



## Alston Moor Parish Council

Grisedale Croft Working Group

alstonmoorhealth.org

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Alston Town Hall

13<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Cath Whalley  
Director of Adult Social Care  
Westmorland and Furness Council  
South Lakeland House  
Lowther Street  
Kendal  
Cumbria LA9 4DQ

Dear Ms Whalley,

### **The cost figures presented in the consultation on the future of Grisedale Croft Care Home**

We are writing on behalf of Alston Moor Parish Council and the Grisedale Croft Working Group about the consultation on the future of Grisedale Croft Care Home in Alston, which runs from 14 May to 5 August 2026. Our subject is the financial case the consultation puts to residents, and we are asking the Council to place the evidence behind it on the public record while the consultation is open.

The consultation document states under Option 2 that the building requires very high levels of capital investment, “an estimated £2.5 million to £3.0 million”, “to meet modern regulatory standards”. Page 4 describes these as “indicative costs, based on similar council projects in Cumbria”, stated in April as within that range “or higher”, and adds that “a complete rebuild would cost more”. No figure is given for a rebuild, and none is given for the preferred option of providing alternative accommodation in a newly acquired property.

We have tried to reconcile the financial case with the Council’s own material and cannot, for four reasons.

- (a) By the document’s own words, the figure is indicative and based on similar council projects elsewhere in Cumbria. That is a benchmark borrowed from

other buildings, not a costing of the works Grisedale Croft itself needs, and the document cites no condition survey or schedule of works for the building. As we understand it, the same indicative range appears in the Council's material for Applethwaite Green in Windermere, a 27-bed home, which if correct reinforces that a general allowance has been applied rather than a building-specific estimate for this 13-bedroom home.

- (b) Only the refurbishment option is costed. The rebuild is said to cost more, with no figure, and the preferred option carries no figure at all. Residents are being invited to prefer an option whose cost is not stated over an option whose cost is, and the five options cannot be compared on cost as presented.
- (c) The statement that a rebuild would have a higher capital cost than refurbishment sits uneasily with published industry benchmarks, which put a new 13-bed care home at approximately £1.56 million to £2.34 million — below the range given for refurbishment. Both statements cannot hold without an explanation that has not been published.
- (d) The investment is said to be needed “to meet modern regulatory standards”, yet the works the document describes are “larger en-suite rooms and reduced capacity”, the home holds a current Good rating from the Care Quality Commission, and we are not aware of any works required by a regulator. How much of the range is required for compliance, rather than chosen as modernisation, is not stated.

The information disclosed so far does not resolve this. The Council's response to request FOI-208440-2026 stated that no building condition survey is held, while the Corporate Management Team report of 24 March 2026 refers to a Mechanical and Electrical Survey of December 2023, a Decarbonisation plan of May 2024 and, at Appendix 1, a per-bed refurbishment and rebuild cost comparison, none of which has been provided; an internal review is pending. On 2 June 2026 the Council refused request FOI-211351-2026 — for the building's capital and maintenance expenditure records, its condition and inspection reports, and its maintenance plans — under section 12 of the Act, on the basis that the information is not held centrally and would be too costly to assemble. We find it difficult to reconcile a closure case resting on the building's condition and the investment it is said to require with the position that the records of that condition and investment cannot be assembled. A refined request, and a further request seeking the basis of the published figures, are being submitted; given the consultation window, we would welcome disclosure without waiting for statutory deadlines to expire.

We also want to understand whether the options were appraised to the standard expected of a decision of this kind. The recognised framework is the HM Treasury

Green Book. It looks for options to be tested against a defined baseline, including a “do minimum” option — here, retaining the home while the NHS step-down referral pathway that bears on its occupancy is restored — for options to be compared on whole-life cost rather than a single capital figure, and for effects that cannot easily be priced to be weighed. The consultation itself acknowledges those effects under Option 4: an impact on residents’ wellbeing, a distance to alternative homes it describes as excessive, and a conflict with the Council’s priorities to support and strengthen local communities. We raise this not as an allegation but as a matter the Parish Council is taking seriously, and we would be grateful to understand how the appraisal dealt with these points.

These matters bear on the fairness of the consultation. Those responding need enough information to give the proposals intelligent consideration, and where a preferred option has been identified, the basis on which the alternatives have been set aside should be apparent. At present the central financial justification cannot be examined, and the options cannot be compared on a like basis.

We are therefore asking the Council, during the consultation period, to:

- (a) publish the schedule of works and the cost estimate behind the £2.5 million to £3.0 million figure, identifying the “similar council projects in Cumbria” on which it is based and the assumptions on which it rests;
- (b) publish the estimated capital cost of a rebuild and of the preferred option, so that the five options can be compared on a like basis;
- (c) publish the options appraisal that supported the Cabinet decision of 21 April 2026, including how residents’ wellbeing, the distance to alternative provision and the rural nature of Alston Moor were weighed; and
- (d) where any of this cannot be produced, correct or withdraw the affected statements from the consultation material, so that residents are not asked to respond to figures that are not evidenced.

Given the consultation closes on 5 August 2026, we would be grateful for a reply in good time, so that any information provided can inform the responses people make. We are happy to discuss any of the matters raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Alix Martin  
Grisedale Croft Working Group  
Alston Moor Parish Council

**cc:**

Cllr Patricia Bell, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Care, Westmorland and Furness Council  
David Hodgkinson, Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer), Westmorland and Furness Council