

Friday 10th February 2023

## **Budget Proposals**

Dear Councillors,

We are writing to you with increasing concern around the recently published proposal summarising your budgeting options for the coming years - including the potentially devastating cut of 174 full time equivalent staff members over 5 years.

As School Captains at Lasswade and representatives typical of the young people in Midlothian, we can recognise the impact the cost of living crisis has had, and the necessity to save money. However, as students we cannot accept that we would be the last to experience an education that is prioritised by its council. Such a substantial reduction in staff would be catastrophic towards the experiences of future generations, and the face of all Midlothian school values and ideals.

Unanimously, our year group has recognised we owe it to our school to enact and bring forward changes, having personally prospered from such a privileged and personalised educational experience at Lasswade. We must make it known that it is the staff that have supported and taught us that *make* Lasswade. The proposal to dramatically cut teacher numbers, if accepted, would eliminate the elements of our education that we view as most important and defining. A school without sufficient Student Support, course variety and extra-curricular opportunity is not the school we are proud of and grateful to represent.

Our lives and independence is built on our education - and we cannot imagine a school experience without the teachers, community and personal development we will remember in our adulthood. We cannot bring ourselves as a community to see this drastic cut in staffing as an option, and dread to see what more disadvantaged schools will suffer as a result. The difference in background of our neighbouring schools already means there are many Midlothian young people facing huge challenges and further setbacks resulting from proposed options you are considering will fail the young people you work to uplift. Such changes proposed would mean significant steps backwards, when truly we need to remain united and optimistic in times of crisis.

As young people we have a right to be heard, and we respectfully request that you allow us to share our views and 'appeal' to you at your meeting on the 21st of February. Before you make what we know must be difficult decisions, we would like the opportunity to directly, and in-person, fulfil a duty to our school and Midlothian young people to share with you the importance of education. We hope to make it known face to face that the meaning of our schooling lies in the hands of the staff and people that uphold and dedicate themselves to our education in every aspect. As students that have depended on the aid of such committed educators, we trust that you will consider the views of the people you impact most when considering such drastic change.

We sincerely look forward to hearing from you,

The School Captains of Lasswade High School: Keir Allison, Sandy Bishop, Mollie Gilmore, Abigail Mackay, Bethany Morrison, Amy Paden, Luke Phillips and Daniel Wheeler

