

To:

EDC Customer Services (email: complaints@eastdunbarton.gov.uk)

Alan Bauer, Assets & Facilities Executive Officer (email: alan.bauer@eastdunbarton.gov.uk)

Cc:

Pam Campbell, Manager, Community Planning & Partnership (email: Pamela.Campbell@eastdunbarton.gov.uk)

Susan Murray MP (email: susan.murray.mp@parliament.uk)

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Councillor Duncan Cumming (email: duncan.cumming@eastdunbarton.gov.uk)

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Councillor Billy Hendry (email: billy.hendry@eastdunbarton.gov.uk)

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Councillor Ben Rose (email: ben.rose@eastdunbarton.gov.uk)

Councillor Calum Smith (email: calum.smith@eastdunbarton.gov.uk)

Councillor Lynda Williamson (email: lynda.williamson@eastdunbarton.gov.uk)

12 May 2025

Dear EDC Customer Services & Alan Bauer, Assets & Facilities Executive Officer
(cc: Pam Campbell, Manager, Community Planning & Partnership / MP / MSPs / Councillors
for Lenzie plus all other EDC Councillors)

Formal complaint - Failure to renovate Lenzie Public Hall

We (the community members and organisations signed below) jointly write to you, East
Dunbartonshire Council (EDC).

We write to formally express our deep concern and dissatisfaction about EDC's decision to:

- 1. cease all work on the renovation of Lenzie Public Hall (the hall)**
- 2. withdraw from its agreement to lease the hall to the proposed tenant, [LEAP Ltd](#) (LEAP), [a charity which seeks to meet the needs of over 50s in a practical and fun way](#)**
- 3. declare the hall "surplus to operational requirements"**
- 4. seek offers for the hall's sale/transfer or lease.**

In summary (and as further explained below):

- **This decision is unacceptable.**
- **The community did not want EDC to make this decision. See [petition](#) currently signed by 949 people.**
- **How EDC has reached this decision is unacceptable.**
- **This decision is a failure of EDC and its Councillors to effectively engage with and support residents and local groups and businesses.**
- **Councillors and MSPs/ MP have all said that they will support a community organisation taking on the hall and EDC itself invites an offer for a Community Asset Transfer.¹**
- **To put this right, we kindly but strongly ask that EDC and its Councillors do now demonstrate their commitment to giving this support and inviting a Community Asset Transfer offer by taking the following immediate actions:**
 - a. **Agreeing now in writing to not start to market the hall in anyway for a period of 6 months. This time is needed to give everyone (the community and local groups and organisations, EDC Officers, all Councillors being those elected by the community to represent Lenzie and otherwise, plus MSPs and MP and potential funders) time to work and engage together to explore comprehensively, and once and for all, the feasibility of a well-run community-led organisation taking on the hall as a Community Asset Transfer. Working well together, we can do this.**
 - b. **Giving community members access to view the hall. You have agreed to do this and we thank you for this.²**

¹ E.g. [Email from Provost Gillian Renwick to Emma Donaldson sent 9 March 2025](#). Email from EDC Officer to LEAP sent 28 February 2025.

² Source: [Email from EDC Officer to Love Lenzie sent 7 May 2025](#).

- c. Providing as requested, and in a timely manner, all information that may be helpful to the community in assessing the feasibility of a Community Asset Transfer including the information already requested, but not yet received, under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Without EDC’s agreement to these 3 asks, the interests of the community cannot be best served and protected.

As below, please kindly respond to this letter to let the community know whether EDC is willing to agree to these 3 asks **by 5:30pm Friday 16 May**.

Key background information

- The hall was built in 1892 using funds raised by the Community³ and on land donated to the Community for the *“erection thereon only of a Public Hall to be used for behoof of the Community of Lenzie, north and south in all time coming”*.⁴
- The hall was owned and run by Trustees selected from the community until transferred to Strathkelvin District Council (now EDC) in 1979 for Strathkelvin District Council to *“continue to be bound to use the said Public Hall for behoof of the Community of Lenzie north and south”*.⁵
- The hall has been the “home” to Lenzie Girl Guides since at least 1963.⁶
- In 2013 EDC let the hall on a fully repairing and insuring lease to the Trustees of Malcolm Cancer Fund (a Taekwondo Club).
- In September 2019 EDC terminated this lease for what we understand to be failure to maintain the building. The building was, at this time, still in use by the community.
- With very little notice, Lenzie Girl Guides had to remove their belongings from the hall and rehouse these (primarily to private homes) and find alternative lets for all Rainbow, Brownie and Guide units (11 units in total) operating at that time from the hall - the closing of the hall effectively having a disproportionate effect on girls in the community of Guiding age.
- Within a few weeks (and with no consultation with the community) EDC put the hall up for let, once again, on the basis of a fully repairing and insuring lease.⁷

³ Sources: [Bazaar train advert](#) / Bazaar programme ([pages 1-6](#), [2-3](#), [4-5](#)) / Kirkintilloch Herald article ([page 1](#), [page 2](#), [page 3](#), [page 4](#) & [page 5](#)).

⁴ Source: [Transfer of the hall from the Trustees of the Lenzie Public Halls to Strathkelvin District Council presented 4 May 1979](#).

⁵ Source: [Transfer of the hall from the Trustees of the Lenzie Public Halls to Strathkelvin District Council presented 4 May 1979](#).

⁶ Source: [Lease between the Trustees for the Lenzie Public Halls and The Office-Bearers of the Lenzie Local Association of the Girl Guides dated 19 November 1963](#).

⁷ Source: [Marketing particulars](#).

- The Love Lenzie Hall Group (which became the [Love Lenzie Association](#)) (**Love Lenzie**) was set up by community members in response to the hall being closed.
- On 20 February 2020 EDC approved a budget line of £500,000 to support the refurbishment of the hall - see [Love Lenzie's Facebook post re: this news](#) including to see the community's positive reaction and support for this. The hall was now to be refurbished before being re-let.
- Lease applications for the hall closed 28 February 2020. Whilst Love Lenzie had initially looked at submitting its own application, it was approached by LEAP, who were also considering submitting an application to see if Love Lenzie would, instead of submitting its own application, support an application by LEAP. After careful thought on the part of all the community members involved, Love Lenzie decided to support LEAP's application instead of putting in their own application.⁸ Love Lenzie provided the Appendix (Community support part) to LEAP's application.
- In June 2020 EDC selected LEAP as preferred tenant for the hall (see [Love Lenzie's Facebook post re: this news](#) including to see the community's positive reaction to and support for this).
- Despite:
 - a. Love Lenzie, [Lenzie Community Council](#), Lenzie Girlguiding and LEAP plus other community members and organisations all at times chasing and being given reassurances by EDC Officers and Councillors that funds remained available for the project and that the project would be progressed / was progressing⁹
 - b. the refurbishment of the hall being on [EDC's 10-year capital development plan with a budget of £500K for expenditure in Year 2022/23](#) and then [30-year capital investment plan with an allocated budget of £3.25m for 2023/24](#) with progress planned¹⁰
 - c. the upgrade of the hall being since 2022 on EDC's [Local Development Plan pages 57 & 58](#) for the area,

⁸Source: [Love Lenzie Facebook post dated 29 February 2020 about LEAP's tenancy application & why supporting it](#).

⁹ Sources: [Email from Love Lenzie to MSP / MP / EDC / Councillor sent 19 July 2019](#) and [attached joint letter from Love Lenzie, Lenzie Community Council and GirlGuiding Lenzie District](#) and [stakeholder update. Response from EDC](#). Email chain between EDC Officer and LEAP (sent separately with this letter). [Email from Love Lenzie to MSP / MP / EDC / Councillors sent 22 September 2022](#) plus [attached letter](#).

¹⁰ Sources: [Council Special Meeting Agenda 24 February 2022, p121 \(project to recommence shortly\)](#). [PNCA meeting 7 June 2022, Appendix 1 \(action expected November 2022\)](#). [Council Budget Agenda 23 February 2023, page 207 \(Additional £2.75m allocated to the project\)](#).

from this point (June 2020) until EDC's recent decision to no longer refurbish the hall (March 2025) little or no effective progress has ever been made towards refurbishing the hall.

- Towards the end of January 2025 LEAP chased again by email for news¹¹, receiving no immediate response to their email.
- On 28 February 2025 (as a delayed response to LEAP's January chaser email) EDC emailed LEAP to notify them that EDC was to: *"consider as part of its budget next week a proposal to cease all proposed refurbishment works to Lenzie Public Hall. The costs related to the refurbishment of the Hall are substantial at approximately £6m. Subject to Council approving its budget on the 6th March, we will look to withdraw the offer of lease in favour of LEAP."* This email was sent more or less at the same time as the publication online of the documents for the Council budget meeting and without any prior discussion or consultation with LEAP, Love Lenzie or any other community members or organisations (e.g. Lenzie Community Council), whether face-to-face, over the phone or by email.
- Acting swiftly, members of the community put together a [petition](#) against the proposals signed by over 600 people in 2 days and submitted to the EDC on the day of the budget meeting. They sent emails to Councillors opposing the proposals. However, given the short notice and lack of any real means of challenge (the only way being to submit via a Councillor an alternative budget by 12 noon on the Tuesday before the meeting of doing so), the community was put by EDC in an extremely difficult (almost impossible) position from which to challenge the proposals.
- The paperwork for the Council budget meeting on 6 March had in it that the *"costs to deliver the project in full [are] now estimated at £6m"* and that it is recommended that:
 - *"all work should cease on the project immediately"*
 - *"the Council formally withdraw from the agreement to lease the building to ... LEAP"*
 - *"the property be declared surplus to operational requirements";*
 - *"offers are ... sought for its sale/transfer/lease to interested third parties for the provision of community facilities".*¹²
- These proposals were passed unamended. We do understand that *"it was highlighted at the meeting ... that the three local Councillors and the council in general want the hall to be retained as public space and that any community group who wanted to attempt to take it on would be supported."*¹³

¹¹ Source: Email chain between EDC Officer and LEAP (sent separately with this letter).

¹² Source: [Report: EDC/004/25/AD: Appendix 5 – East Dunbartonshire Forward in Partnership – Local Government in Scotland Financial Bulletin 2023/24, page 24, para. 5.84.](#)

¹³ Source: [Email from Provost Gillian Renwick to Emma Donaldson sent 9 March 2025.](#)

- On 25 April LEAP received final notification by email from EDC of them no longer refurbishing the hall and officers have been instructed to remarket the hall for sale or lease for community use in its existing condition.
- Recently members of the community have seen contractors and EDC employees going into the hall and furniture and items being removed from the hall and placed in a skip.
- The community's understanding is that EDC are looking to remarket the hall towards the end of May.¹⁴

Why this decision is unacceptable

We fully acknowledge that the Council is operating under increased financial pressures and that the Lenzie area is not classified as deprived. We also understand that since EDC agreed to renovate the hall, stricter environmental, accessibility, and sustainability regulations have been introduced, increasing project costs. However:

- The community did not want EDC to make this decision. See [petition](#) currently signed by 949 people and letters and emails sent to EDC and its Councillors by members of the community before EDC's budget meeting¹⁵. Over 600 of the petition signatures were obtained within 2 days¹⁶ and, even more could have been collected, had the community had been given notice of the pending decision.
- The project was a "win win" for all:
 - for the community – the community currently has no public hall, no non-religious social space, no focal hub / large venue to bring the community together – the refurbishment of the hall would have given this back to the community as well as enabling currently unavailable services (in particular, services for the growing over 50s population) to be offered in the area as well creating potential job, volunteer and small business enterprise opportunities.
 - for EDC - a competent well-established / "safe pair of hands" tenant, with [creative sustainable ideas](#) and [experience of property management](#) as well as offering [high quality services for over 50s](#), which in themselves had the potential to reduce EDC's own costs.
 - for LEAP - the opportunity to expand their services into another local authority, for which they had at the onset of this project secured funding.

¹⁴ Source: [Email from EDC Officer to Love Lenzie sent 29 April 2025](#).

¹⁵ E.g. [Letter from Emma Donaldson to EDC, all Councillors, MSP and MP sent 6 March 2025](#).

¹⁶ Source: [Email from Love Lenzie to EDC, all Councillors, MSP and MP sent 6 March 2025](#).

- Other localities in East Dunbartonshire have had, or are continuing to have, their public halls refurbished - (e.g.:
 - [Kessington Hall, Bearsden](#)
 - [Brookwood Villa, Bearsden](#)
 - [Kirkintilloch Town Hall](#)
 - [Campsie Memorial Hall, Lennoxtown.](#)

No money has been spent by EDC in Lenzie to either improve or maintain community facilities.

- The hall is not “surplus to operational requirements”
 - The hall was in use at its closure.
 - Demand for community rental space in Lenzie is high and with existing space frequently fully booked.
 - The population of Lenzie is 8090 according to Census data from 2022. However the population of Lenzie and Kirkintilloch South (ward), which includes the new developments at Woodilee and Auchinloch (both populations readily served by the Hall), is 13,475. With the continual building of new housing in the areas readily served by the hall, this already high demand can only grow.
 - Activities and events that would be held in Lenzie often have to be run outside of Lenzie and/or in not so central locations as wished. This makes it harder for the community to access them, increases the financial and time costs of getting to them as well as increasing environmental costs. Forced to travel further, community members often have no option but to rely on less sustainable modes of transport to reach alternatives in other areas, increasing environmental costs.
 - A large part of Lenzie’s current community rental space is provided by the local churches. Lenzie Public Hall offers one of the few non-religious community spaces.
 - Lenzie Girl Guides currently have no “home” to call their own and, as such, are now less visible in the community. Guide leaders have expressed a clear wish to use the hall again.
 - Lenzie Union Church and Lenzie Old Parish Church are to be merged. As part of this, there is a near certainty that the currently used community rental space at one of these churches will be lost, impacting the local business and groups that use the space. This places small businesses and their employees at risk. The merger again impacts Lenzie Girl Guides, who have taken lets in the community spaces of both churches following no longer being able to use the hall.
 - There is no “warm” public space of any substantial size for the local residents. There is also no public space for young people to use as a place to meet up away from homes and screens (e.g. for a youth club). The hall (if in use) has the potential to offer both of these.
 - Lenzie Public Hall is the largest venue in Lenzie. Notably, both Lenzie Meadow Primary School and Millersneuk Primary School are unable to host whole

school events in their own halls, needing to put on e.g. multiple duplicate events / performances of shows for all parents to have the opportunity to attend. They could do this if the hall was used. The type and maximum size of community events, fundraisers, private functions (such as weddings) and, which indoor sports can be offered in the area, are all limited by the lack of a local venue with a large capacity. Having the hall available and refurbished would increase social, recreational, and sporting opportunities in the area, potentially improving overall mental and physical well-being. Affordable rents in a community run building would also benefit abutting areas with need.

- A public hall acts as a hub for the community and brings a community together. Lenzie is currently missing this with its public hall being closed.
- As far as we are aware, we have to date seen no evidence of the considerations that EDC Officers and Councillors have taken into account in accessing that the hall “surplus to operational requirements” and are unaware of any community consultation on this (see below). We also have not seen any actual evidence or a breakdown of the estimated refurbishment costs now placed at £6 million. This was a key fact presented by EDC Officers as justification for their recommendation and the Councillors’ decision to no longer refurbish the hall. We have placed a Freedom of Information Request for a copy of: all the evidence EDC has, including that collated from the community, as to the hall being “surplus to operational requirements”¹⁷; and a copy of the £6 million refurbishment cost estimate. We have not received this information, despite the time limit for providing this having passed (see below).

How EDC has reached this decision is unacceptable

Failure of EDC and its Councillors to effectively engage with and support residents and local groups and businesses

- As far as we are aware, EDC Officers appear to have reached their recommendation (and Councillors this decision, including Lenzie’s own councillors) without consultation with LEAP, Love Lenzie, Lenzie Community Council or any other community members and organisations. Had EDC given notice to LEAP, Love Lenzie and/or Lenzie Community Council of the risk of this decision and entered into discussion then this would have enabled alternative options and ways of working together to be explored.
- As a community we consider ourselves let down and unrepresented by our Councillors. Emails from multiple concerned members of the community have repeatedly gone unanswered or only acknowledged with no substantive reply. This is unacceptable from those that we have elected to represent us.
- The decline of the hall’s condition and cited escalating renovation costs, are due to inaction on the part of EDC. Had the refurbishment been managed in a more progressive and timely manner, renovation costs would be lower and the renovations would have been completed, with LEAP now installed as leaseholder. The planned

¹⁷ E.g. [Letter from Emma Donaldson to EDC, all Councillors, MSP and MP sent 6 March 2025.](#)

“win-win” would have been realised with all the benefits it had the potential to bring to the area including services which encourage economic development and reduce costs and burdens on EDC. With time, not only have renovation costs increased due to the rising prices of building materials globally but presumably also due to the condition of the building being allowed to deteriorate.

Rationale for our asks

1. Your support / need for time

As above, we understand that the property is being readied for marketing by the end of May 2025.

Given EDC’s Officers and Councillors have now repeatedly made documented assertions that they wish to support a community organisation taking on the hall, the accelerated marketing directly contradicts these commitments. The speed of this action (especially in comparison to the lack of action over the last 5 years) severely disadvantages the ability of local community organisations to secure the building. In effect, the community is forced to compete “commercially” for ownership of a building that was theirs in the first place (before being transferred to Strathkelvin District Council for continued use by them as a Public Hall). It also puts the community, once again, under pressure and on the back foot in working together to ensure its public hall remains in use for the benefit of the whole community and adjoining areas.

The community of Lenzie are ready and willing to explore the feasibility of a well-run community-led organisation acquiring the property as a Community Asset Transfer but we need a fair and reasonable timescale in which to do this.

2. Viewing the hall

No one from the community has been in the property since early 2020. Without being able to view the hall (and assess its condition and potential renovation / maintenance costs), it is effectively impossible for any community organisation to be able to properly assess the feasibility of taking on the hall.

3. Failure to provide information on Lenzie Public Hall

For a Community Asset Transfer, the community needs access to information. A Freedom of Information Request has been submitted to EDC for information about the hall.¹⁸ Despite the deadline for providing this having now passed, this information has not been provided.

¹⁸ Source: [Email from Emma Donaldson to EDC, all Councillors, MSP and MP sent 6 March 2025](#).

Our asks

We kindly but strongly ask that EDC and its Councillors do now demonstrate their commitment to giving this support and inviting a Community Asset Transfer offer by taking the following immediate actions:

- 1. Agreeing now in writing to not start to market the hall in any way for a period of 6 months.** This time is needed to give everyone (the community, local groups and organisations, EDC, the Councillors elected to represent Lenzie, all our EDC representatives , plus MSPs and MP and potential funders) time to work and engage together to explore comprehensively, and once and for all, the feasibility of a well-run community-led organisation taking on the hall as a Community Asset Transfer. Working well together, we can do this.
- 2. Giving community members access to view the hall.** You have agreed to do this before the end of May and we thank you for this.¹⁹
- 3. Providing as requested, and in a timely manner, all information that may be helpful to the community in assessing the feasibility of a Community Asset Transfer** including the information already requested, but not yet received, under the Freedom of Information Act.

Without EDC's agreement to these 3 asks, the interests of the community cannot be best served and protected.

Whilst it was envisaged that the land for the Public Hall be "*used for behoof of the Community of Lenzie, north and south in all time coming*"²⁰, Lenzie has now been without use of its hall, a precious focal point for bringing the community together, for nearly 6 years. The ultimate aim for all involved (EDC Officers and Councillors, MP, MSPs, the community and local organisations and groups) should be bringing Lenzie Public Hall back in action as soon as possible for use by the whole community. We the undersigned are ready and willing to work with all the above parties to achieve this.







Please kindly reply to this letter to let the community know whether EDC is willing to agree to its 3 asks by 5:30pm Friday 16 May.

Regards

¹⁹ Source: [Email from EDC Officer to Love Lenzie sent 7 May 2025](#).

²⁰ Source: [Transfer of the hall from the Trustees of the Lenzie Public Halls to Strathkelvin District Council presented 4 May 1979](#).

Community groups & organisations:

	<p>Love Lenzie Association</p>	 <p>Emma Donaldson Chair</p>
	<p>Lenzie Community Council</p>	 <p>Thomas Gray Secretary</p>
	<p>Girlguiding Lenzie District</p>	 <p>Janice Deacon Lenzie District Commissioner</p>

Members of the community:

Name	Post Code	Email address	Signature
EMMA DONALDSON	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
CHARLE MARNEY	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Thomas G F Gray	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
MARIAN MARTIN	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Hilary Snedden	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Elizabeth Ibbotson	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]