

Summer Report 2026

Councillor James Anderson

East Berwickshire Ward Update

As we move into the summer recess, I wanted to provide residents with an update on some of the work that has been taking place across East Berwickshire and within Scottish Borders Council over recent months.

Fighting for a Stand-Alone Eyemouth Primary School

This has undoubtedly been the biggest issue facing our community.

Following concerns raised by parents, teachers and residents, I have continued to push for a stand-alone primary school to become the Council's preferred option.

Working alongside parents, Parent Councils, community representatives, our MP and MSP, we have successfully ensured that Scottish Borders Council will now bring forward a report with the stand-alone option as its primary proposal, alongside a funding assessment.

While this represents significant progress, no funding has yet been committed and this is unacceptable.

The campaign is far from over and I will continue pressing the Council to prioritise investment so Eyemouth's children receive the school they deserve.

Coldingham

Work around the hedging at Coldingham bay parking areas has been raised, a site meeting took place and officers have been tasked with cutting back the hedging once nesting season is over.

Parking in disabled bays is increasing and causing an issue for people with mobility issues. While looking at parking I also done a walk around in Coldingham for drop kerbs and other accessibility related issues. Multiple issues have been raised and will be attended to by officers. The full list of issues was sent to Coldingham CC.

The Viking Project

I attended a meeting on Friday to hear more about the Viking Project in Eyemouth, and it is a genuinely impressive initiative with real potential for our young people and the wider community.

The project is based around the restoration of Bee, a historic Stroma yole built in 1904 and constructed using traditional techniques with links to Viking-era boatbuilding. Rather than simply preserving an important piece of maritime heritage, the project is using the restoration as a practical training opportunity for young people from Eyemouth High School and recent school leavers.

Participants are developing hands-on skills in traditional boatbuilding, repair methods and the use of specialist tools, while also gaining experience in teamwork, sustainability, enterprise and personal development. It is exactly the type of practical, locally rooted opportunity that can help give young people confidence, skills and a clearer pathway into employment or further training.

Eyemouth has a proud maritime history, and it is encouraging to see that heritage being used in such a positive and forward-looking way. The Viking Project brings together traditional craftsmanship, skills development and community pride, while helping to ensure that valuable knowledge is not lost for future generations.

I look forward to seeing how the project develops and will support opportunities for this type of practical skills-based learning to grow in our area.

Greater Transparency in Council Decision Making

Throughout the year I have continued challenging the Council to improve openness and accountability.

Examples include asking:

How CGI complaints can consistently be reported as zero;

Whether project completion dates shown to councillors are the original target dates or revised dates with months added to them;

Clarification that all elected members have appropriate access to schools while carrying out their duties.

Residents deserve open government and clear information.

Question to council for June 2026

"Given that councillors will be asked to make decisions regarding the future educational environment of hundreds of Eyemouth children, will the Leader and Executive Member for Education commit to facilitating a visit for all elected members in August to Eyemouth High School prior to any future decision on the standalone school or campus options?"

The response was as follows.

Elected Members do not hold any operational responsibilities for schools, or other Council services, and therefore there is unlikely to be cause for Members, other than those with portfolio responsibilities to visit schools out with their own ward, or to visit schools without a specific reason to do so.

Headteachers are encouraged to include ward members in events within schools, for example through invitations to prize giving and performances and Parent Councils may wish to include local Members in their meetings.

If a Member has a reason to make a visit to a school, this should be agreed first with the Head teacher, and as a courtesy any visit should also be notified in advance to the Director of Education.

It would be unlikely that there would be any cause for an individual elected member acting in a ward capacity to invite other Councillors to make a visit to an individual school.

In follow up I requested SBC invite all Elected members to the Schools. The response was simply "NO" which is the disgusting attitude people of East Berwickshire received during the initial public consultation.

Motion to Council June 2026

Support for HM Coastguard Rescue Officers

Council notes:

- (a) The vital role played by HM Coastguard Rescue Officers (CROs) in protecting life along the UK's coastline, including within the Scottish Borders, where volunteers regularly respond to incidents involving cliff rescues, missing persons, flooding, maritime emergencies and public safety.
- (b) That Coastguard Rescue Officers provide thousands of hours of training, emergency response and community service each year and are an integral part of the emergency response network alongside Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Scottish Ambulance Service, RNLI and StAbbs Independent life boat.
- (c) Reports that following recent legal proceedings regarding employment status, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency has taken the decision to remove call-out payments previously available to Coastguard Rescue Officers.
- (d) Concerns raised by Coastguard volunteers and representative bodies that the removal of these payments may have implications for recruitment, retention and the long-term resilience of the Coastguard Rescue Service, particularly within rural and coastal communities.
- (e) The importance of maintaining a strong and sustainable volunteer Coastguard service to ensure the continued safety of residents and visitors along the Berwickshire coastline.
- (f) Recognises the main point for serving Coast Guard members are, The Coastguard Rescue Service saves lives using highly trained volunteers. The call-out payment was never making anyone rich, but it recognised the disruption, responsibility, and personal sacrifice involved in responding to emergencies. Removing it risks making volunteering unaffordable for many people and could ultimately affect the resilience of the UK's coastal rescue network.

Council therefore agrees:

To formally recognise and thank all serving and former Coastguard Rescue Officers for their commitment, professionalism and service to communities within the Scottish Borders and across the United Kingdom.

To express concern regarding the potential impact that the removal of call-out payments may have on volunteer recruitment, retention and operational resilience.

The Council leader write to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, local Members of Parliament, local Members of the Scottish Parliament and relevant representative bodies outlining the Council's support for Coastguard Rescue Officers and requesting that all reasonable options be explored to provide a sustainable and legally compliant framework that supports the continued recruitment and retention of Coastguard volunteers.

Moved by: Councillor James Anderson

The Coast Guard has since reversed their decision due to pressure from many who support the volunteers.

Supporting Communities Across East Berwickshire

Casework continues every week across the ward.

Recent examples include:

working with residents in Copath to improve access to healthcare appointments where transport has become a significant concern;

engaging with NHS services regarding patient transport arrangements for elderly and vulnerable residents.

One important point that many residents are unaware of is that NHS departments can arrange transport for patients where it is considered clinically or socially necessary. While eligibility is assessed on an individual basis, I believe more people should be made aware that this support exists for those who genuinely need it, particularly older residents who have no other reasonable means of travelling to appointments.

Eymouth Harbour - Planning for the Future

The future development of Eymouth Harbour remains one of the most significant opportunities our town has seen for generations.

Throughout the development of the Harbour Masterplan, Eymouth Harbour Trust has undertaken extensive community engagement including public consultations, exhibitions, presentations, drop-in sessions, surveys and stakeholder meetings. The Trust has repeatedly encouraged residents, businesses and harbour users to shape the proposals before they progress further.

The Masterplan itself remains a long-term vision rather than a final planning application. It aims to:

safeguard the fishing industry;

create opportunities in offshore wind, marine services and tourism;

improve harbour infrastructure;

strengthen flood resilience;

create new local jobs and supply chain opportunities;

deliver long-term economic benefits for future generations.

Importantly, the proposals continue to evolve through consultation, technical studies and environmental assessments before any future planning decisions are taken.

Local Infrastructure

During recent months I have continued working on a wide range of local issues including:

road maintenance and A1 resurfacing works;

broadband connectivity;

cemetery maintenance; multiple layers have been levelled off.

public toilets;

community facilities; taking over as Chair at Eyemouth Community Centre and declaring an interest with SBC.

environmental concerns;

local planning issues; Coldingham car park area and future proposals with a site meeting were undertaken.

Many of these issues may not make headlines but they make a real difference to everyday life for residents.

Community Projects

I'm pleased to see continued progress on several important local projects including:

The new Pump Track; which is a very welcome addition to Eyemouth and the surrounding area.

Eymouth Shop Front Improvement Grants; almost completed and the high street is looking good.

regeneration work across the town; Multiple projects are happening and keeping up with them is a challenge but well worth the running around.

ongoing improvements through the Eyemouth Place Plan; Briefings from officers keep us up to date and conversations with Town team members regularly.

continued investment discussions surrounding the harbour and wider economic development.

Town team continues to work on the various stages of the process of getting the Borderlands funding. It is important to note this process has been long and laborious but the focus the Town team was to see is on Bantry improvements and the main town park. A sudden focus on heritage is causing concern as the heritage projects were not a priority for the people of the town who completed the survey and it is important to them they stick to what the town wanted and not deviate.

Working With Residents

One of the most rewarding parts of this role continues to be working directly with local people.

Whether it's helping resolve individual problems, supporting community groups, attending meetings, or representing residents within the Council, my priority remains ensuring East Berwickshire has a strong independent voice.

Thank you to everyone who has contacted me over the past few months. Every email, phone call and conversation helps me better represent our communities.

I am working on the summer Surgery dates and will be out and about in the coming weeks.

Gull Feeding and Marine Reserve Campaign

The Berwickshire Marine Reserve's "Do Not Feed the Gulls" campaign appears to be having a positive effect in the central areas of the town. There is growing awareness that feeding gulls, particularly unsuitable human food, contributes to nuisance behaviour and encourages birds to remain in built-up areas rather than relying on natural food sources.

There remains an issue in some housing estates, where gulls are still being fed, and with a small number of individuals who continue to provide inappropriate food despite repeated messages. However, locally the campaign is helping to change behaviour. There are signs that more birds are returning offshore to feed naturally, rather than gathering in the town centre.

The combined approach of public awareness work, responsible waste management, and the local businesses that contribute towards falconry activity should help reduce the bulk of the problem during the summer period. I will continue to support this work and will follow up on progress towards a gull-feeding by-law after the summer, once Scottish Borders Council officers have had time to complete the preparatory work needed to bring forward a legally robust proposal.

Holyrood Election 2026

Earlier this year, I stood as an Independent candidate in the 2026 Scottish Parliament election for Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire. It was a positive and worthwhile experience, and I was genuinely grateful for the encouragement, support and confidence shown by people across the constituency.

I received 740 votes, representing the strongest result achieved by an Independent candidate in this constituency since it was created. While I was not elected, the result demonstrated that there is a clear appetite for independent representation that puts local people, practical solutions and individual judgement ahead of party political interests.

My campaign was built on the same principles that guide me as an Independent councillor: listening to residents, being open and accountable, standing up for local communities, and judging each issue on its merits rather than following a party line. Those principles remain at the heart of my work for East Berwickshire and the wider Scottish Borders.

The campaign also gave me the opportunity to speak with residents across the area about the issues that matter most to them, including rural services, education, roads, local health provision, housing, the cost of living and the need for stronger local voices in decision-making. I will continue to carry those conversations and concerns into my work as your councillor.

Looking Ahead

There is still much work to do.

My priorities remain:

Securing funding for a stand-alone Eyemouth Primary School;

Improving transparency and accountability within Scottish Borders Council;

Supporting investment that creates long-term jobs while protecting our environment;

Continuing to improve local services;

Representing residents fairly, independently and honestly.

Thank you once again for your continued support.

James Anderson

Independent Councillor

East Berwickshire Ward

Additional document from Parents of Eyemouth.

Save our Schools - Factsheet

No community should have to wait 11 years for a new primary school

Eyemouth originally had a separate Primary School and High School located next to each other on the site on Coldingham Road in the centre of Eyemouth, easily accessible for Eyemouth children. The Schools shared a canteen which was physically located between the Schools.

Eyemouth High School (EHS) moved to the new purpose-built High School at Gunsgreenhill on the outskirts of Eyemouth in 2009. Eyemouth Primary School (EPS) and Early Learning Centre (ELC) remained on the Coldingham Road site.

The campaign for a new stand-alone Eyemouth Primary School has continued to gather momentum over the summer.

Following the decision by Council in May, officers are now preparing a report due to come back in September. That report will compare a new stand-alone primary school with the alternative "campus" proposal, which would see primary pupils accommodated within the existing high school.(NOT A CAMPUS)

Since the last Council meeting, local parents have shown remarkable determination. Information boards have been placed in Eyemouth Community Centre, a new community survey has been launched and we continue to work closely with MSPs, our MP and community organisations to ensure the strongest possible case is put forward.

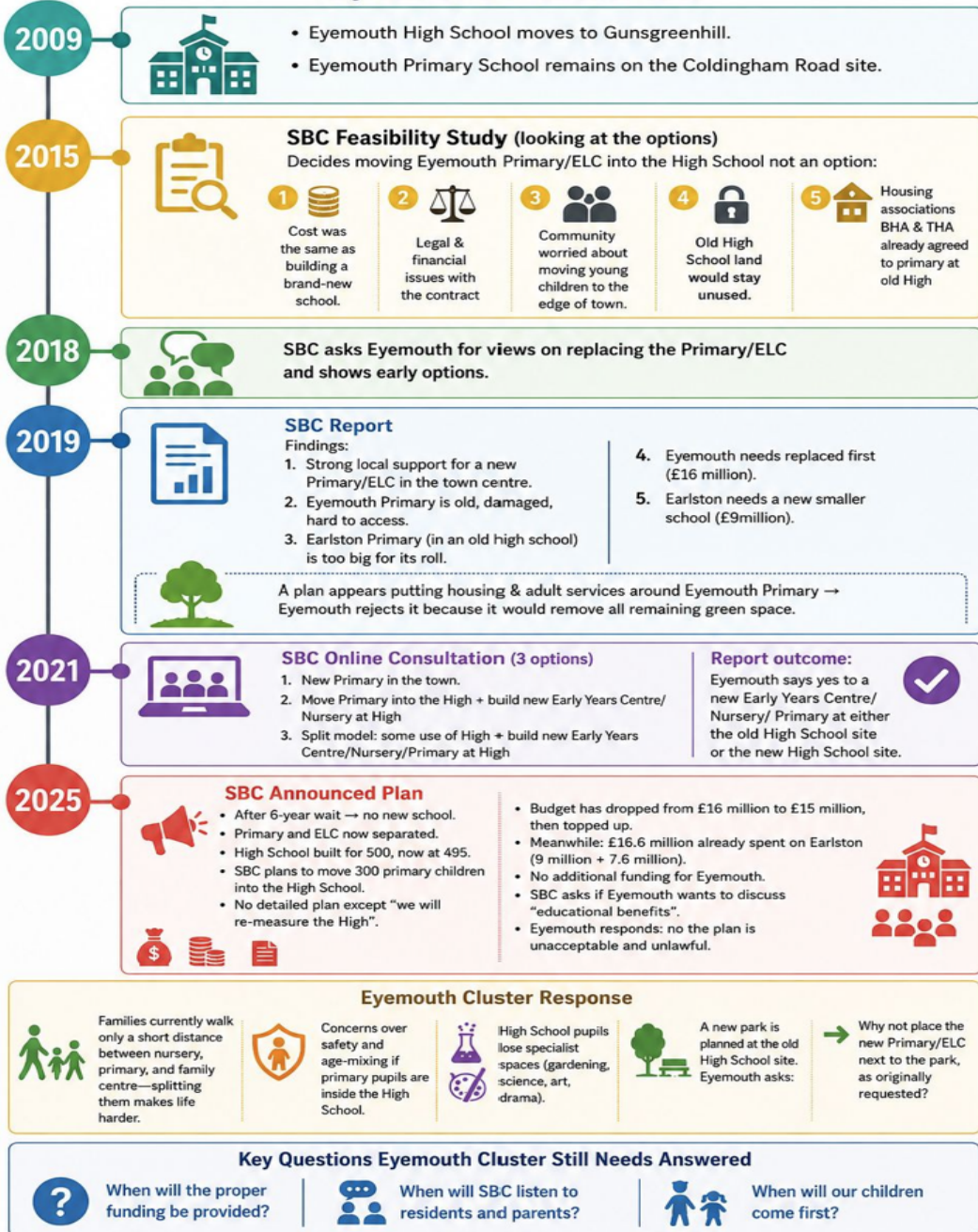
One thing remains clear to me. This is not simply about bricks and mortar. It is about giving our children a school that meets their needs for decades to come while recognising the role a primary school plays at the heart of a community.

I have also asked that all elected members be given the opportunity to visit both Eyemouth High School and Eyemouth Primary School before making what will be one of the biggest education decisions affecting our town in recent years. For me, that is simply common sense. Councillors should be able to see the buildings they are being asked to make decisions about rather than relying solely on reports and photographs. Site visits happen regularly for members on the planning committee so it is not a diversion from regular practice, however SBC and the administration seem hell bent on now allowing it. The question is why are they so worried about elected members seeing inside both schools? The answer is simply, because if all elected members see how inappropriate the high school is to force a primary school worth of children into it they would not get to use the school to save money by going for the cheapest option.

The decision expected later this year will shape education in Eyemouth for generations. While there is still work to do, I remain committed to ensuring the community's voice is heard and that every option is assessed fairly, openly and on the evidence.

EYEMOUTH SCHOOL TIMELINE

Key events from 2009 to 2025



SCOTTISH BORDERS SCHOOL ESTATE INVESTMENT

MAJOR SCHOOL PROJECTS TIMELINE 2009–2026



CAPITAL COST



PUPILS (ROLL OR CAPACITY)



2017



LANGLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

New primary school
completed in Galashiels.
Part of the school
modernisation programme.

£10m

260
pupils



KELSO HIGH SCHOOL

Officially opened in
November 2017.

£22.5m

600
pupils

2018



BROOMLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL (KELSO)

Occupied in January 2018.
Modern replacement
primary school.

£9.7m

280
pupils

2020



JEDBURGH CAMPUS

Opened in August 2020.
Combined nursery, primary
and secondary education
on one site (3–18).

£32m

910
pupils

2025



EARLSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL / COMMUNITY CAMPUS

New community campus
completed in 2025.
Includes primary school,
nursery, library and
health centre.

£16.6m

173
pupils



PEEBLES HIGH SCHOOL

Opened to pupils in
November 2025.

£61m

1,300
pupils

2026



GALASHIELS ACADEMY

Opened to pupils on
6 January 2026.

£64m

700
pupils



EYEMOUTH
PRIMARY

EYEMOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Planned re-open in 2026 –
built to replace in-situ site –
That's over 10 years of delays
for children in Eyemouth.

£14.7m

280
pupils



EYEMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

Opened in 2026.

–

503
pupils



Over the last decade, the Scottish Borders has rebuilt or replaced much of its major school estate, delivering modern, sustainable facilities for communities across the region.

Since 2009 EHS has steadily improved in its academic achievement and is now ranked as one of the best schools in the Scottish Borders and is performing in some subjects nationally in the top 10% of schools.

In **2015** SBC launched a feasibility study to assess the options for a new EPS. The conclusion that SBC reached was that moving EPS and ELC into the new EHS building was not an option for the reasons that:- the cost was the same as building a brand new school; there were legal and financial issues with amending the existing PFI contract for the EHS; the Eyemouth Community was worried about moving young children to a school on the edge of the town; the old EHS land would stay unused; and the Housing associations BHA & THA had already agreed to the provision of a new EPS on the site of the old EHS.

In **2018** SBC asked the Eyemouth Community for views on replacing the EPS and ELC and outlined the early options.

In **2019** SBC reported its findings which were that:- there was strong local support for a new EPS and ELC in the town centre; Eyemouth Primary was old, damaged and hard to access; Earlston Primary (in an old high school) was too big for its roll; Eyemouth Primary needed replaced first (at a cost of £16 million); and Earlston needed a new smaller school (at a cost of £9 million).

SBC produced a plan putting housing and adult services around EPS at the Coldingham Road site. The Eyemouth Community rejected the plan as it would remove all remaining green space on the site.

It was clear in **2019** that the Eyemouth Community favoured a new EPS and ELC on the Coldingham Road site.

In **2021** SBC launched an online Consultation proposing three options for the EPS:

1. New EPS on the Coldingham Road site.
2. Move EPS into the new EHS at Gunsgreenhill and build new ELC on the new EHS site.
3. Split model: some use of the new EHS plus a new ELC and EPS would be built on the new EHS site.

The outcome of the Consultation was that the Eyemouth Community said 'yes' to a new ELC and EPS at either the old EHS site on Coldingham Road or the new EHS site. Both favoured options were for purpose-built new facilities.

What followed was a four-year period in which there was no communication from SBC with the Eyemouth Community regarding a replacement Primary School.

In September **2023** David Robertson, Chief Executive of SBC, committed to an ambitious school replacement programme, which included a new EPS. Mr Robertson confirmed increased construction costs would be met by SBC and to that end an extra £11M had been allocated to the new Peebles High School, while an additional £10M had been found to plug a funding shortfall for new schools in Earlston and Galashiels. The cost of Earlston's new primary school had increased from £12.3M to £16.6M. This increased cost was paid by SBC. A further £5M was found by SBC for the cost of Galashiels Academy which cost a total of £64.5M. The cost of Peebles High School in 2023 had increased to £61M from £50M and SBC met this cost. Mr Robertson was quoted as saying that SBC was "*firmly committed to delivering all of the new schools*" which included a new EPS¹.

On 6th October **2025** SBC launched a statutory consultation on proposals to incorporate EPS into the new EHS building at Gunsgreenhill. A new ELC would be constructed on the old EHS site on Coldingham Road in the centre of town. The proposals had the EPS and ELC on separate sites. At that time the EHS roll was 495. SBC's plans involved moving 300 primary children into the EHS building. No detailed plans were included with the consultation papers.

The budget had dropped from £16 million to £15 million. Meanwhile Earlston Primary had progressed at a cost of £16.6 million, which was several £million over budget.

¹ [Council vows to meet soaring cost of five new Borders schools - BBC News](#)

The statutory consultation was withdrawn by SBC before the end of the statutory consultation period. SBC confirmed that the responses to the consultation had been overwhelmingly against the proposal – out of a total of 421 responses, 369 were against the proposal for reasons which included the following:-

1. The consultation was unlawful as it did not comply with legal requirements.
2. There was insufficient information provided in the consultation document to demonstrate that the amalgamation of the EPS and EHS would work in practice.
3. Families currently walk only a short distance between ELC and EPS —splitting them makes life harder.
4. There were concerns over safety and age-mixing if primary pupils are inside the EHS building.
5. EHS pupils would lose purpose-built specialist spaces (gardening, science, art, drama). Additionally, the flagship Greenpower programme will no longer have access to the rear of the property to test and drive its cars.
6. Condensing EPS and EHS into one building, which was not purpose-built will undoubtedly place additional, unnecessary pressures on the students, faculty and staff of both schools as they deal with the implications of overcrowding. (By comparison Jedburgh is a purpose-built campus and Earlston is a purpose-built primary school and ELC.)
7. To protect EPS students on the 3rd floor, additional walls and barriers will have to be built thus destroying the aesthetic of the current EHS building and likely limiting the available daylight which was an important part of the original design of the building—among other things, intended to improve the overall mental health experience of both students and faculty alike in the learning environment.
8. The current proposal makes access to EPS at the farthest distance possible for families living in the Deanhead and Acredale housing estates. Many of these families still have to walk their children to school because they do not own or have access to a vehicle at school times. Not only will the distance be much greater than it is at present, but now these children, some aged as young as 4, will have to walk down a very busy main road frequented by trucks and business vans as well as cars.
9. Additionally, there are problems associated with school drop-offs and pick-ups. The roundabout at the entrance to EHS is also the main access from the A1 into town. There's already a traffic problem twice a day at the roundabout entrance to town. Putting EPS on the same site will drastically increase traffic congestion at this busy junction and for a longer period of time throughout the day. All HGVs, business vans, buses, etc., must use the same roundabout and roads, and this will potentially become an even greater hazard should the construction of the new harbour take place.
10. It was not clear what provision had been made for space to play in prioritising the need for our young students to “learning through play”.
11. A new park is planned at the old EHS site. The Eyemouth Community asked - why not place the new Primary/ELC next to the park, as originally requested?

Throughout the entire proposal to amalgamate EPS and EHS, no positive benefit for EHS pupils was described.

Early in 2026 SBC carried out a successful engagement exercise with the Eyemouth Community. The outcome was that a new standalone EPS and ELC on the Coldingham Road site is overwhelmingly the preferred option of the Eyemouth Community for valid and justified reasons.

On **14 May 2026**, following a Council Meeting, SBC is developing plans for two options being firstly the preferred new standalone EPS and ELC on the Coldingham Road site, and secondly the campus option which SBC consulted on in 2025. The cost of a standalone EPS is estimated by SBC to be £23.085M to £25.515M. The cost of the campus option is estimated by SBC to be £15.7M.

SBC has informed the Eyemouth Community that there is no additional funding for Eyemouth Primary School and that only £14.7M is now available.

However, through agreement reached on 14th May, SBC is obligated to pursue urgent discussions with the Scottish Government, UK Government and other funding partners to explore all available funding opportunities. There is, however, no commitment from SBC to secure the additional funding.

On **29 May 2026** Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA) submitted a report to SBC outlining proposals to build 64 affordable homes on land in Eyemouth north-west of the Acredale Industrial Estate. BHA will

commence pre-planning application consultation in June 2026. Of the 64 homes, 54 will be houses and 10 will be cottage flats. It is very likely that the 54 houses will accommodate families and so increase the roll of EHS and EPS. Thus far, this would appear not to have been considered by SBC.

We need your support!

We have engaged with Rachael Hamilton MSP and John Lamont MP who have agreed to support us and we are working with them to agree a plan to escalate the issue to the Scottish Ministers and UK Government. Over the summer we will be engaging with the Eyemouth Community to further gather views on the options being considered by SBC.

There will a public meeting in September with Rachael Hamilton MSP and John Lamont MP to discuss the views of the Community and proposed next steps.

On behalf of this collaboration, we would be grateful for your support in raising awareness of the issue and attending the public meeting. For updates please follow us on

<https://www.facebook.com/share/1D1q6i4a79/> for details of engagement events.

No community should have this battle for a new primary school!