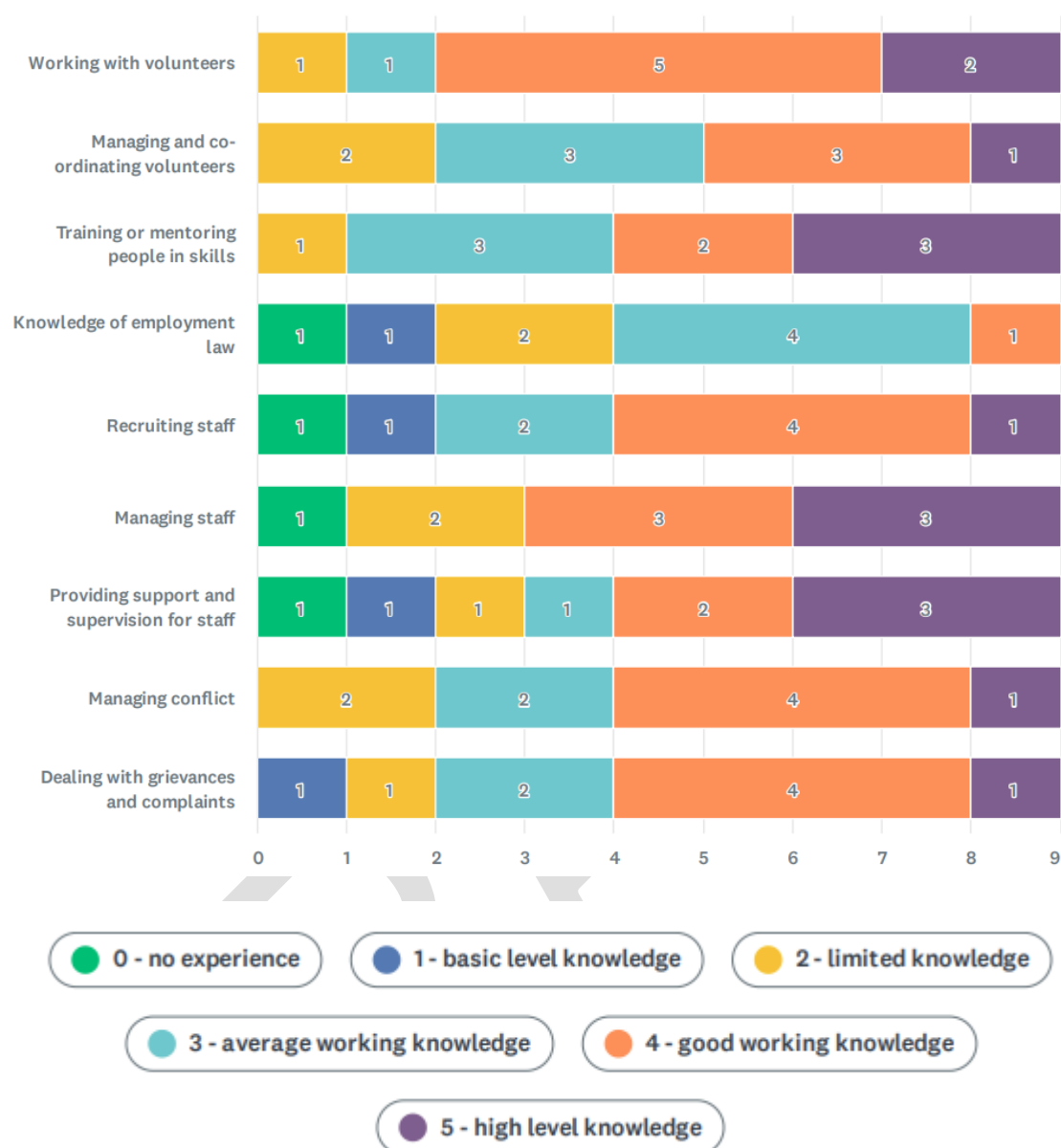
There is a fairly high level of skill among the Board in planning and management. In many areas, the Board has at least two members possessing 'good working knowledge' or 'high working knowledge'. These higher skilled areas include:

- Strategic planning and policy development
- Generating ideas for new services
- Project and contract management
- Setting targets and KPIs
- Risk management
- Knowledge of health and safety regulations
- Quality assurance and compliance
- Knowledge of the voluntary sector

However, the Board possesses a lower skill level in 'market research / testing the market', with the highest ranking being a 3 ('average working knowledge'). 'Writing business plans', 'writing operational plans' and 'commissioning work' are also weaker areas, as only one Board member ranked their skills at 4, and at least 2 members have no experience. These are areas where higher skilled Board members might consider offering training and support to upskill others.

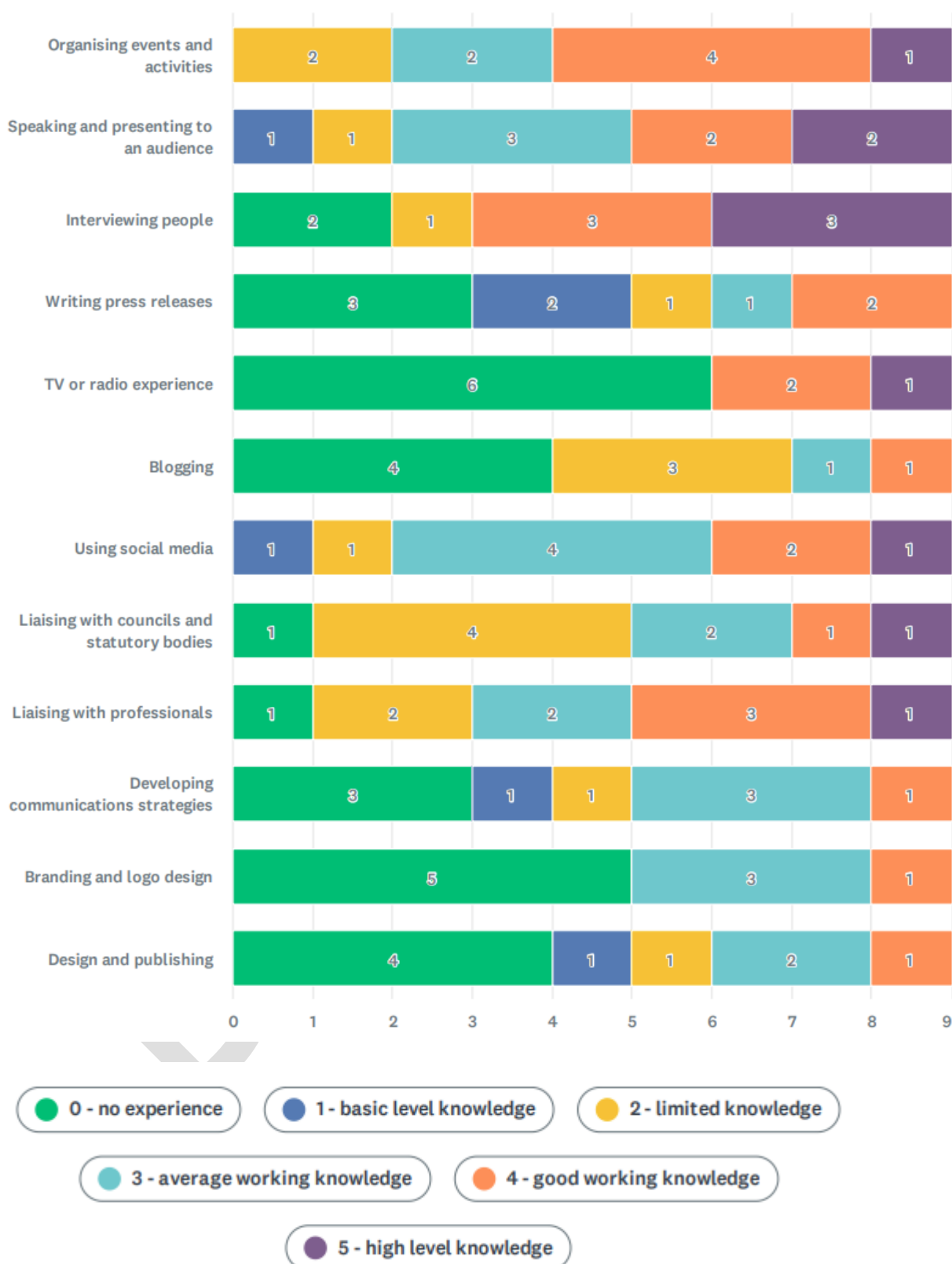


Working with people



The Board is well-skilled in the broad theme of 'working with people'. Across all but one element of this theme, at least 4 Board members ranked themselves at 5 or 4. 'Knowledge of employment law' is a slightly weaker area for the Board, as there are fewer individuals who possess a good or high level of knowledge.

Communications and marketing



Overall, there is a mixed level of skill in the field of communications and marketing. In many areas, at least two Board members ranked themselves at 4 or 5. However, in some

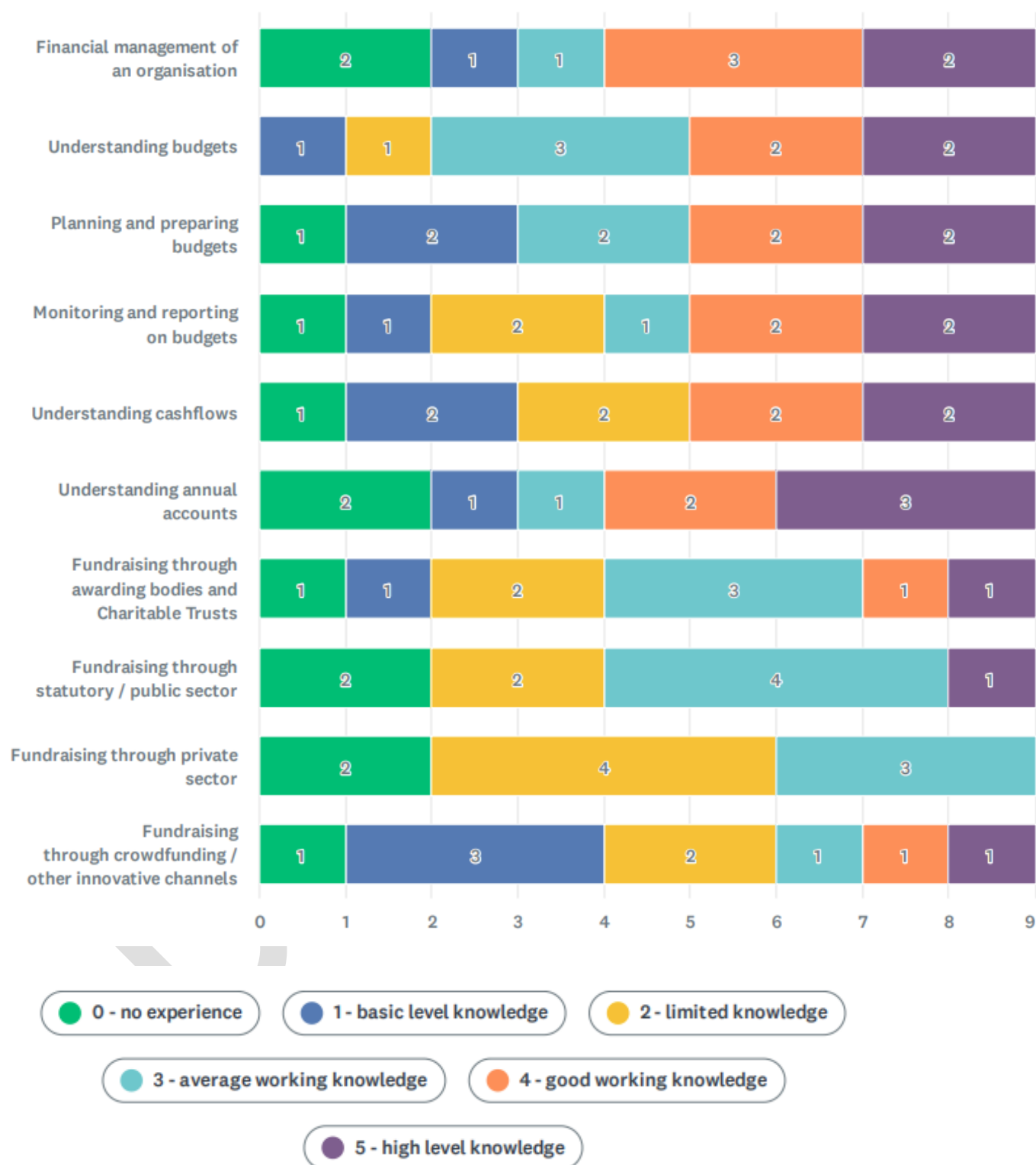
areas only one Board member placed themselves at these higher knowledge levels, and many others have no experience. These areas of weakness include:

- Blogging
- Developing communications strategies
- Branding and logo design
- Design and publishing

‘Writing press releases’ is also an area of relative weakness. Although two Board members placed themselves at 4, no one possesses a high level of knowledge, and many Board members have no experience in this area. The Board might benefit from additional support or training in these weaker areas.

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Finance and fundraising

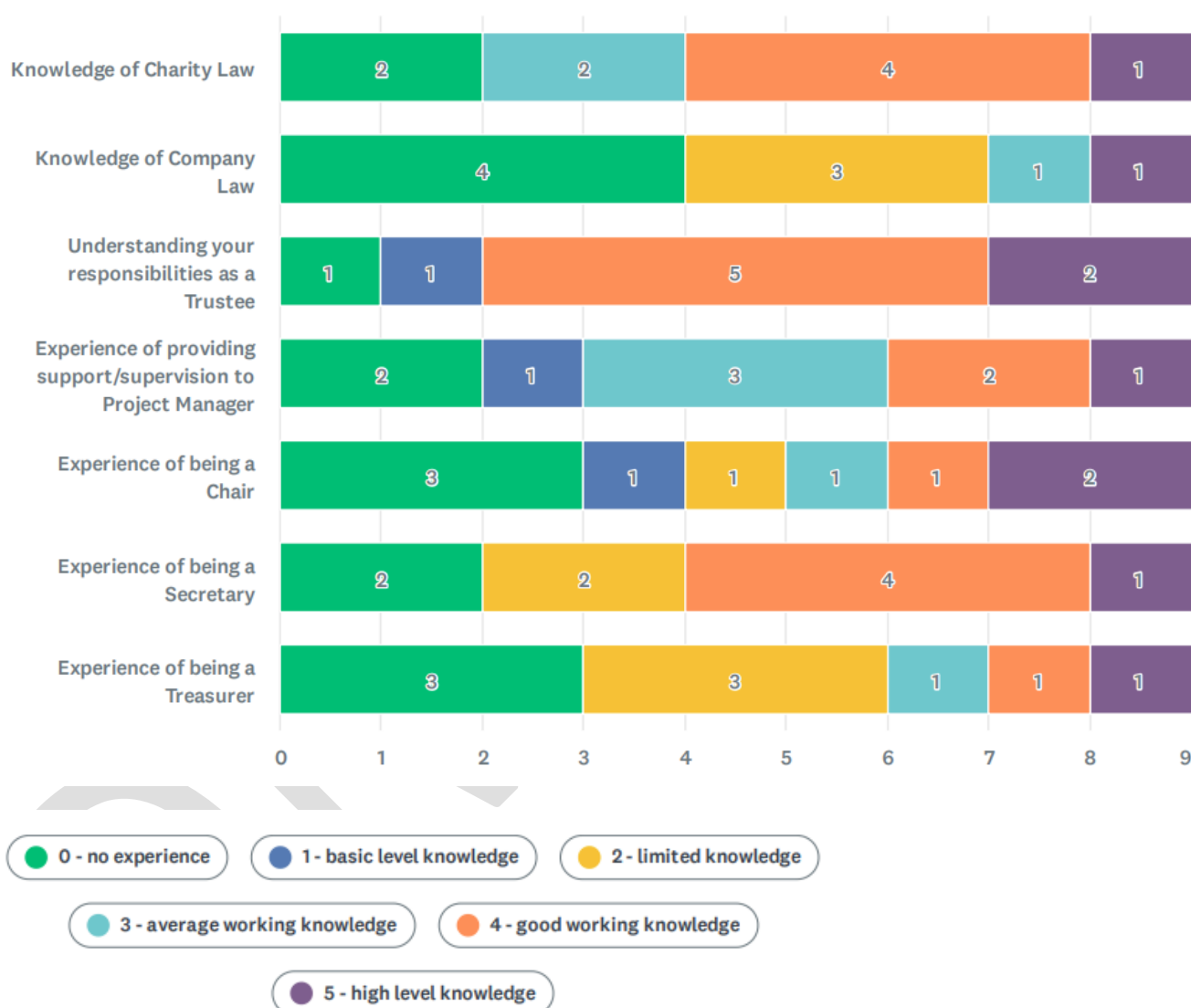


The Board possesses a high level of financial knowledge, with at least two Board members ranking themselves at 5 across all financial elements, and at least two others ranking themselves at 4.

However, the Board is less skilled in fundraising. Across all four of these elements, fewer individuals placed themselves at 4 or 5. 'Fundraising through statutory / public sector'

and 'fundraising through private sector' are areas of particular weakness, where most Board members have average working knowledge or lower. Fundraising is therefore an area where the Board might need further support and development.

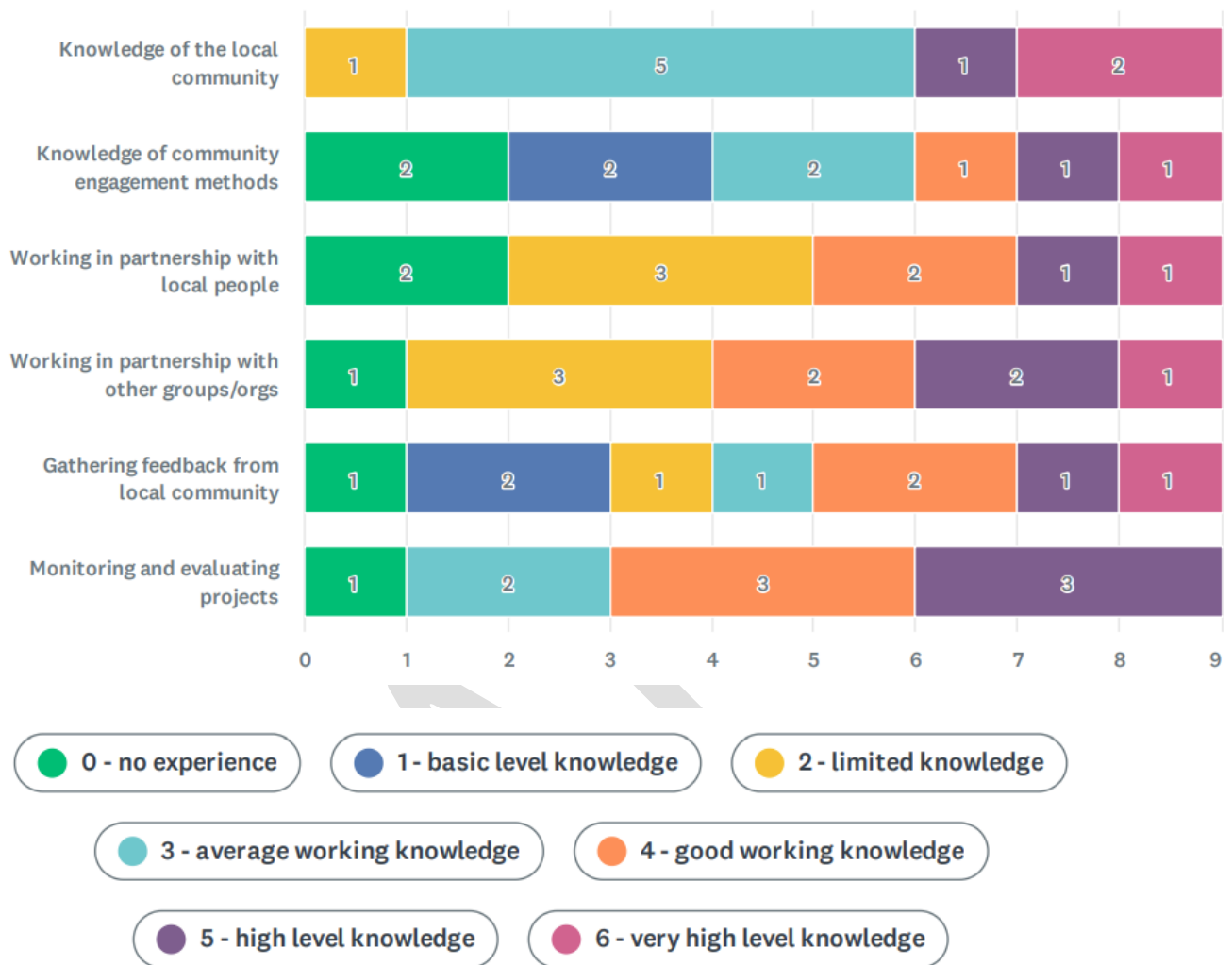
Governance



The Board is fairly well-skilled in the area of 'governance'. Across all but one element, at least two Board members have 'good' or 'high-level' knowledge. 'Understanding your responsibilities as a trustee', 'knowledge of charity law' and 'experience of being a Secretary' are particularly strong areas. 'Knowledge of Company law' is a weaker element for the Board, with only one individual placing themselves at the upper end of the scale.

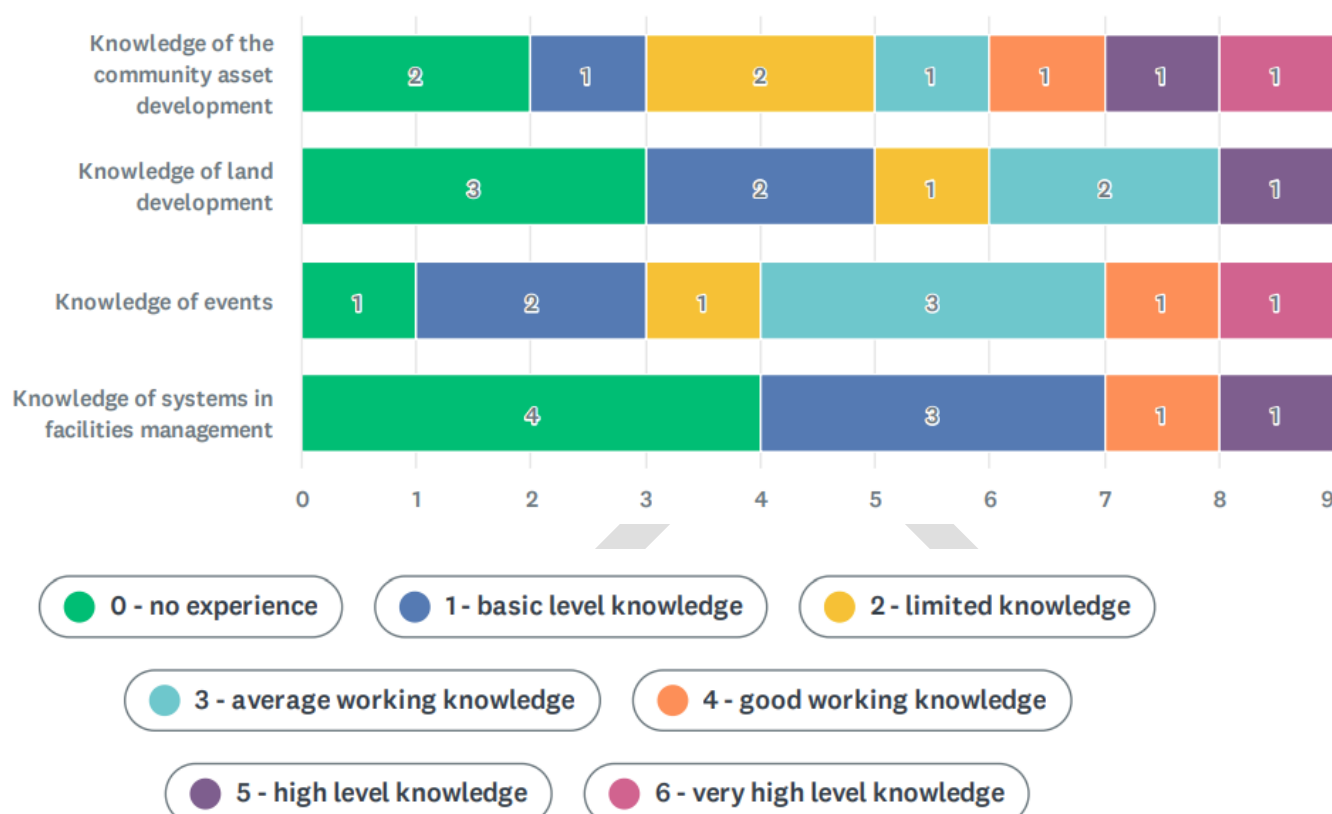
Although the Board is generally well-skilled in governance, across most elements there are also multiple Board members who have 'no experience'. These board members might benefit from training and support.

Community Engagement and Development



The Board is very well-skilled in community engagement and development. Across all areas, multiple Board members possess 'good' to 'very high level' knowledge. 'Monitoring and evaluating projects' stands out as a particularly strong area. 'Knowledge of community engagement methods' and 'knowledge of the local community' are slightly weaker areas.

Project Specific Skills

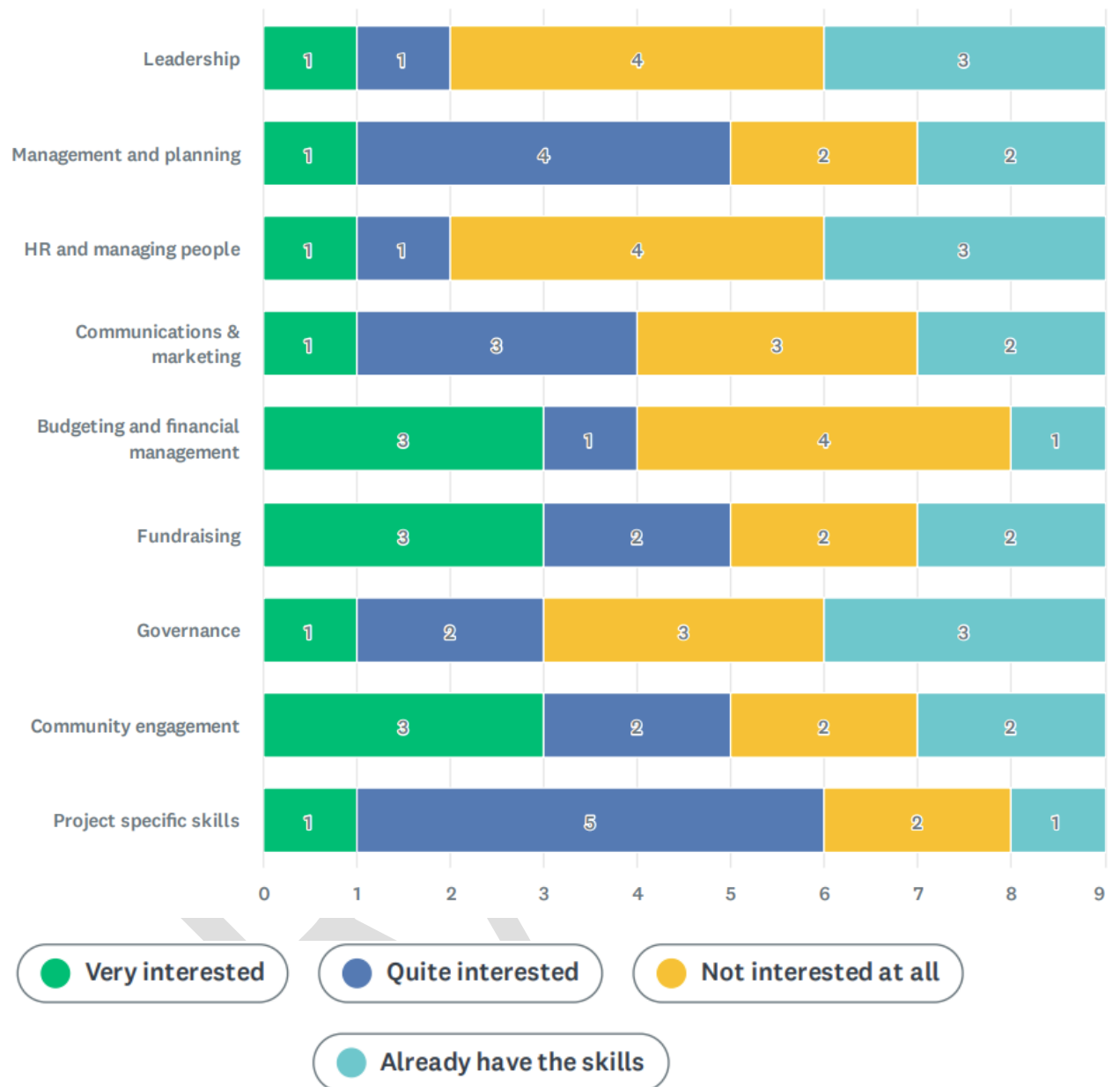


There is a varied level of knowledge among the Board in project specific skills. The Board is fairly well-skilled in 'knowledge of the community asset development', with three Board members possessing good to very high-level knowledge. 'Knowledge of land development' is a weaker area. Fewer board members are positioned at the upper end of the scale, and many have no experience. 'Knowledge of systems in facilities management' is also a slightly weaker area. Although two Board members are placed at the higher level of the scale, all others have basic level knowledge or no experience.

Increasing Skills

How interested are you in developing skills?

Board members were asked about their interest in developing their skills in different areas, rating their interest from 'very interested' to 'already have the skills'. Across all areas, at least two Board members are interested in developing skills. 'Project specific skills' is the area that received the most interest from respondents. 'Management and planning', fundraising', and 'community engagement' also received high levels of support, with at least five Board members very interested or quite interested. Building skills in governance, HR, and leadership is of less interest to Board members.



Appendix 9 : Policy Fit

National Policy Alignment

Policy Name	Summary of Key Points	How Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre contributes to meeting national policy goals
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015	Gives communities the right to own assets, participate in decision-making, and influence local service design. Encourages transfer of public assets into community hands to strengthen local resilience.	Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre already demonstrates strong community control, locally-led decision-making, and inclusive service design, fully embodying the Act's purpose of empowering communities. The CAT proposal directly advances the Act by placing land and assets firmly in community ownership, strengthening resilience and long-term stewardship.
Community Wealth Building	Focus on plural ownership, fair work, local supply chains, local circular economies, and keeping wealth in communities. Anchor institutions should support local businesses and community enterprises. The Bill has just been passed by the Scottish Government to mandate CWB plans.	The Centre supports CWB by generating local social and economic value through volunteering, local procurement, community food growing, and social enterprise activity such as bike servicing and the tool library. As an anchor community organisation, it keeps wealth circulating locally and provides opportunities for fair participation in the local economy.
National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET)	Emphasises entrepreneurship, skills development, fair work, innovation, and local economic resilience. Highlights the importance of social enterprises in driving inclusive growth.	Drylaw contributes to inclusive growth by offering skills development through gardening, bike repair, food activities, volunteering, and community learning programmes. Its social enterprise activities and partnership work support entrepreneurship, employability, and local economic resilience in an area of deprivation.
Wellbeing Economy / Wellbeing Economy Monitor	Prioritises social connection, inclusion, health, equality, fairness,	The Centre's programmes explicitly strengthen wellbeing through social connection,

	and environmental sustainability over GDP alone. Focus on communities thriving socially and economically.	physical activity, access to food, cultural activities, and nature-based engagement. Its model prioritises community belonging, equality and improved life outcomes – core principles of Scotland's wellbeing economy approach.
Scottish Government National Performance Framework (NPF)	National outcomes include: communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe; a creative, fair, healthy and thriving economy; and a sustainable environment.	Drylaw delivers directly on national outcomes including: "communities are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe," "we are healthy and active," and "we value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment." Its inclusive, preventative, community-led programmes reflect NPF goals across health, equality, environment, culture, and local economic participation.
Place Principle	Encourages organisations to collaborate across sectors to make the most of assets, services and resources in a locality. Focus on shared ownership of place-making.	The Centre already operates as a collaborative, place-based hub where multiple partners, services and community groups come together. Its CAT proposal enables a more coordinated approach to improving the local environment, buildings and services in line with shared place-making priorities.
Climate Emergency / Net Zero Scotland	Calls for community-led sustainability, reduced carbon footprints, circular economy initiatives, repair and reuse, renewable energy adoption, and climate resilience.	Drylaw actively supports climate action through food growing, composting, repair and reuse (tool library, bike maintenance), biodiversity projects. Plans for solar panels, EV charging, and expanded green space also feed into this policy area. This positions the Centre as a local driver of community-led climate resilience and low-carbon behaviour change.
Scottish Social Enterprise Strategy	Promotes community-owned businesses, sustainable local economies, social impact, employability opportunities, and	The Centre hosts social enterprise activity and reinvests all value back into the community. Its work creates volunteering pathways, skills development, and

	reinvestment of profits for community benefit.	community-owned economic activity, fully aligning with Scotland's vision for social enterprise as a tool for inclusive local prosperity.
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Edinburgh Local Policy Alignment

Policy / Strategy	Summary of Key Points	How Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre contributes/fits with local policy goals
City of Edinburgh Council Plan / Community Planning Priorities	Priorities include reducing inequalities, supporting economic recovery, improving wellbeing, strengthening communities, and increasing participation.	Drylaw delivers preventative, community-led services that reduce isolation, improve health, support families, and provide inclusive spaces — directly advancing the Council's goals around wellbeing and reduced inequalities.
Edinburgh Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP)	Focused on reducing child poverty, improving health, building community capacity, and creating fairer, safer communities.	Drylaw supports LOIP priorities through its community larder, youth programmes, gardening, social groups, wellbeing activities, and targeted work with older adults and vulnerable groups, helping reduce poverty impacts and strengthen community resilience.
Edinburgh 2050 City Vision	Envisions a future Edinburgh that is fair, green, connected, and thriving, with strong communities, reduced inequalities, and vibrant local spaces shaped by residents.	Drylaw's community-led model, green-space development, inclusive programming, and focus on belonging and wellbeing reflect the Vision's emphasis on fair, sustainable, and community-shaped neighbourhoods.
Edinburgh City 2030 Climate Strategy	Encourages community-led climate action, repair/reuse practices, local food, and carbon-reduction projects.	Drylaw's gardens, orchard, food growing, bike repair sessions, tool library, composting, and plans for solar panels all contribute to local carbon reduction and encourage sustainable community behaviours.
Growing Locally: Edinburgh's Food Growing Strategy 2021 - 2026	Seeks to expand community food growing, increase	Drylaw's food-growing gardens, raised beds, orchard, community larder and

	access to green spaces, support healthy eating, and strengthen local resilience through gardening and urban growing initiatives.	gardening groups directly deliver the aims of Growing Locally by increasing local access to healthy, community-grown food.
Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership Plan	Aims to support people to live well locally, reduce social isolation, prevent crises, and build community-based alternatives to formal services.	Drylaw provides early-intervention support through social groups, Tea & Toast, walking groups, lunch sessions, advice drop-ins, community transport, and wellbeing activities – reducing pressure on formal health and care services.
Edinburgh Community Learning & Development (CLD) Strategy	Focus on learning, employability, digital inclusion, youth work, and building community capacity.	The Centre offers youth clubs, craft and learning activities, volunteer training, gardening and food skills sessions, and a welcoming environment for building confidence, community capacity, and lifelong learning.
Thriving Green Spaces	Supports the creation, protection, and development of high-quality community green spaces that promote biodiversity, health, climate resilience, and community stewardship.	Drylaw's gardens, orchard, outdoor social spaces, and volunteer-driven maintenance embody the strategy's goals by enabling residents to care for and benefit from vibrant, biodiverse green spaces.
Edinburgh Poverty Strategy / Child Poverty Action Plan	Aims to reduce financial hardship, improve access to low-cost services, and support families.	Drylaw tackles poverty through its community larder, shared meals, social support, low- or no-cost activities, advice partnerships, and accessible community spaces that reduce financial pressures on families and individuals.