

Invitation to Tender: Glenkens & District Rural Education Review



1. Background

The Glenkens is an active and engaged community in Dumfries and Galloway. Glenkens & District Trust (GDT) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation established in 2011. As a fund distribution body its role is to resource, enable and stimulate community development in the Glenkens and surrounding communities, defined as the Community Council areas of Balmaghie, Balmaclellan, Carsphairn, Corsock & Kirkpatrick Durham, Crossmichael, St. Johns Town of Dalry, Dunscore, Glencairn, New Galloway & Kells and Parton.

Since 2018 GDT has been progressing with a range of activity focused on ensuring that any community benefit funds coming into the area can be maximised for the long-term benefit of the local communities, including commissioning the development of the Glenkens Community Action Plan. The goal of GDT is to ensure that any community benefit funds coming into the area are maximised for the long-term benefit of the local communities, through good stewardship and positive partnership working. Further information about the area and on the Community Action Plan can be found [here](#). And on the Glenkens Hub at <https://glenkens.scot/community-groups/community-action-plan-steering-group>

GDT wants to commission a piece of rigorous research to explore developments in, and discussions around, rural education in Scotland and beyond, particularly in areas that are suffering depopulation and have seen a decline in school rolls. The final Report will be used to inform local groups, the Education Forum and the Council on potential options for educational arrangements in our area. Among other benefits this should support the goal in our Community Action Plan to be an area where people will want to live, to work, to bring up their families and to grow old. It could also be used to input into consultations by the Council's Education Department on the future of education facilities in the Glenkens.

2. Context

Over the last few months there has been a focus on the provision of secondary education facilities in the Glenkens with the Education Department of Dumfries and Galloway Council proposing to mothball Dalry Secondary School. This school is a partner school with the much larger Castle Douglas High School and is within the same management group. Following a huge collective effort by ward councillors, community groups and individuals in the area, Dumfries and Galloway Council have agreed to defer the mothballing of Dalry Secondary School until a mothballing policy is agreed which takes into account the related socio-economic impacts. The deferment period is until at least the end of the 24/25 year. Information on the community's current position is set out in its [local newspaper](#).

During public meetings arranged by Dumfries and Galloway Council, various options for the future of Dalry Secondary School have been suggested by local groups, but the community believes that there has been insufficient time to analyse all possibilities properly in an evidence-based way, and the Council appears to be focusing on mothballing as the most viable option. It seems also that the Council's focus is solely on the future of the Secondary School,

whereas to many in the Glenkens it only makes sense to consider this in the wider context of education and learning in the community as a whole.

A Glenkens Education Forum is being set up by the Glenkens & District Community Action Plan Steering Group as an unincorporated voluntary group with a remit to develop ideas and potential solutions to create short, medium and long-term models for education and learning in the Glenkens. The Forum will consider pre-school, primary school, high school, wrap-around clubs, post school learning and further education as well as the broader socio-economic context, including present and future work opportunities in the area. A call for membership of this group has gone out and Dumfries and Galloway Council has been invited to participate.

3. About the work

To address these issues, GDT wishes to commission research with the purpose of collating information, principally from other rural communities, that are currently being affected by challenges to established models of schooling, such as small populations or impacts of remote rurality on access. While the focus is on Scotland, we recognise that communities in similar contexts in other countries may have valuable experience. The study will therefore also look at communities elsewhere in the UK, the Republic of Ireland and the Nordic countries (and if time permits, elsewhere in the world). This information will enable stakeholders in the GDT area of operation to have a better understanding of how other communities have responded to and approached challenges to their educational arrangements in similar or related contexts.

4. Outputs

The successful bidder will undertake a combination of:

- desk top research, using published material (including academic research), project/community documents and plans, and social media posts) and
- conversations with people from community groups, appropriate educational professionals and others with relevant expertise.

Overall, the report will address the following questions:

- What models of education are being, or have been, developed to deal with the challenges of small, dwindling and remote communities, including alternatives to the 'standard model' of classes-in-schools?
- How are these being organised – who manages them, how are they resourced, how (if at all) do they interface with mainstream provision?
- What are the main supporting and constraining factors to these models being adopted?
- Who in Scotland (and beyond) are developing such alternative models?

The contractor will work to a small steering group, comprising members of the Glenkens communities with interests and expertise in the local educational context. They will provide guidance at the outset and as the project evolves, since it may well be that making contact with other communities throws up new ideas which can contribute to the course of the research.

There will be two principal outputs:

- 1) A report which can be used both within the communities and for external stakeholders. It is expected that this will include:
 - as comprehensive a list as possible of communities in rural mainland Scotland and the Scottish islands addressing educational options in the context of constraints such as small population or remote rurality, including a summary of the challenges/constraints and relevant context, the response in terms of either community response or organisational models being proposed or implemented, and other relevant information. Where feasible and appropriate, this should be supplemented with similar information drawn from areas facing similar problems in other parts of the UK and in other countries.
 - Associated, the view of any related parent bodies or other local community-led stakeholder groups on what is effective and/or where changes could be made to enhance educational arrangements in their community.
 - In particular, but not exclusively, where and what online facilities or distance learning options are being made available to enhance and support rural education provision.
 - Any other innovative models in use, either nationally or internationally where there is read across to the Scottish rural context, such as schools partnered with local businesses, interesting links with local colleges etc.
- 2) A list of contacts: people and organisations who might be useful resources and partners in taking the work forward. This will not be for external use, and will need to be GDPR compliant

5. Budget

£8 - 10k inc. VAT

6. Timescales

- Publication of ITT: Friday 26 April 2024
- Tender Return Deadline: Monday 20 May 2024
- Shortlisting and interviews: w/b Monday 20 May 2024
- Research design and fieldwork: June 2024
- Research analysis: July 2024
- Draft report by: August 2024
- Final report designed for publication by: September 2024

7. Additional Relevant Information

There is already some information gathered by Dalry Parent Council which will be made available to any contractor in order to be collated into a standard form/report and enhanced with further research.

8. Management of Contract

The successful applicant will sign a Contractual Agreement with GDT. This will include, but not be limited to, adherence to data protection regulations and the stipulated terms and conditions of the Agreement. The successful contractor will contribute to and agree roles and responsibilities as set out in the Contractual Agreement and participate in collaborative working with GDT and partners. GDT will project manage the work and the contractor will work closely with it to deliver on time and within budget.

The Agreement will include details of the ownership of the research material including the final report and any data produced as a result. All Intellectual Property Rights in any material including but not limited to reports, guidance, specifications, instructions and toolkits which are created or developed by the supplier under the terms of the contractual agreement will be designated the property of GDT. The successful contractor will make all necessary preparations to ensure it is compliant with Data Protection Laws. For the purposes of data processing, the supplier will act as the data processor and GDT will act as the data controller.

9. Procedure for Tendering

Tender proposals should be no more than five pages in length. Tender applications should contain the following:

- Your understanding of our research needs.
- Your experience of conducting similar research.
- Your proposed research methodology that will be used to meet research aims and objectives with a rationale for this (the methodology will be agreed in detail during the inception stage of the project based on outline proposals submitted by the successful tenderer).
- Your proposed outputs in relation to the requirements of the research as set out above.
- Your required inputs from the commissioner.
- Your approach to project management, ethics and quality assurance (including risk assessment).
- Your ability to complete the work to the deadlines set out above.
- A budget for the research outlining the resources required for each stage of the project
- CVs of the research staff who will be responsible for undertaking this work.
- Demonstrable levels of insurance cover

The following criteria will be used to finalise decisions:

- Understanding of the brief and research requirements and a clear understanding of what we want to achieve
- Skills and experience of working in the field of education research, particularly in remote and rural areas.
- Value for money and ability to meet timelines.

Submission of Responses

Responses to this brief should be emailed to emmah@foundationscotland.org.uk by 5pm on Monday 20 May with the subject heading 'GDT Rural Education Review'

Receipt of submissions will be acknowledged.

If you wish to discuss this opportunity before tendering, please contact emmah@foundationscotland.org.uk in the first instance to arrange.